GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

CHANGE OF USE FROM D1 SCHOOL TO MULTI-USE SITE INCLUDING A1, A3, B1, D1 AND D2 USES.

Former Pontfadog County Primary School, Pontfadog, Wrexham, LL20 7AH





INTRODUCTION

This Green Infrastructure Statement is submitted to assist consideration of a planning application for a proposed change of use is from a D1 (non-residential institution) use to a mixed-use site including A1 (retail), A3 (food and drink), B1 (business), D1 (non-residential) and D2 (assembly and leisure) at former Pontfadog County Primary School (PCPS).

The land and buildings were purchased by four local residents to save the building from demolition and are now leased for 25 years to a local community interest company (Pontfadog ForestSchool Community Interest Company-PFSCIC).

PROPOSED SCHEME

The proposed change of use of buildings and land relates to the previous school buildings and playing field to the rear of the school.

The application area includes existing buildings and a playing field comprising grass, tarmac car park and hedgeline to all boundaries.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

This statement is prepared within the requirement of the step wise approach to Green Infrastructure within the Revised Planning Policy Wales Version 12.

The site has is a previous school building and intensively used playing field. There are no designations on the site nor protected species. The subject application relates only to the change of use of buildings and land, no development is proposed to the roof, the building will undergo repair and refurbishment in order to bring forward the change of use.

One of the proposed changes of use is as a Forest School, the biodiversity improvements brought forward within this GIS will relate to the implementation of a Forest School, and our future forest school pupils will help deliver the proposals. Education gave the school its history, biodiversity learnings will provide part of its future. Our Forest School will use the school grounds but also retreat to the shared space in the main school building when needed. Forest School activities will be combined with holiday clubs, giving environmental education an important role in the building. This was supported in our recent consultation exercise in February 2025.

The scheme is brought forward with no impact to biodiversity interests, the requirements of Para 6.4.15(2) within Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 12 are met.

On site mitigation is brought forward with the proposed scheme, meeting the requirements of Para 6.4.15(3b), as outlined below.

HAY MEADOW

Part of the school playing field will be managed as a hay meadow. The area will be established from local sources of green hay. The new meadow area will be left to grow untouched through the spring and summer and cut back for haymaking in late August/early September. Our Forest School pupils will help create and manage the meadow.

Meadows have been disappearing from the Welsh landscape since the 1930s, Since 1930, 97% of Wales' wildflower meadows were lost due to heavy fertiliser use and early hay crops, which meant 63% of butterflies were also lost.



A local supply of green hay might be the Chirk Castle meadow illustrated above.

TREE AND HEDGEROW PLANTING

We will plant a new hedgerow along our westerly boundary and on our northerly boundary. Within the school we already have a number of mature and semi mature trees, we will recoppice our hazel on the northern boundary and plant a hazel and willow maze. These proposals will be taken forward as part of Forest Schools.



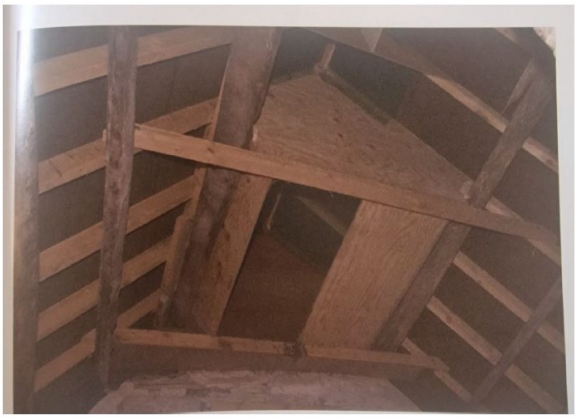




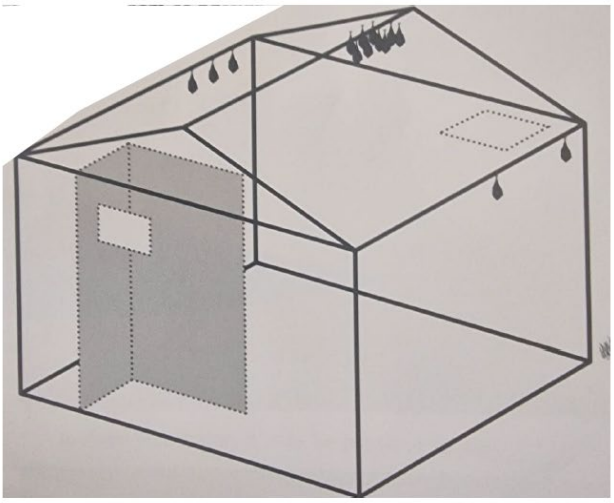
BATS AND BIRD NEW HABITAT

We will bring forward a new bat roost for the school, located in the central storage area of the old school toilet block.

The central storage area will be dedicated as a bat roost incorporating a lesser horseshoe bat hot box to encourage bat roosting and hibernation.



A ground floor chimney/baffle will be built within the storage spaces also to encourage lesser horseshoe bats, as illustrated below. All illustrations taken from the lesser horseshoe conservation handbook (Schofield 2008).



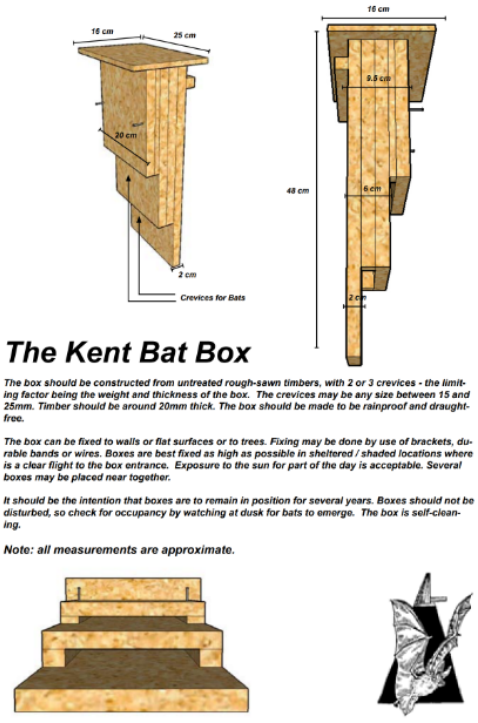






Bat tower habitat will be built within the building storage area.

Externally, two kent bat boxes will be erected at the boundary of the site.



Bird box construction will form part of the Forest School activities. A number of new bird boxes will be erected on the building and in existing mature trees, we will refurbish previous boxes put into the woodland.

This GIS confirms a minimum of 6 new bird boxes will be brought forward, and two existing rebuilt, thus a total of 8 bird boxes will be new habitat.


An old school bird box will be refurbished.

The proposed net biodiversity benefit will be brought forward alongside an environmental education programme as part of its new life as a community resource. We consider this to be a significant improvement in that present currently on site, and meets the proportionality requirements of Para 6.4.16 within PPW 12.

We consider that the proposed scheme in this GIS can be achieved by an implementation condition and for this to remain as an in-perpetuity requirement associated with the proposed change of use.

Thank you for your consideration.

