

Green Infrastructure Statement

Croxton Farm
Hamner
Whitchurch
SY13 3BS

Proposed barn conversion scheme to provide two residential dwellings and all associated works including demolition of agricultural buildings, installation of a package treatment plant and upgrading of existing access

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1. Policy Background

1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports a full planning application made to Wrexham County Borough Council ("The Local Planning Authority") for the residential conversion of two redundant agricultural buildings and all associated works including the demolition of agricultural buildings, the installation of a package treatment plant and the upgrading of an existing field access at Croxton Farm, Hamner, Whitchurch, SY13 3BS ("the Application Site").

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.

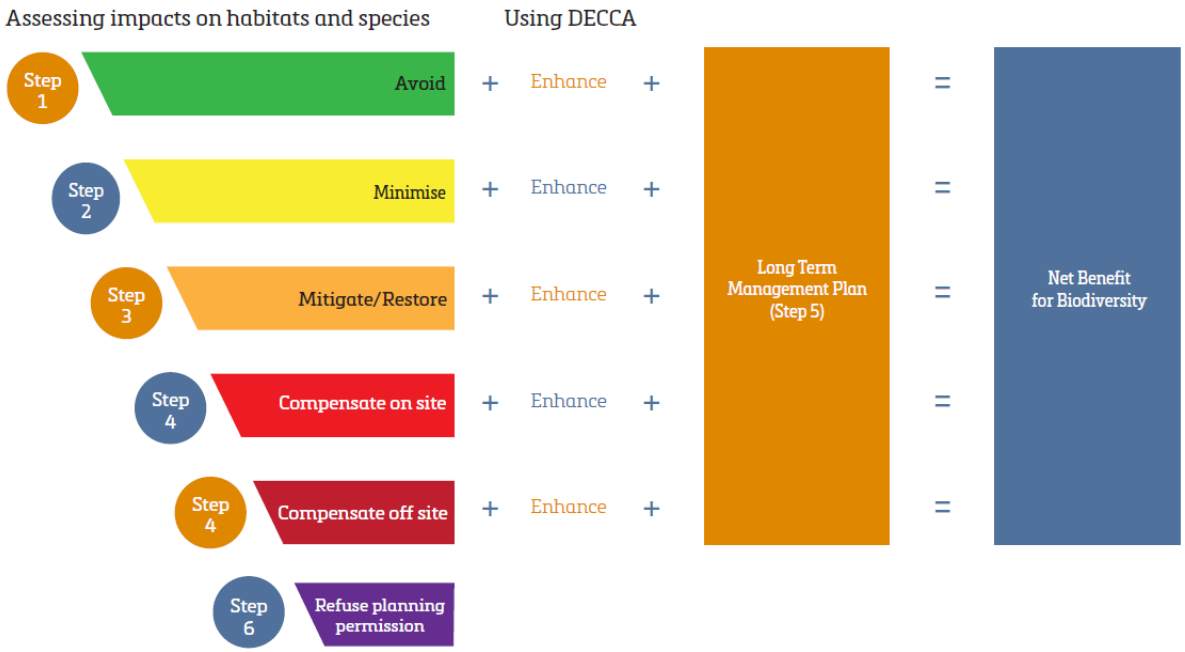


Figure 1: A summary of the step-wise approach taken from Chapter 6 of PPW (Ed. 12, 2024)

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 Planning permission is sought for the residential conversion of two redundant agricultural buildings (Buildings 1 and 2) and all associated works including the demolition of agricultural buildings, the installation of a package treatment plant and the upgrading of an existing field access at Croxton Farm. The proposed development will result in the provision of two open-market barn conversions, a shared courtyard area, private gardens and a shared driveway.

2.2 Buildings 3 and 4 are proposed to be demolished in their entirety.

2.3 A new shared driveway will be created, linking the application site to an improved existing vehicular access off the class C public highway, to the west of the site. No access will be gained into or from the application site directly from the A525 public highway.

2.4 The proposed development will involve the sympathetic conversion of the existing traditional buildings on the site into 2x residential dwellings, utilising existing window and door openings wherever possible so as to retain the buildings' existing rural character. The overall and intrinsic scale and design/character of the existing buildings will remain as existing as a result of the proposed development; whilst the buildings will be given a viable long-term use to secure their future.

2.5 Building 1 will provide a two-storey barn conversion containing four bedrooms. No extensions are proposed to the existing building. New windows will be simplistic in design and without glazing bars – maintaining the existing non-domestic appearance of the barn. Existing openings, including cart shed and threshing barn doors, will be subdivided or repaired sympathetically, while hayloft, stable, and shippon doors will be retained or repaired like-for-like. A limited number of roof lights are proposed on the north and south roof planes, vertically aligned and top-hung. These are required in order to make the building fit-for-purpose as residential accommodation. Internally, key spaces include the former stable and double-height threshing areas, which will be fully utilised. A wood-burning stove with a small black flue is proposed for the north elevation. All new doors and windows will be of appropriate materials, such as timber with simple ironmongery or painted timber/aluminium, with details capable of being secured by condition in consultation with the Authority's Conservation Officer.

2.6 Building 2 will provide a single-storey barn conversion containing four bedrooms. Again, a limited number of new conservation roof lights are proposed within each roof plane of the building to achieve sufficient light levels internally. On the western elevation, a small oak-framed extension is also proposed, in-place of a former part of the building which has been demolished at some point in the building's history. A new small, black, flue is proposed to serve a new wood-burning stove within the barn conversion. The existing asbestos roof will be removed and replaced with slate, delivering a clear heritage benefit.

2.7 Two new private garden areas will be created, on land which is currently developed – largely replacing the footprint of Buildings 3 and 4, which are to be demolished and removed from the site. Both gardens would thus be closely related in spatial and visual terms to the host barn conversions and their creation will not involve any new development onto areas of adjoining agricultural land.

2.8 The application site is to be comprehensively landscaped with native species planting; with full details of the proposed planting being included on the submitted Biodiversity Enhancement Plan.

2.9 Vehicular access to the application site will be via an existing field gate lying to the west of the application site (which will be substantially improved and widened) and a new shared private drive which follows the route of an existing farm access track. The proposed access will achieve sufficient levels of visibility to serve the

proposed development of 2x residential dwellings – with full details shown on the submitted Proposed Access Plan. No access from the application site directly onto the A525 public highway will be available, noting that visibility from this existing access to the farmhouse is severely sub-standard. The development as proposed will have no impact upon the use of the existing access onto the A525.

2.10 Parking provision will be provided for each of the proposed barn conversions – with four spaces per unit as shown on the submitted Proposed Block Plan. This is in excess of the maximum standards outlined within Wrexham Local Planning Guidance Note 16 (Parking), which confirms that 3 spaces should be provided for a 3/4 bedroom home.

3. Green Infrastructure Baseline

3.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) accompanies the planning application and confirms the proposed development site has an area of approximately 0.27ha and mainly comprises agricultural barn buildings, developed land, and modified grassland. In addition, one Sycamore tree and some small lengths of native species hedgerow are also present on the site.

3.2 Given the nature of the application site, being an exiting developed farm yard with farm buildings (which have been noted are not in use by any protected species), the site's green infrastructure baseline is considered to be low at present.

4. The Green Infrastructure Strategy

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

4.2 Indeed, the submitted ecological information (provided by UES) confirms that on-site ecological impacts are considered to be unlikely given the nature of the development site and the scale and nature of the proposed development.

4.3 Whilst the presence of on-site native species hedgerows and a Sycamore tree is noted, all of these features will be retained on-site as part of the proposed development, meaning their green infrastructure value will not be lost.

4.4 In order to achieve a net-benefit for biodiversity on the site, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, it is proposed to implement the following measures as part of the development:

- New native species hedgerow planting around the proposed garden areas; full details can be viewed on Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 004.

- Planting of 7x new native species trees on-site; full details can be viewed on Drawing No: 80087 / GH / 004.

4.5 The above measures will provide a substantial net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) effect over and above the site's low green infrastructure baseline.

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

4.7 Off-site ecological mitigation will not be required as there will not be any impacts upon protected species on the site; however RAMs are outlined within the accompanying PEA report, and adherence to these can be secured through the use of appropriately worded planning conditions.

5. Conclusion

5.1 It is clear the proposed development will 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 will provide a net benefit for biodiversity which is commensurate to the scale of the proposals.