



Green Infrastructure Statement

Ty'n Yr Heol House, 1 Henfaes Road, Tonna, SA11 3EQ

A report for Emily Byrne

May 2025

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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Green Infrastructure Statement

Client: Emily Byrne

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The evidence which Herdwick Ecology has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional opinions.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Green Infrastructure (GI) Statement has been prepared by Herdwick Ecology on behalf of Emily Byrne. It accompanies the full planning application for a proposed residential development at Ty'n Yr Heol House, 1 Henfaes Road, Tonna, SA11 3EQ (hereafter referred to as "the Scheme").

Background and Purpose

- 1.2 The purpose of this GI Statement is to describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal and to therefore demonstrate compliance with requirements set out in the updated Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW edition 12 released 07/02/24).
- 1.3 The Statement is informed by the existing reports and statements which accompany this planning application including:
- Site Location Plan
 - Proposed Site Plan
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
 - Bat Survey
 - Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- 1.4 This report has been prepared by Ceri Griffiths, director at Herdwick Ecology, who is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

2.0 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal sets out the legislative, national and local policy and guidance which inform the approach and requirements of the Green Infrastructure Statement. The key policies and overarching principles are summarised below:

- Environment (Wales) Act 2016 - duty for public authorities in the exercise of their functions- the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty. The Act provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure, and this is an important way for local authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty, as set out in the Act, and consider Section 7 species as is appropriate.
- Planning Policy Wales 12 – Chapter 6 of the PPW12 states that a GI Statement must be submitted with all planning applications. The chapter also sets out the standards that the statement should meet. It details the ‘step-wise approach’ on how proposed development should be assessed and evidenced within the statement (see below). The PPW Chapter 6 update also covers trees, woodland, and hedgerows, and sets out the expectations to retain and protect such assets, where they are capable of making a significant contribution to an area. The step-wise
- Technical Advice Note 5- Nature Conservation and Planning (1996) - TAN5 provides national guidance on how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.

Step-wise Approach

2.2 Paragraph 6.4.15 sets out the step-wise approach, which is a means of demonstrating the steps which have been taken towards securing a net benefit for biodiversity. In doing so, planning authorities must also take account of and promote the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following attributes, known as the DECCA Framework:

- Diversity between and within ecosystems;
- the Extent or scale of ecosystems;
- the Condition of ecosystems including their structure and functioning;
- the Connections between and within ecosystems;
- Adaptability of ecosystems including their ability to adapt to, resist and recover from a range of pressures likely to be placed on them through climate change for example.

2.3 In fulfilling this duty, the PPW12 stated that LPA must also have due regard to guidance and species/habitats of Principal Importance that are published under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and The State of Natural Resources Report¹ (SoNaRR) that is published by NRW that provide evidence on a range of environment and natural resources management issues and an

¹ [Chapter 4. Resilient Ecosystems](#)

effective de-risking approach should facilitate greater transparency about environmental risks, appropriate solutions and the potential for wider associated benefits.

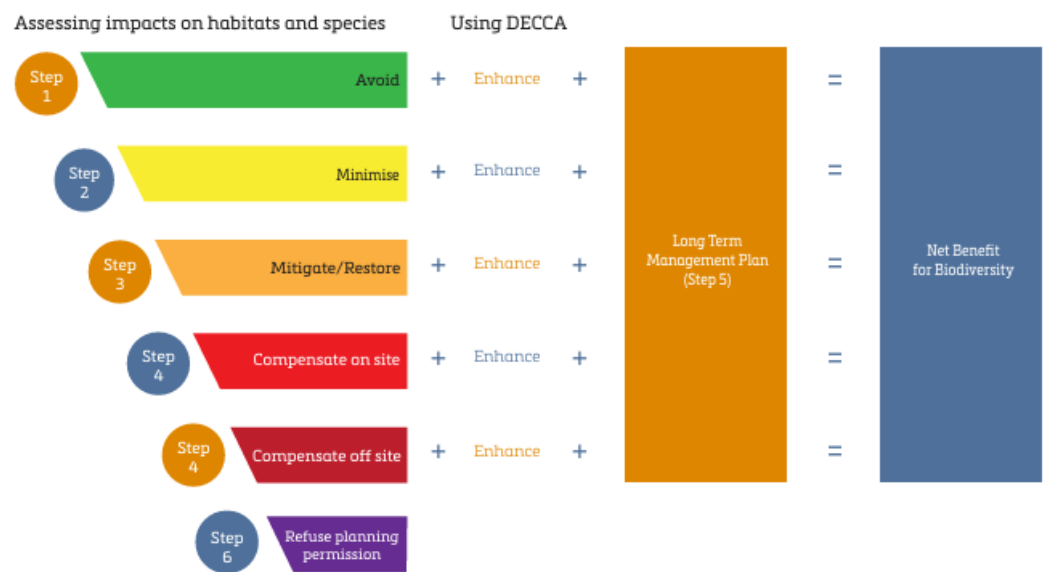


Plate 1: Step-Wise Approach (PPW12, Chapter 16, Figure 12)

3.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Ecology Summary

3.1 The site is situated in the village of Tonna, to the north-east of Neath. It is located to the south of Henfaes Road, along which are numerous residential properties of varying construction and age. A residential development, constructed in the 1990s, lies immediately to the south. The River Neath lies 140m to the northeast, beyond which lies the A465, 400m from the site. The wider landscape comprises agricultural land predominately of pasture, with large swathes of woodland and scattered trees.



Plate 2: Site Location (Google, May 2023)

- 3.2 The site comprises a derelict Grade II listed building and associated stone outbuildings that have collapsed in and overgrown in vegetation. The site was historically formal gardens associated with the property and this is still evident with a number of ornamental species. The site is now overgrown with a mix of ornamental and native scrub and self sown trees, with a large proportion being sycamore, goat willow and alder. There are a number of mature trees, mainly along the road side of the site and western edge. Whilst Japanese Knotweed is present in the locality, none was recorded onsite at the time of the survey. However, there were large stands of Himalayan balsam, mainly along the southern side of the site where the ground had been previously wet, considered likely to be from a drain that runs through the site from the adjacent housing estate. The habitats, namely the mature trees onsite are considered to be **Local ecological importance**.
- 3.3 In terms of fauna, bat activity surveys did not identify any roosts but the site, in particular the mature trees on the northwestern/western side, were well used by foraging bats, with activity dominated by common and soprano pipistrelle. The assemblage of bats using the site is considered to be of **Local ecological importance**. A number of common garden species of bird were heard/seen on site during the surveys and the site is considered to support a common bird assemblage of site ecological importance. No other evidence of any other protected / priority fauna was identified onsite.

Arboricultural Summary

- 3.4 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement was prepared by Hillside Trees Ltd in December 2024. The following trees will be retained onsite.

Tree / group / hedge nos	Common name	Total
T1, T9	Beech	2
T18, T19, T20, T23, G25, T28, T33, G35 (3No.), T42	Sycamore	12
T6	Lime	1
T7, T11	Monkey Puzzle	2
T10	Copper Beech	1
T13, T16, T24, H40	Holly	3
G14	Yew	2
T15	Sweet chestnut	1
T21, T22	Goat willow	2
G29	Horse chestnut	3
T36, T39	Alder	2
T37	Oak	1
Total number retained		32

Plate 3: Trees Retained

- 3.5 The following trees will be removed.

Tree / group no	Common name	Stem diameter in cm at 1.5m	No. Replacement trees needed
G2	Sycamore x 2	41.7	N/A 'U' Category
T3	Sycamore	65.0	6
G4	Sycamore x 2	27.0	4
T5	Sycamore	36.0	3
T8	Beech (dead)	N/A	N/A
T12	Ash	86.0	N/A 'U' Category
T17	Sycamore	46.0	N/A 'U' Category
T26	Elm	75.0	N/A 'U' Category
T27	Goat willow	84.9	8
T31	Sycamore	80.0	N/A 'U' Category
T34	Ash	36.0	N/A 'U' Category
G35	Sycamore x 3	33.0	9
T38	Ash	80.9	N/A 'U' Category
G41	Ash x 3	38.0	N/A 'U' Category
G43	Ash x 2	28.0	N/A 'U' Category

- 3.6 The majority of the trees proposed for removal are of a 'U' category which, under the arboricultural definition means *'Those in such condition that they cannot realistically be retained as living trees in*

the context of the current land use for longer than 10 years'. The remaining trees to be removed are a mix of sycamore and goat willow.

- 3.7 The trees of high arboricultural and amenity value are to be retained. Furthermore, a number of trees - of a native mix - are to be planted within the Ecological Mitigation Zone and around the periphery of the site. Whilst the proposed tree planting does not reach the NPTBC tree replacement ratio of 3:1 it is of note that the trees to be removed are of a poor quality. The proposals, including this statement and EMP, sets out wider ecological enhancements to allow the delivery of the scheme whilst providing, with certainty, that the mitigation/enhancement can be achieved in perpetuity.

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposals comprises the demolition of the derelict buildings onsite to allow for the construction of a new residential development, as illustrated in Figure 3 below.



Plate 3 Proposed Site Layout

- 4.2 In summary, the design has been an iterative and holistic process, accommodating the various comments received during the pre-app following the response from the pre-app and seeking to implement the 'step-wise' and DECCA approach. Whilst the proposals will result in the loss of the willow scrub to the site, the design accommodates a green ecological buffer along the southern and eastern boundaries, as illustrated in the Proposed Site Plan (AEA Ref: Dwg 1566-027, above). This will include the retention and protection of the ditch along the eastern boundary, together with

the retention of the 32 mature trees along the northern, western boundary and wider site. There will be additional native and species rich planting within these buffers to maintain and improve the connectivity around the site. The Ecological Management Plan (EMP) has been prepared to accompany this application that provides details of the planting and on-going management of this area in perpetuity.

Step-wise Approach	Summary of Approach (+ DECCA enhancement)
Avoidance	• Avoids impact to high value (arboriculturally) trees • Avoids impacts to ditch • Avoids impacts to boundary features
Minimisation	• Minimise impacts to retained trees and habitats – RTZ • Minimise impacts from disturbance through CEMP and Ecological Management Plan
Mitigation & Restoration	• Sensitive site clearance (CEMP) and implementation of RTZ • Ecological Mitigation Zone to be implemented via a Ecological Management Plan in perpetuity • Sensitive lighting strategy to maintain a dark corridor around the site
Compensation	• Planting of additional trees to compensate for removal of 23 trees (majority in poor 'U' category) with remaining being sycamore and goat willow. [see additional comments below]
Enhancement	• Creation of a species rich ecological mitigation zone to enhance connectivity • Provides green and species diverse buffer from adjacent residential development • Additional gardens and hedgerow throughout the development area • Enhancement of retained trees through appropriate management • Installation of numerous habitat boxes for species • Removal of invasive species (Himalayan Balsam) which is dominant onsite will improve habitat diversity.

Overall GI and Ecosystem Services Value	The design accommodates new residential units within a careful considered scheme. The ecological mitigation zone will act as a green buffer from the adjacent residential development and provide a connectivity around the site and to habitats beyond. The habitats and numerous species boxes will also provide further opportunities for interaction between the future residents and nature.
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5.0 ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 An Ecological Management Plan has been prepared and accompanies this application. The implemented ecological prescriptions of the EMP will be monitored in order to ensure that opportunities for biodiversity are maximised and maintained post-development and that the proposed biodiversity net gain score can be secured for the long term.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This GI Statement is considered to be appropriate and proportionate to the proposed development and, in conjunction with the EMP, provides thorough detail on the overall enhancement and management of the scheme in accordance with the step-wise approach and DECCA in line with the relevant national and local planning policy and legislation.