

Green Infrastructure Assessment

29 Primrose Lane, Rhos, Pontardawe, SA8 3ES

Background

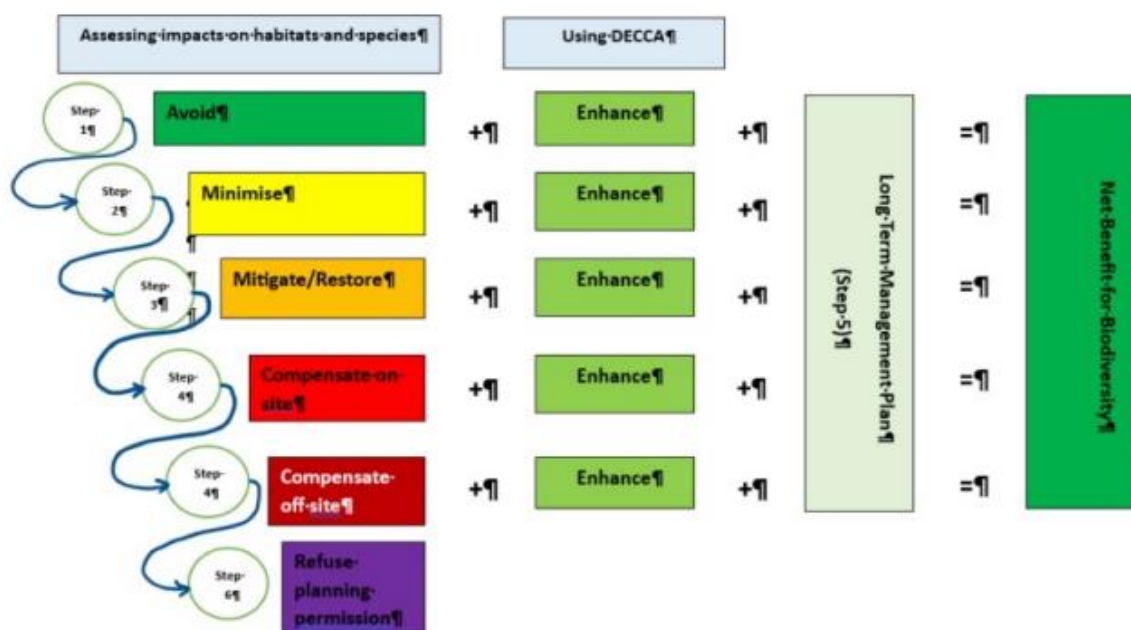
On 11th October 2023 the Welsh Government issued updated National Planning Policy for chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales.

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 stepwise 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: The design proposal seeks to add one further bedroom with en-suite bathroom at second floor level by raising the ridge line of a portion of the roof and by adding a small front dormer for stairs access.

The Site: The application site is an existing two-storey dwelling at 29 Primrose Lane, Rhos, Potardawe

Existing green infrastructure:

Primrose Lane is at the edge of a well-established residential area with a semi-rural outlook. Nearby is a varied mix of modern housing with the rear facing open fields, some of which is earmarked for development under the latest LDP. Most dwellings have mature and above average size gardens, there is an abundance of mature trees, green roadside verges and green spaces near the housing. It is expected that the usual mix of semi-rural wildlife of foxes, hedgehogs, badgers, native British birds, bats and pollinators are all to be found here.

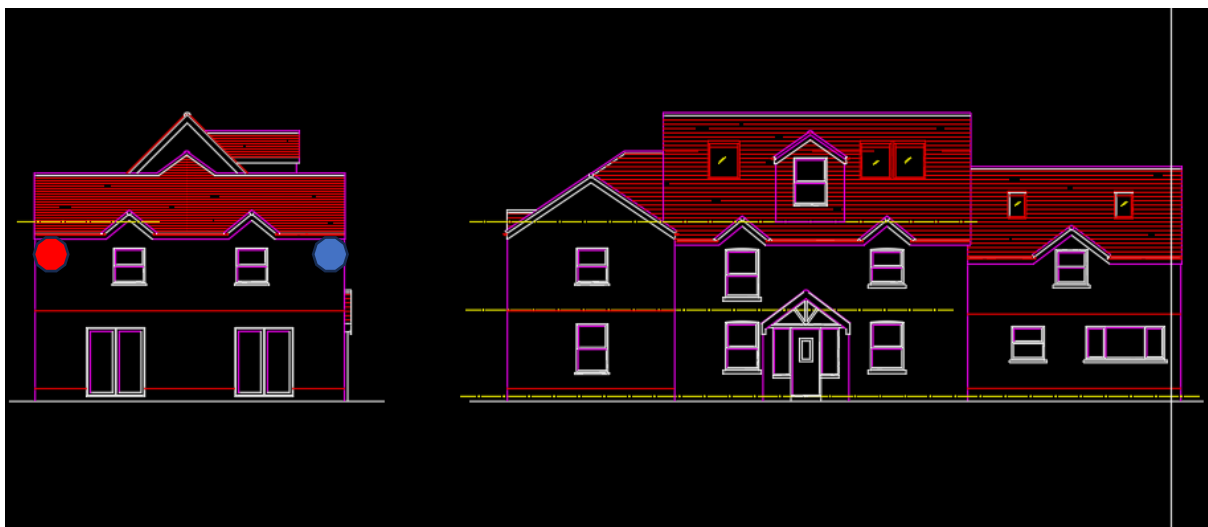
Proposed Enhancement:

It is accepted that Future Wales now requires ecological enhancement to any development. It is submitted that any ecological enhancement must be proportional to the development so, given the modest scale of the proposal it is considered that the provision of bat and bird boxes within the site will provide adequate ecological enhancement.

Location of bird and bat boxes:

Fig 1. A red circle indicates the position of a bird nesting box on the south elevation. A blue circle indicates the position of a bat box also on the south elevation which overlooks open fields
Images of the bird and bat boxes are shown in fig 2.

Figure 1



Details of bird and bat boxes

Bird nesting box: It is proposed to use a Schwegler 1B general purpose nesting box with a 32mm dia entrance hole. This entry hole size is suitable for a variety of small to medium size species such as Great Tit, Blue Tit, Marsh Tit, Coal Tit, Tree Sparrows and House Sparrows. These boxes are constructed from Schweglers own “woodcrete” material which is

sustainable, long lasting, beathable, weather resistant and resistant to insect and fungal attack.

Bat roosting box: It is proposed to use the Schwegler flat box 1FF. According to Scwegler, *“This box has proved highly effective under practical conditions everywhere, in gardens and forests as well as on urban buildings and balconies”*. This is also constructed from the same durable material as the bird boxes.

Figure 2.



Legislation and Guideline's

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 buildup 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 should 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 it be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT 2018).

Implementation

Bird & bat Boxes – to be installed within one month of the completion of works and maintained as outlined above. 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.

Conclusion

The proposal is a modest extension to an existing large dwelling house. The measures set out above avoids damage to any biodiversity and as such agrees with the *stepwise* approach set out in the published advice.