

Green Infrastructure Statement

Timber Shed
Top House Farm
Big Arowry
Hanmer
Whitchurch
SY13 3EQ

Conversion of traditional agricultural building into a residential dwelling house and associated works

Mr T Hanmer

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1. Policy Background

1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports a full planning application for the conversion of a traditional agricultural building into a residential dwelling house at The Timber Shed, Top House Farm, Big Arowry, Hanmer, Whitchurch, SY13 3EQ.

1.2 This GIS aims to respond to the requirements of Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024). This states:

"6.2.11 The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes.

6.2.12 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 6.4.15) has been applied.

6.2.13 There are multiple ways of incorporating green infrastructure, depending on the needs and opportunities a site presents, and the green infrastructure assessment should be referred to, as appropriate, in order to ascertain local priorities. Landscaping, green roofs, grass verges, sustainable drainage and gardens are examples of individual design measures that can have wider cumulative benefits, particularly in relation to biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems as well as in securing the other desired environmental qualities of places. Wider landscape measures, such as the creation of species rich meadows, woodlands and the improvement of linkages between areas of biodiversity value should be considered for larger scale development. In most cases the green infrastructure statement should highlight any baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, including but not limited to, habitats and species surveys, arboricultural surveys and assessments, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans, open space assessments and green space provision and active travel links".

1.3 The 'step-wise approach', as outlined below, demonstrates the sequential approach that has been adopted as part of the proposed development to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimised, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. In addition, enhancement has been secured by delivering a net biodiversity benefit on-site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact.

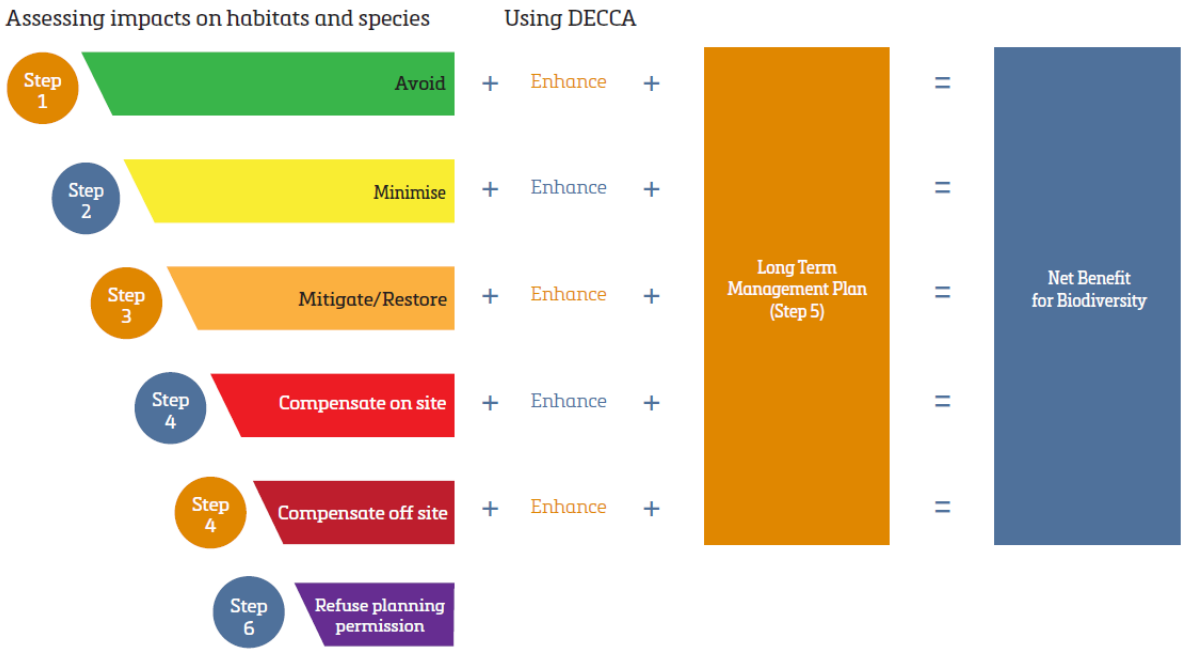


Figure 1: A summary of the step-wise approach taken from Chapter 6 of PPW (Ed. 12, 2024)

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the conversion of the existing building into a single open-market residential dwelling house.

2.2 The proposed development would involve the sympathetic conversion of the existing building, utilising existing window and door openings wherever possible so as to retain the building's existing rural character as much as possible. The overall and intrinsic scale and design/character of the existing building would remain as existing as a result of the proposed development; whilst the building would be given a viable long-term use to secure its future.

2.3 The development would involve the use of existing and reclaimed corrugated sheeting on the external elevations, and a new natural slate roof is proposed atop the existing timber roof structure. The proposed roof light would be 'conservation

style' and would be flush fitting with the surrounding south-eastern roof plane. New windows and doors are proposed to match the style of the existing units which are in a poor state of repair. Existing openings are to be used where possible as shown on the submitted existing and proposed elevation drawings. It is anticipated that final details concerning the proposed external materials and finishes could be secured and controlled through suitably worded conditions.

2.4 The application also proposes the creation of a new small-scale residential garden space, which would be closely related in spatial terms to the host building. Landscaping would involve the planting of a new native species hedgerow, and the planting of new native species trees as detailed on the submitted Net Biodiversity Benefit (NBB) Plan.

2.5 It is proposed to improve and widen the existing field access into the site in order to provide a suitable vehicular access into the site from the public highway. Access visibility would be improved as a consequence of these works. These works are fully detailed within the submitted Highway Plan. Two new car parking spaces, together with an appropriate parking/turning area are proposed on the site to serve the proposed development.

3. Green Infrastructure Baseline

3.1 The application site presently relates to an existing agricultural building and wider areas of hardstanding and grassland forming part of the former farmyard at Top House Farm.

3.2 The planning application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. The submitted report confirms the existing building provides negligible potential as a bat roost, and that the proposed works would not have any impact upon bat species.

3.3 There is also no evidence of breeding birds using the building.

3.4 In terms of potential impacts upon Great Crested Newt (GCN), whilst a small area of grassland would be affected by the development, it is noted the vast majority of land to be affected comprises existing areas of concrete hardstanding. As a result, the submitted report concludes that impacts upon GCN are unlikely. In any case, the report sets-out suitable GCN Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) which will be fully adhered to throughout the course of the proposed works. No further survey work has been identified as being required.

3.5 In addition, the application site is not located within or near to any statutory or non-statutory designated ecological sites, and therefore the proposed development does not have any potential to cause an impact upon protected sites.

3.6 Therefore, the application site is currently considered to be of relatively low ecological value based upon the results and conclusions of the PEA.

4. The Green Infrastructure Strategy

4.1 The approach to the design and siting of the proposed development has fully taken into account potential environmental and green infrastructure impacts. Every effort has been taken during the design process to minimise and avoid impacts upon existing green infrastructure on the site.

4.2 It is proposed that a new native species hedgerow would be planted to the south and west of the subject building, to enclose the proposed new residential garden area. Details of the proposed new hedgerow planting are contained within the submitted Biodiversity Enhancement Plan submitted as part of the planning application. The plan also details the proposed planting of new native species trees on-site to further add to the NBB proposals.

4.3 The above measures would provide a substantial net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) effect over and above the baseline.

4.4 The step-wise approach has been followed as impacts upon habitats and species would be avoided through the siting and design of the proposal. The development would also not prejudice connectivity between nearby habitat for protected species and wider biodiversity.

4.5 Off-site ecological mitigation will not be required as there will not be any impacts upon protected species on the site.

5. Conclusion

5.1 It is clear the proposed development would not cause any impacts upon existing green infrastructure, biodiversity, ecosystem resilience or protected species. The proposal has fully followed the step-wise approach as prescribed by Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, and the development would provide a net benefit for biodiversity which is commensurate to the scale of the proposals.