

Green Infrastructure Assessment

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Introduction

This document has been prepared in support of an application for the retention of use of land as part of domestic curtilage, retention of garden shed, walls and patio area.

Background

On 24 February 2021, Welsh Government published 'Future Wales – the National Plan 2040'. The Government has emphasised that Future Wales sits at the centre of the new and refreshed network of legislation, strategies and plans that now govern planning across the country. It is clear that Future Wales, and the planning process more widely, is seen as being a central force for delivering cross cutting, national objectives for the economy, environment and society

Future Wales sets out a number of key approaches/ policies. Policy 9 states that in all cases, action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity (to provide a net benefit), the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment.

As a result, Local Planning Authorities will be looking to secure these biodiversity enhancements as part of the planning application process.

Proposal

The proposal is for the retention of use of land as part of domestic curtilage, retention of garden shed, walls and patio area.

The Site

The site forms part of the existing side garden of the host dwelling but was previous open land

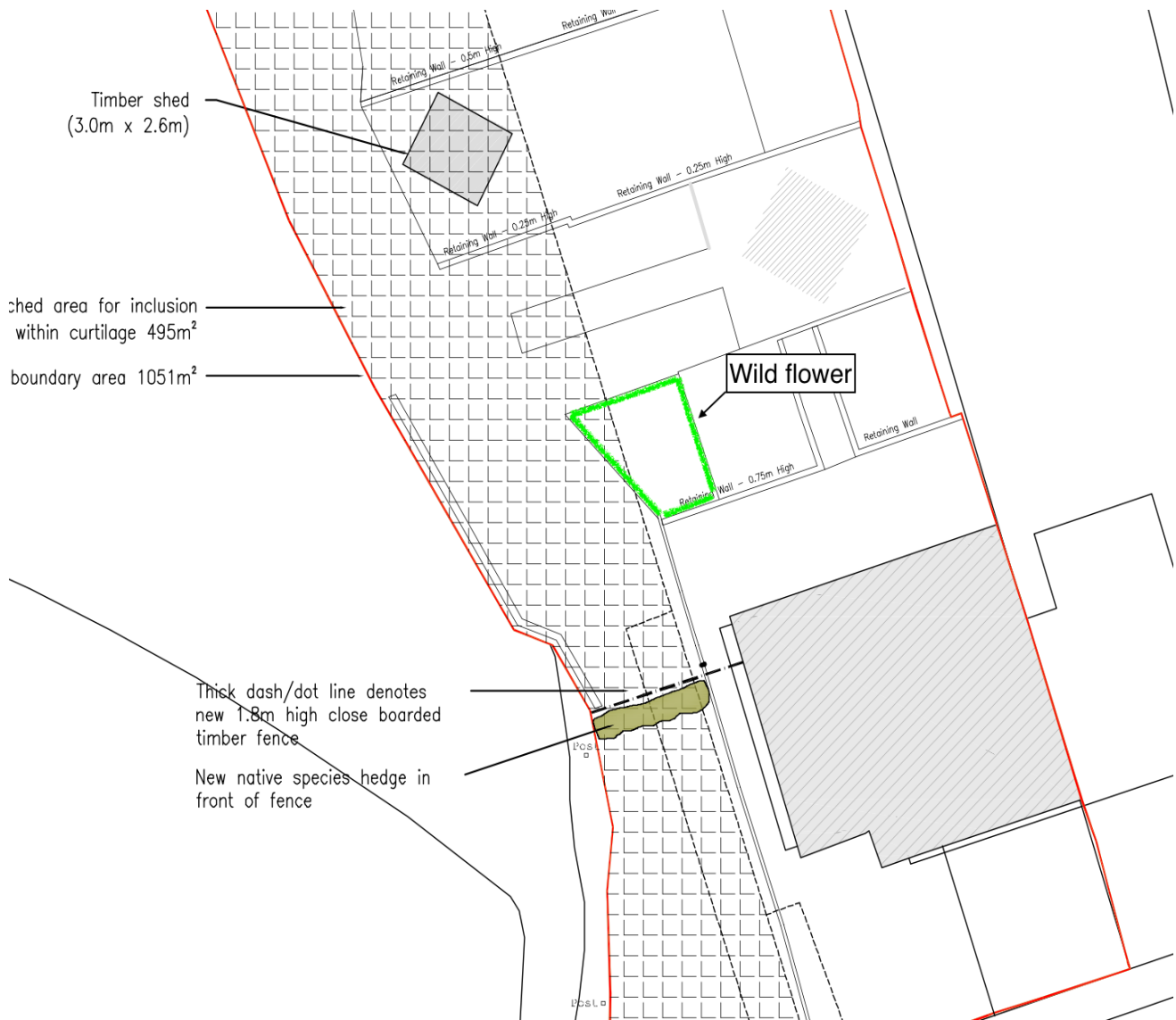
Assessment

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 native hedge and wild flower planting within the site will provide adequate ecological enhancement.

The location of the proposed enhancements are shown in **Figure 1**

Figure 1 (Wild Flower, Native Hedge)



Wild Flower Specification

Method - New and re-spread top soil would be lightly harrowed and raked to create a moderately fine tilth. No fertilizer would be added to any of these planting areas. Areas will be seeded either by hand or using a light tractor mounted spinner or drill with drills at 5 cm centres, 5 mm maximum depth immediately after preparation which would ideally occur in late summer (August-September). The seed rate will be 4g perm²

The seed mixture in new soil areas with comprised of 80:20 mix of native grass and wild flowers as set out in **Table 1** below.

Table 1

Species	% of Total by weight	Notes
Grasses		
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	30	Note: <u>Not</u> <i>Agrostis castellana</i> Low fertility strains only, eg 'Arletta', 'Tracenta' from 2010 STRI Seed Guide
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	20	
<i>Festuca rubra</i> spp <i>rubra</i> ; OR:)	20	Low fertility strains only, eg 'Boreal', 'Franklin' Low fertility strains only, eg 'Agram', 'Banner', 'Koket', 'Wintergreen' (or eg 'Lifalla', 'Raymond', 'Wilma' from 2010 STRI Guide) Low fertility strains only, eg 'Dawson', 'Logro', 'Merlin', 'Oriflame' (or eg 'Lovisa', 'Bornado', 'Garance' from 2010 STRI Guide)
<i>Festuca rubra</i> spp <i>commutata</i> ; OR:)		
<i>Festuca rubra</i> spp <i>litoralis</i>)		
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	5	
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	5	
Wildflowers		
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>)	20	Any six species (minimum) in equal quantities, to a maximum of 15 species. Fodder species (eg legumes) to be supplied as low fertility non-fodder strains only
<i>Centaurea nigra</i>)		
<i>Hypochoeris radicata</i>)		
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>)		
<i>Lathyrus pratense</i>)		
<i>Leontodon autumnalis</i>)		
<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>)		
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>)		
<i>Luzula campestris</i>)		
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>)		
<i>Medicago lupulina</i>)		
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>)		
<i>Potentilla anserina</i>)		
<i>Primula vulgaris</i>)		
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>)		
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>)		
<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>)		
<i>Trifolium campestre</i>)		
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>)		
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>)		
<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>)		
<i>Vicia cracca</i>)		
<i>Vicia sativa</i>)		
<i>Vicia sepium</i>)		

Where a given species listed is not available a suitable alternative should be agreed with the supervising Ecologist. All seed material should be Welsh or at least UK native origin. Seed suppliers should be signatories to the *flora locale* code of practice for collectors, growers and suppliers of native plants and seeds.

Native hedge Specification

2 Rows of 600mm whips Hawthorne (*Crataegus monogyna*) 50%, Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) 20%, Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) 10%, Holly English (*Ilex aquifolium*) 10%, Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) 10%.

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

- Wild Floor / Native hedge Planting - The first planting season following the completion of the development.

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	The application is for the retention of use of land as part of domestic curtilage, retention of garden shed, walls and patio area. The development is located on a occupied land with no ecological features. The proposal avoids damage to any biodiversity and as such accords with the <i>stepwise</i> approach set out in the published advice.	Native hedge and wild flower planting to be provided	Annual Cleaning as set out above	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 maintained
- There is a net benefit to biodiversity as a result of the development.