

Mr and Mrs C Bexhell

Pistyll Y Garth

Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

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Produced by



www.wildbanksconservation.com

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Wildbanks Conservation was commissioned to prepare a document that satisfies the below conditions of Planning permission – LGC P/2020/0091, decision date of 27/07/2020. For the construction of a car parking space (retrospective). To in summary prepare a landscaping scheme for the development and an ecological management plan and ecological method statement to protect any feature of ecological/wildlife interest during the completion of the development and appropriate management in the short term.

1.2 A single car parking space (thereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) has been created measuring 2.4m x 4.5m, dug into the hill side at Pistyll Y Garth, Glyn Ceiriog, Wrexham. The floor of the car parking space is compacted crushed stone. A timber retaining wall has been installed to retain the bank from collapse into the car parking space. A structural engineers report has identified that additional vertical support posts (n=20) are required to adequately support the retaining wall. The inclusion of the posts on the inside of the timber walls (i.e within the car parking space) is the only additional work required to complete the development.

1.3 This report aims to satisfy planning condition 3, 4, 5 and 6

3. Within three months of the date of this permission, full details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme together with a timescale for implementation of works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

4. The landscaping scheme submitted and approved in connection with condition no. 3 shall be fully implemented in all respects within the agreed timescale and in strict accordance with the approved scheme.

5. The landscaping scheme as carried out in connection with condition no. 4 shall be retained for a minimum of 5 years. Within this timescale, any planting becoming severely damaged or seriously diseased, or is in poor physiological condition and/or are removed without the written permission of the Local Planning Authority shall be replaced with trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted and within a timescale all to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

6. Within 3 months of the date of this permission a short-term Ecological Management Plan and Ecological Method Statement, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This information shall demonstrate how existing features of ecological / wildlife interest will be protected, identify any areas of compensation and demonstrate management in the short-term. The recommendations as approved shall be fully implemented in accordance with timescales to be agreed in writing before any part of the development commences on site.

2.0 Survey Methodology

Walkover Habitat Assessment

- 2.1 The car parking space footprint, including the walls is less than 15m². No work is required outside of the car parking space. The site was surveyed on 3rd August 2020 using a revised Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2010). This involved a systematic walk over of the site to classify the habitat types present. If required target notes were used to record features or habitats of particular interest, as well as any sightings or evidence of protected or notable species.
- 2.2 Consideration was also given to the potential presence of species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). Such species included, but was not limited to GCN, badger, bats and bird species.
- 2.3 Evidence of any invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) was also recorded where present.
- 2.4 Review of proposed site plans and elevations was also carried out

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

Walk-over Habitat Assessment

- 3.1 The car parking space is built into the bank of the garden of Pistyll Y Garth. The Site is to the north of Glyn Ceiriog village, on the hillside above it.
- 3.2 The car parking space internally measures 2.4m x 4.5m. The footprint, including the walls is less than 15m². The car parking space is entirely covered with crushed compacted stone. The walls are constructed of timber. No vegetation is present within the site. Immediately to the West and North of the Site is the garden of Pistyll Y Garth including a timber garden shed, to the East a public footpath and woodland beyond. To the south is hardstanding in the form of the public highway. Surrounding the property, the wider land is primarily woodland with agricultural fields and occasional properties. The eastern wall of the car parking place is immediately adjacent to the boundary of the property (stock fence). As can be seen form plate 2



Plate 1: Car parking space at Pistyll Y Garth



Plate 2: The eastern boundary of the car parking space showing the properties boundary (stock fence) immediately adjacent to the car port

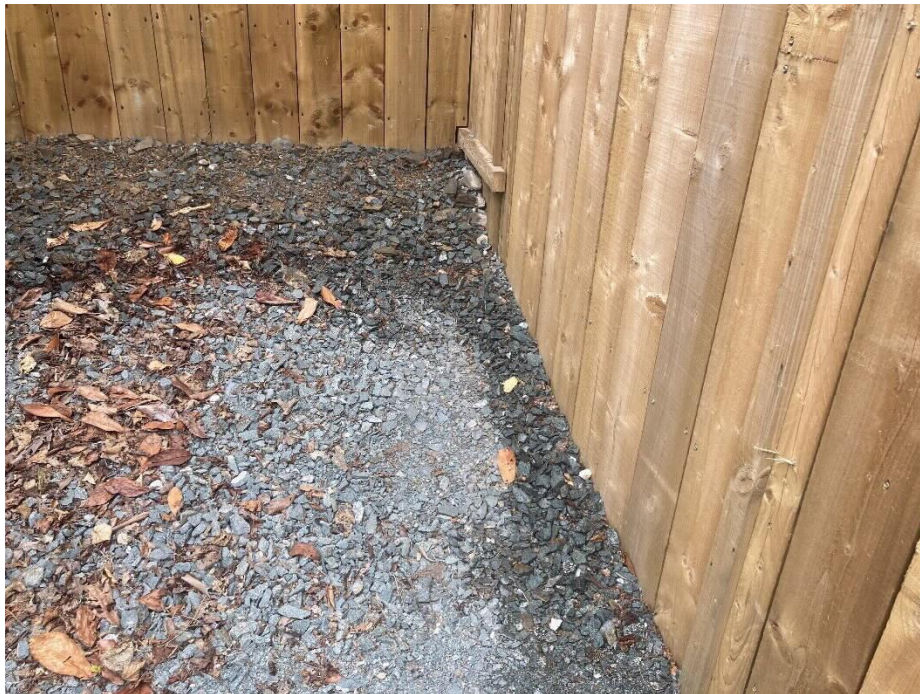


Plate 3: Compacted hardcore floor of the car parking space and timber walls

Protected Species

- 3.3 Consideration was given to the potential presence of protected species within the Site, including great crested newts, bats, reptiles and breeding birds. The Site consists of compacted hardstanding and vertical timber walls. The compacted hardcore extends to the base of the timber as can be seen from plate 3 above. The timber extends beneath ground. The crushed stone is crushed granite 40mm to dust. It does not provide cracks or crevices within it due to the mixture of sizes of stones/particles within it. It creates a fully solid base.
- 3.4 The timber walls are tightly aligned and do not provide cracks suitable for nesting birds or bats. No opportunities for protected species exist within the Site. Furthermore very few opportunities for any wildlife exist within the car parking place.

4.0 Hard and Soft Landscaping Scheme

- 4.1 It is acknowledged that the car parking space and in particular the timber walls do provide a stark view and could be landscaped to soften its appearance from the highway and to improve its ecological value. As such the below improvements will be made.
- The car parking place timber will be painted with a timber preservative the same colour as the existing shed. This will be a dark brown colour which will enable the timber to blend into the garden more readily.
 - The area to the left of the car parking space will be appropriately prepared to sustain the planting suggested below. Top soil will be added to the ground and 'worked in'. No addition of compost or fertiliser is required.
 - On the left hand side of the car parking space, below the shed the following plants will be planted a) buddleia davidii purple, b) native honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, c) trailing ivy *Hedera helix* ssp. *hibernica*. See plate 4 below for indicative locations and growth. The honeysuckle will be trained to grow across the rafters of the car parking space. The ivy will be trained to cascade down the timbers of the wall.
 - A timber planter will be installed at the back of the car parking space on the existing ledge and 3 x native honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* planted and trained to ramble vertically up the fence. Horizontal wires will be installed to allow the honeysuckle to ramble

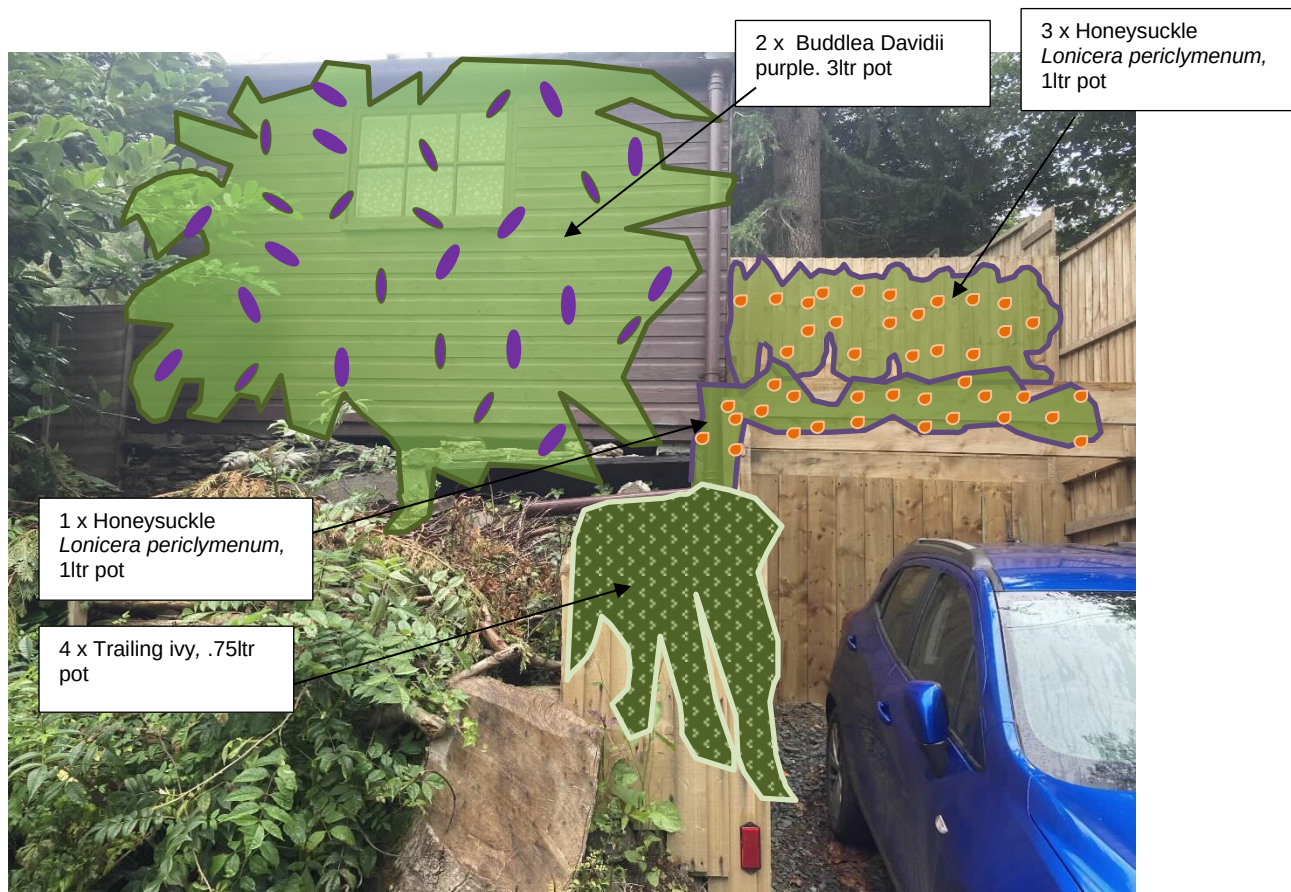


Plate 4: indicative locations and predicted growth of planting scheme.

- 4.2 There is no space to provide planting the East of the car parking space due to the proximity of the properties boundary (see plate 2)
- 4.3 There are no timing constraints to when the landscaping scheme could be carried out. It is aimed that the landscaping scheme will be implemented in full within 2 weeks of written acceptance from Wrexham Council that this Landscape and Ecological Management Plan is acceptable.
- 4.4 It is anticipated that the required maintenance for this planting will be minimal as the majority of plants are planted within soil where maintenance is less necessary. The planting of the three honeysuckle in the planter at the back of the car parking place would be more susceptible to drought if not maintained carefully. Regular watering may be required to aid establishment in the first year. This is considered to be relatively unlikely due to the time of year they would be planted, ie late summer/ autumn as rainfall amounts will increase and establishment should be straightforward.

- 4.5 Mr and Mrs Bexhell understand that the maintenance of this planting scheme for 5 years is their responsibility and is a condition of the planning permission.

5.0 Ecological Method Statement and Ecological Management Plan

Existing site summary

- 5.1 Overall the site currently offers very few opportunities for wildlife, due to the small size of the site (less than 15m²) and that it is made up of compacted stone floor and solid vertical timber walls providing negligible features for wildlife.

Works to be carried out

- 5.2 The car parking space has already been constructed, the remaining works required are the installation of 20 support posts into the ground to support the timber walls. These will be installed by hand, the holes dug by hand and the post then concreted in and the holes back filled as required. This work will be carried out on the receipt of acceptance of this Plan from Wrexham Council.
- 5.3 The below points, provided they are followed in full, provide a suitable method for the installation of the posts demonstrating how existing features of ecological/wildlife interest will be protected. There are no features of ecological or wildlife interest within the car parking place. However, a precautionary approach will be carried out when undertaking the works.

Ecological Method Statement

- 5.4 The below points should be adhered to throughout the remaining works at the Site
- All workers should note that the site is within a rural area and wild animals may appear in places that they are not anticipated. Care must be taken when excavating the holes in the unlikely event such creatures are found
 - Behind the vertical timber boards (on the outside of the car parking place), where areas of loose rubble or where cavities have formed, these will be removed by hand and filled with compacted soil to prevent the entrapment of reptiles, in particular slow worm which are known to be present locally.
 - If any protected species are found works must stop immediately and advice sort from Wrexham Council or Wildbanks Conservation.
 - Excavations for the posts must not be carried out using small plant. Holes must be dug by hand.

- Arising from the hole should ideally be spread evenly and thinly within the garden of Pistyll Y Garth.
- Posts will be installed and concreted into the holes on the same day as the holes dug. No holes should be left open overnight to avoid wild animals falling into the holes
- If a hole has to be left overnight due to unforeseen circumstances (highly unlikely and not intended) then it should be covered with a board and a stick should be placed within it so that small mammals and amphibians have the opportunity to escape. It should also be carefully checked using torches for any animals that might be present before works continue in the hole.

5.5 If all of the above points are carried out the risk of harm to wildlife is minimal and the works can continue without further assistance from an ecologist.

Ecological Management Plan

5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework recommends the local planning policy should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains on biodiversity where possible.

5.7 Habitat improvement works have been tailored to species that are likely to be within the area surrounding the site. No ecological surveys have been carried out and none are required. The recommendations are based on our experience of what would be beneficial in this setting and proportionate to the development size and impact.

5.8 The below list of actions provide compensation for the creation of a car parking place.

- The planting scheme above has been designed to provide native nectar rich plants. Buddlea (although not native) and native honeysuckle provide flowers suitable for a range of butterflies and other pollinating insects such as hoverflies and bees.
- Once the honeysuckle on the back wall has matured and is covering the wall, it will then provide suitable nesting places for small birds
- The native trailing ivy will provide nectar, pollen and berries as an essential food source for insects and birds during autumn and winter when little else is about. It also provides shelter for insects, birds and small mammals.

- A bird box suitable for tit species (25-32mm hole) will be installed on the trees overlooking the car parking place or on the fence above the car parking place. It will be positioned out of prevailing winds and rain and direct sunshine for large parts of the day. It should be a minimum of 3m in height.

5.9 The planting and bird box will be maintained for a period of 5 years. Bird boxes with nests present should be cleared out in the winter. No disturbance to the box should be made between March and October

5.10 If all of the above points are carried out existing features of ecological/wildlife interest will be protected and compensation measures will be managed effectively in the short term. No additional assistance from an ecologist will be required