

Green Infrastructure Statement

Proposed Development: Erection of Three Detached Dwellings at Land to the Rear of 50–52 Brecon Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, SA8 4PD

Applicant: K Davies

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Local Planning Authority: Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

1. Introduction

This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports a full planning application for three detached dwellings on a vacant plot at land to the rear of 50–52 Brecon Road, Pontardawe. It outlines how the proposed development will protect, retain, and enhance local green infrastructure, consistent with Policy EN7 (Green Infrastructure) of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), and the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015). The Statement also aligns with Neath Port Talbot Council's guidance on Addressing the Nature Emergency through the Planning System. This Statement should be read alongside the Arboricultural Planning Statement prepared by ADAS (Ref: 1053354, September 2025) and the submitted Drainage Strategy/SAB application.

2. Existing Site and Context

The site comprises vacant brownfield land, formerly used for garaging and storage. All structures have been demolished, with only hardstandings and tarmac remnants remaining. The site is currently overgrown, with vegetation concentrated along the northern, eastern, and western boundaries. The land slopes upwards from Brecon Road (south) towards the northern edge, with an approximate 8m change in level. It is bordered by Mount Elim Church to the east and residential properties to the north and west.

The ADAS tree survey recorded 17 arboricultural features: 10 individual trees, 6 groups, and 1 hedgerow. Key species include Scots Pine, Pedunculate Oak, Ash, Weeping Willow, Hazel, Holly, Hawthorn, Leyland Cypress, and Cherry Laurel. Tree quality: 1 high quality (Category A), 9 moderate quality (Category B), and 7 low quality (Category C). No ancient or veteran trees were identified.

The Design and Access Statement (Juice Architecture, May 2025) provides additional context: the land historically contained garages (now demolished) with tarmac hardstandings, overgrowth, and vacant brownfield character. It notes the site is visually contained, with limited visibility from Brecon Road, and is accessible only from the south.

Surrounding development is predominantly Victorian housing, with Mount Elim Church to the east forming a landmark. This historic context underpins the opportunity to redevelop the site with high-quality housing while integrating significant green infrastructure improvements.

A Site Investigation (CJ Associates Geotechnical Ltd, Nov 2022) confirmed the site's brownfield character, with made ground and shallow glaciofluvial deposits. Soil testing identified some elevated metals, but overall contamination risk is assessed as Moderate to Low for residential use. No asbestos or significant land gas was detected. Infiltration testing found soakaway drainage unsuitable, supporting the use of an engineered SuDS system with attenuation pond, permeable paving, and rain gardens. These findings have informed the proposed landscaping and SuDS design, ensuring appropriate soil remediation and long-term viability of new planting and biodiversity features.

3. Proposed Development

The proposal includes:

- Construction of three detached dwellings with associated access and parking.
- Formation of a new SuDS attenuation pond with ecological planting.
- Modification of the existing driveway to meet highways standards.

The design has been informed by TAN 12 (Design) and TAN 5 (Nature Conservation), ensuring that green infrastructure is integrated into the layout, with enhancements to biodiversity, amenity, and climate resilience.

4. Tree Retention and Removal

Based on the ADAS Arboricultural Planning Statement:

- One Scots Pine (T4, Category B) will be removed to facilitate construction of Plot 3.
- Partial removal of Group G11 (Hazel, Holly, Rhododendron, and Privet) is required near Plot 1.
- The majority of trees and hedgerows will be retained, including the Pedunculate Oak (T3) and Weeping Willow (T14).

All retained trees will be protected in accordance with BS5837:2012, using protective barriers, ground protection, and monitored excavation in Root Protection Areas (RPAs). An Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan will guide works throughout construction.

5. Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Enhancements

The scheme incorporates a range of measures to protect existing GI and deliver biodiversity net gain:

a) Habitat and Tree Protection

- RPAs respected with supervised works where minor encroachments occur.
- Protective fencing and exclusion zones in place throughout construction.
- Temporary surfacing to avoid soil compaction in compound and parking areas.

b) New Planting

- Replacement and additional planting using native species such as Rowan, Birch, Hazel, and Hawthorn.
- New ornamental and pollinator-friendly planting along dwelling frontages.
- Additional tree planting around dwellings to integrate with landscape and increase canopy cover.

c) Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)

- New attenuation pond with Sun and Shade planting mixes, designed to provide ecological habitat, water storage, and visual amenity.
- Use of permeable paving, rain gardens, and SuDS planters to treat and manage surface water.

d) Wildlife Features

- Bird boxes and bat boxes installed on dwellings and mature retained trees.
- Hedgehog gaps (13 x 13 cm) incorporated in boundary fencing.
- Log piles and small wildlife areas in gardens.

e) Invasive Species Control

- Rhododendron within Group G11 will be controlled to prevent spread, in compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The DAS also highlights landscape design as central to placemaking. It records that only one tree is proposed for removal, with mitigation planting of approved species, and identifies the attenuation pond as both a drainage and amenity feature. The GIS builds on this, detailing the ecological and biodiversity benefits of the pond with Sun and Shade planting, alongside frontage planting and tree provision around the dwellings.

6. Biodiversity and Policy Compliance

The development will:

- Retain and protect the majority of mature boundary trees and hedgerows.
- Replace lost trees with native species and strengthen habitat corridors.
- Deliver biodiversity enhancements consistent with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 duty to 'maintain and enhance biodiversity'.
- Support Neath Port Talbot's Nature Emergency objectives by increasing habitat diversity and ecological connectivity.

The scheme is therefore compliant with:

- Policy EN7 (Green Infrastructure) of the Neath Port Talbot LDP.
- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12).
- TAN 5 (Nature Conservation and Planning).
- TAN 12 (Design).
- The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015).

In addition, the DAS demonstrates how the development contributes to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals by promoting climate resilience, health, and placemaking. It references TAN 18 (Transport) and the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, noting proximity to public transport and pedestrian access, thereby complementing the GI strategy by supporting sustainable mobility alongside green infrastructure.

7. Long-Term Management

All new planting will be maintained for at least five years post-completion, with any failed specimens replaced. Boundary vegetation will be managed to maintain screening and ecological connectivity. Periodic tree inspections will be carried out in line with arboricultural best practice, ensuring long-term health and safety. SuDS features will be maintained under an agreed schedule, following CIRIA guidance.

8. Summary

The proposed development:

- Minimises tree loss (only one Category B tree removed).
- Retains and strengthens boundary vegetation.
- Enhances biodiversity through native planting, habitat creation, and SuDS integration.
- Provides a net biodiversity gain and climate-resilient design.

Accordingly, the scheme demonstrates compliance with local and national policy, representing a sustainable and well-balanced integration of built form and green infrastructure.