

Planning Statement / Green Infrastructure Statement

5 Groves Road, Neath



June 2026

Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for alterations and energy efficiency improvements to the existing mixed-use property at 5 Groves Road, Neath.

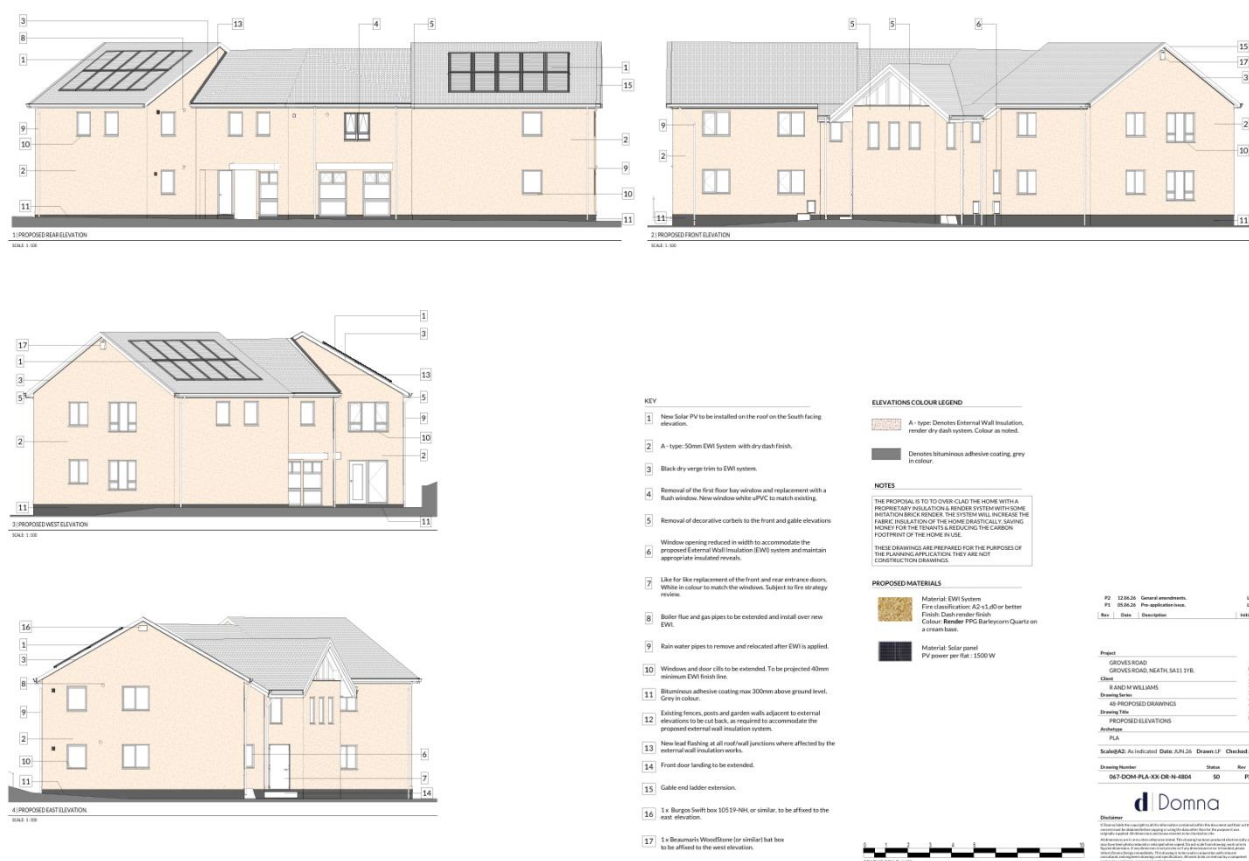
The building comprises five residential flats and one office unit, owned and managed by Stori Housing Association. The proposed works are primarily focused on improving the thermal efficiency, longevity, and environmental performance of the building, alongside modest external alterations.

Site Context

The site lies within a well-established residential area characterised by traditional properties, many of which are externally rendered. The building is not listed or within a conservation area.

Whilst the site itself contains limited soft landscaping, it forms part of a wider urban environment where opportunities for large-scale green infrastructure are constrained. The proposals therefore adopt a proportionate approach, integrating environmental enhancements within the fabric of the building.





Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been developed to align with the overarching principles of both National and Local Planning Policy. Details of the most relevant policies are set out below;

National Planning Policy

- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, February 2021)**

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and promotes sustainable development. It places strong emphasis on:

- Maximising energy efficiency in existing buildings
 - Supporting renewable energy generation
 - Delivering green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement
 - Promoting a “retrofit-first” approach to existing buildings

- Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)**

Future Wales identifies the need to reduce carbon emissions and supports developments that:

- Improve the energy performance of existing buildings
 - Incorporate renewable energy technologies
 - Contribute to climate resilience and decarbonisation

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

This Act requires development to contribute to the seven well-being goals, particularly:

- A resilient Wales
 - A healthier Wales
 - A globally responsible Wales

The proposed improvements to energy efficiency and living conditions directly support these objectives.

- **Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)**

TAN 12 promotes high-quality design that enhances the character of an area while delivering sustainability and functionality. The proposal improves the appearance and performance of the building in a manner consistent with its context.

- **Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)**

TAN 5 requires that development protects and enhances biodiversity. The inclusion of integrated bird boxes ensures the scheme contributes positively to ecological interests.

Local Planning Policy

At a local level, the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan, contains a policy framework that enacts upon the National commitments to provide for decarbonisation and within which the following policies are of relevance:

Policy SP1 – Climate Change

This strategic policy supports development that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, increases energy efficiency, and promotes renewable energy. The proposed insulation upgrades and solar PV installation directly contribute to these objectives.

Policy SP2 – Health and Wellbeing

This policy seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Enhancing thermal comfort and reducing fuel poverty through building upgrades aligns with this policy.

Policy SP15 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Development proposals should protect, conserve, enhance and manage biodiversity. The inclusion of bird boxes within the gable elevations provides measurable ecological enhancement in accordance with this requirement.

Policy BE1 – Design

This policy requires development to achieve high-quality design that complements the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The use of dash render and sensitive alterations ensures the building integrates with the local streetscape.

Policy EN8 – Pollution and Land Stability

This policy ensures that development does not result in unacceptable impacts from pollution or land instability. The proposed works are limited to building improvements and do not give rise to adverse effects.

Material Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

A key objective of the development is to significantly reduce the building's carbon footprint. The combination of external wall insulation, improved glazing, loft insulation, and renewable energy generation through solar panels will contribute to reduced energy demand and operational emissions.

This aligns with Welsh Government objectives to decarbonise existing housing stock and addresses fuel poverty concerns by improving energy efficiency for residents. On this basis, and taking into account the abovementioned policy framework, the development is acceptable as a matter of principle.

Design and Visual Impact

The existing building is finished in yellow brickwork, which contrasts with a number of surrounding properties within Groves Road that are finished in render, including pebbledash treatments, as visible within the immediate street scene.

The proposed installation of External Wall Insulation (EWI) will be finished in a pebbledash render, carefully selected to reflect the prevailing material palette in the surrounding area. As demonstrated by adjacent properties, including those in close proximity to the application site, rendered finishes form a common and established characteristic of the local context.

The application site is therefore not introducing a new or incongruous material; rather, it is aligning the building more closely with the surrounding built context.

Furthermore, the use of render as part of an EWI system is a functional and policy-supported intervention, allowing for significant improvements in thermal performance while maintaining an appropriate external appearance.

The proposed roof alterations are limited to the gable ends and remain proportionate to the original form of the building. Solar photovoltaic panels will be installed in a low-profile manner to minimise visual prominence.

In respect of the windows, as shown on the submitted drawings, the overall arrangement will remain largely unchanged. The primary alteration relates to the removal of the first-floor bay window on the rear elevation, which will be replaced with a standard flush window to match the existing fenestration elsewhere within the building. This element is located on the rear elevation and is not visible from the public realm. Furthermore, the existing bay window does not represent a significant architectural feature and its replacement is considered appropriate in order to achieve improved thermal performance and consistency in the building's external appearance.

Overall, the development is considered to respond positively to the character of the area and complies with the requirements of Policy BE1 (Design) of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Impact upon Residential Amenity

The proposed works will not result in any adverse impacts on neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, daylight, or outlook. Instead, the improvements will enhance internal living conditions for occupants through improved thermal comfort and reduced energy costs.

Green Infrastructure and Ecological Enhancement

Existing Green Infrastructure

Although predominantly developed, the site benefits from existing green infrastructure features.

To the front of the site, there is a well-established hedgerow which provides a strong visual edge to the street and contributes positively to local character, as well as offering habitat and foraging opportunities for urban wildlife. In addition, the site includes grassed areas and areas of tree cover along the site boundaries, which provide further ecological value and contribute to urban green connectivity.

These features collectively form a modest but valuable component of green infrastructure within the immediate area. Importantly, the proposals seek to retain all existing green infrastructure in situ, with no removal or alteration to the hedgerow, grassed areas, or trees.



Existing hedgerow which forms a strong green boundary feature to the front of the site to be retained and maintained

Proposed Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Enhancements

Given the constrained and developed nature of the site, opportunities for new landscape planting are limited. However, the proposed development adopts a proportionate and policy-compliant approach by integrating green infrastructure within the building fabric itself with inclusion of ecological enhancement.

In line with the Ecology Report recommendations the scheme includes the provision of 1 x bat box to be affixed to the West Elevation of the property as indicated on the submitted drawings. In addition 1 x swift nest brick is to be affixed to the East Elevation of the property again as indicated on the submitted drawings. These features will provide ecological benefit supporting bats and providing dedicated nesting opportunities for urban bird species, such as swifts and house sparrows, supporting local biodiversity and contributing to ecological resilience.

In addition, the wider environmental performance improvements associated with the development form an important component of green infrastructure delivery. The installation of external wall insulation, loft insulation, and solar photovoltaic panels will significantly reduce the building's energy demand and operational carbon emissions. This contributes to urban climate regulation and resource efficiency, which are key functions of green infrastructure as defined by Planning Policy Wales.

Green Infrastructure Summary

The proposed development adopts a retain and enhance approach to green infrastructure by:

- Retaining existing on-site features

- Introducing biodiversity enhancements through bird / bat boxes
- Delivering wider environmental benefits through improved energy efficiency and renewable energy generation

The scheme therefore complies with national and local policy requirements to maintain and enhance green infrastructure, representing a balanced and appropriate response for a constrained urban site complying with Planning Policy Wales and Local Planning Policy referenced above.

Conclusion

The proposed works represent a sustainable upgrade to the existing building with focus on energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions, and end enhancing living conditions for residents. External changes are modest with no negative design impacts or adverse impacts upon neighbouring amenity. Green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement has been integrated into the scheme in a proportionate manner that is fully compliance with national and local planning policy.