Robert Bowen Planning and Development Ltd

Green Infrastructure Assessment & Ecological Enhancement

Llety'r Goff Farm,

Cwm Nant Llwyd Road,

Gellinudd

Pontardawe,

SA8 3JE

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Background

On 11th October 2023[1] 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.

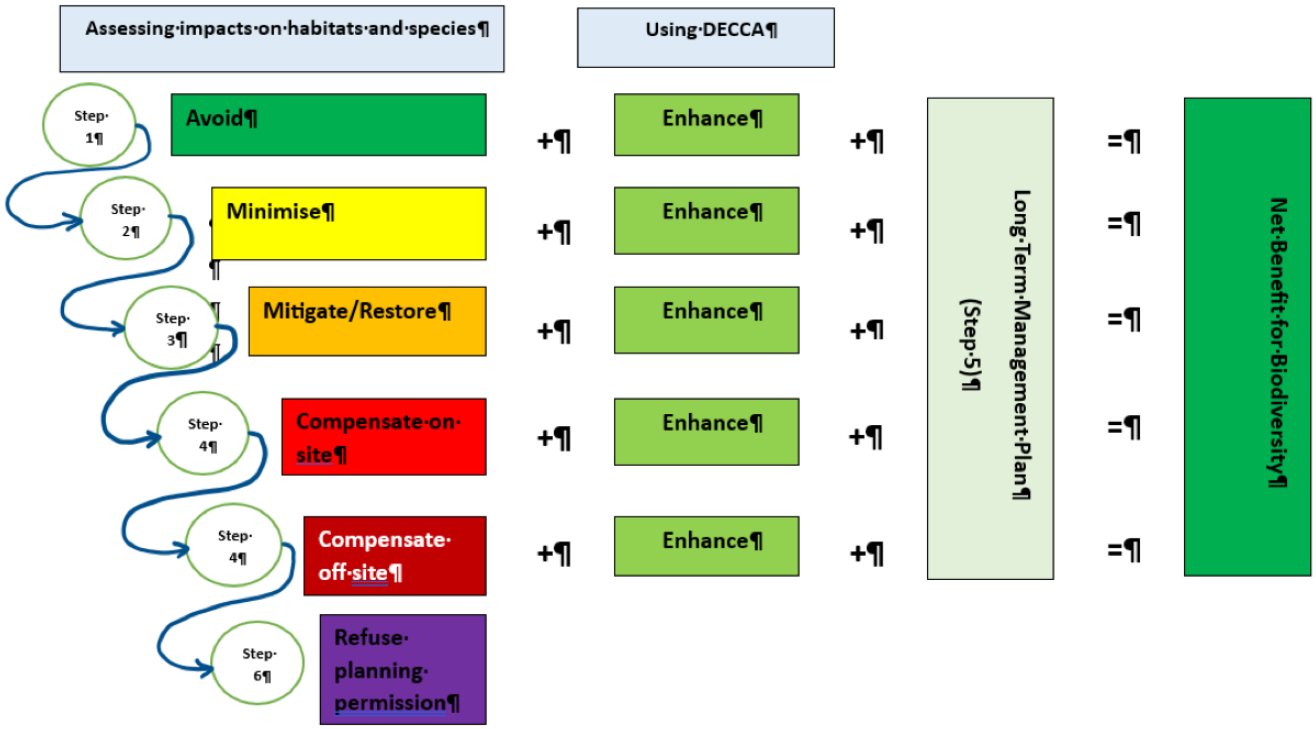
"6.2.6 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be 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 step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.21) has been applied."

Figure 1 below sets out the summary of the stepwise approached as set out in the Annex[2] to the published advice

[1] *https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-10/addressing-the-nature-emergency-through-the-planning-system.pdf*

[2] *https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-10/annex-addressing-the-nature-emergency-through-the-planning-system.pdf*

Figure 1



Proposal

The proposal is for the change of use of existing domestic outbuilding to allow a mixed use comprising uses ancillary to the residential occupation of the host dwelling and a holistic therapy centre including widening of access track.

The Site

The application site is a large detached outbuilding within the extensive residential curtilage of the host dwelling. There are no ecological features within the building the subject of the application.

In order to facilitate the development, the highways section have requested that the southern end of the access track is widen to 4.5m for a distance of 22m. This will necessitate the removal of an existing, non-native, Leylandii hedge.

Proposed Enhancement

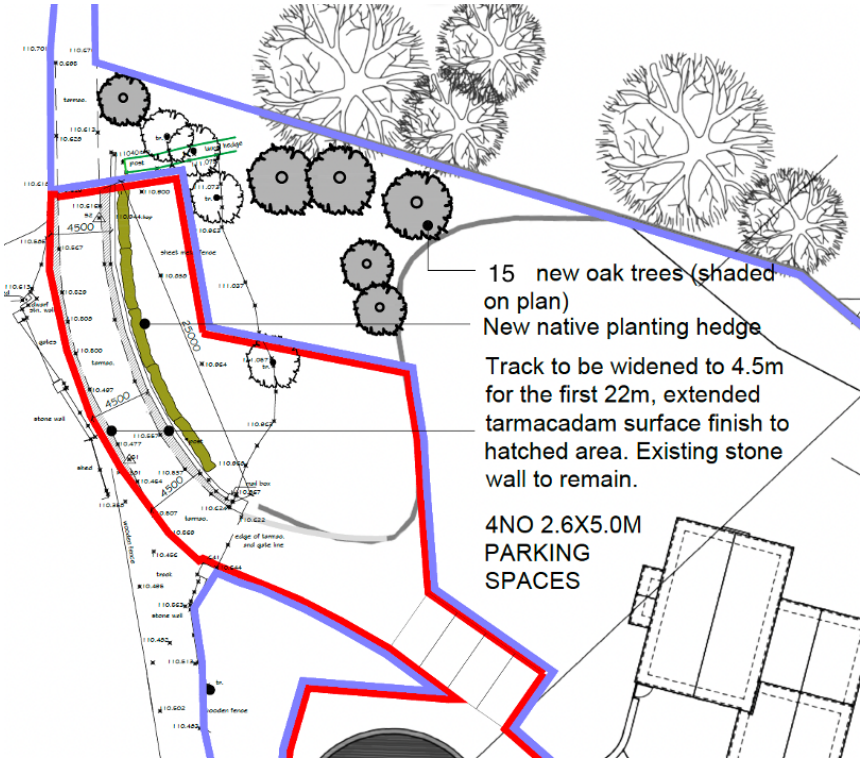
It is accepted that Future Wales now requires ecological enhancement however, it is submitted that any ecological enhancement must be proportional to the development proposed.

Given the scale of the proposal it is considered that the provision following will provide adequate ecological enhancement.

1. 22m of replacement native hedge - *(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%.)*
2. Native trees – Oak *(Quercus robur)*
3. Bat box – located on existing dwelling

Details of the location of the proposed enhancements are set out below

Figure 1

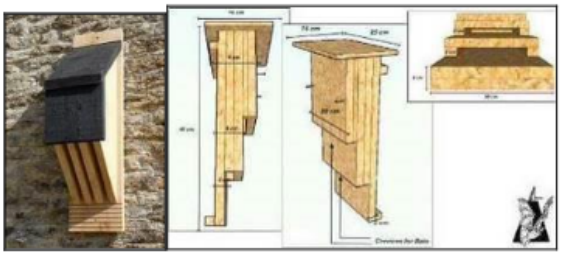


Box Specifications

Bat Boxes

Top: From left to right, the in-wall Schwegler 1FE, the tree mounted 1FF and the multi season 1WQ. The bottom image shows the 1FR in situ.

Right: The Harlech WoodStone bat box offers excellent insulation with a minimum of condensation for roosting bats. WoodStone® is a mixture of sawdust from FSC wood sources and concrete, and it is designed to last for years. It is breathable so there will be no problems with condensation and Woodstone maintains a consistent temperature inside, providing excellent insulation for roosting bats. **Left:** The Beaumaris bat box is made entirely from Woodstone, a robust material comprising concrete and wood fibres. The Beaumaris box has a single narrow cavity which makes it suitable for crevice roosting bats such as the common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius' pipistrelle, Brandt's bat and whiskered bat. The interior of the box has a rough surface for bats to cling to and the front of the box features a subtle but attractive imprint of a bat in flight. Suitable for attaching to external walls and should be sited as high up on the façade as possible, at a height of at least 3m from the ground. Avoid siting under artificial lights. Bats prefer to change roosts to benefit from varying ambient temperatures, so bat boxes should ideally be clustered in small groups. **Below:** The Vincent Pro bat box (left) and the Kent Bat Box (right)



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 it 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

- Bat Boxes - Within one month of the completion of works.
- Hedge and Trees – Within 12 months of the date of the consent.

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**	No	Na	Na	Na
2.	**Minimise**	The proposed development relates to the use of an existing building which has no ecological. The development will require the removal of 22m of non-native hedge. The proposal minimises damage to any biodiversity and as such accords with the *stepwise* approach set out in the published advice.	22m of new native hedge. Bat box to be provided 15 Nos. native Trees	Cleaning as set out above. To be set out in landscaping scheme	Yes
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 maintenance free
- There is a net benefit to biodiversity as a result of the development.