Green Infrastructure Statement.

Application for a modular building providing accommodation for a Flying Start Childcare expansion at All Saints' Primary School, Gresford.

Applicant: The Governors of All Saints' Church in Wales VA School
Site Address: All Saints' Primary School, School Hill, Gresford, Wrexham LL12 8RW Marshlands
Local Planning Authority: Wrexham County Borough Council

---

1. Introduction

This Green Infrastructure Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application made to Wrexham County Borough Council for a modular building providing accommodation for a Flying Start Childcare expansion at All Saints' Primary School in Wrexham.

The purpose of this statement is to respond to the requirements set out in Chapter 6 of the Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024) and Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

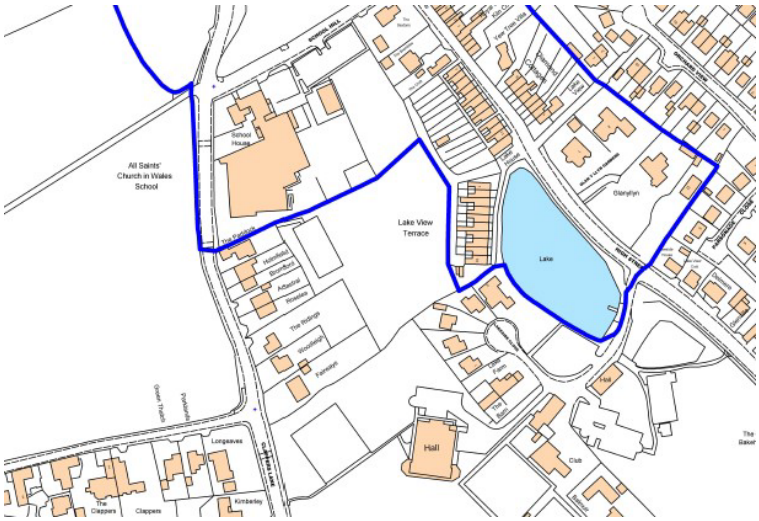
Section 6.2.12 of PPW12 requires that a Green Infrastructure Statement should be submitted with all planning applications, to show that development has a net benefit to biodiversity and green infrastructure and should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.

This Green Infrastructure Statement should be read in conjunction with the Planning Design and Access Statement and architectural plans submitted under the proposal application.

2. Site and Development Description

The school site is located partially within the Gresford Conservation Area, directly to the south of the 13th C. Parish Church of All Saints and is bounded to the south and east by residential properties and to the west by open agricultural land.

The original school was built on the current site in 1874 and comprised a master's house and single schoolroom, built in the Gothic Revival Style and was Grade 2 listed in 1996. This was extended in 1902 in a Victorian red brick style to provide additional classrooms and in 1970 and 1999 the school was further extended with a single storey infill between the original School house and the later Victorian buildings.



School Site and Gresford Conservation Area Boundaries

2. Site and Development Description – continued.

The application seeks full planning permission for a single storey modular building, The proposal arises from an identified increased demand for high quality early years childcare provision and family support services within the local community.

It is intended that the proposed modular building will provide an inclusive, safe and nurturing environment designed to meet the needs of young children and families within the local area and its location within the school community will also support greater engagement with parents and carers and improve accessibility to key services.

The application site is within the established grounds of All Saints' Primary School and is located to the northeast of the main school buildings and to the north of the school playing fields on an area of poor quality maintained grassland which is of little value to wildlife or visual amenity. Given the nature of this Green Infrastructure feature and the limited opportunities that it currently provides for biodiversity or connectivity in the wider landscape, it is considered that the loss of the area of modified grassland will not result in any significant impact on the existing Green Infrastructure of the site.

As an expansion of the existing childcare provision, the site for the modular building has been chosen to take advantage of it's close proximity to both the current Early Years Childcare setting and to the main school buildings and playground, helping the young children to feel comfortable and integrated into the school surroundings and to support their future transition into the school. The use of the proposal site for the modular building will also not affect the existing sports pitch provision at the school.



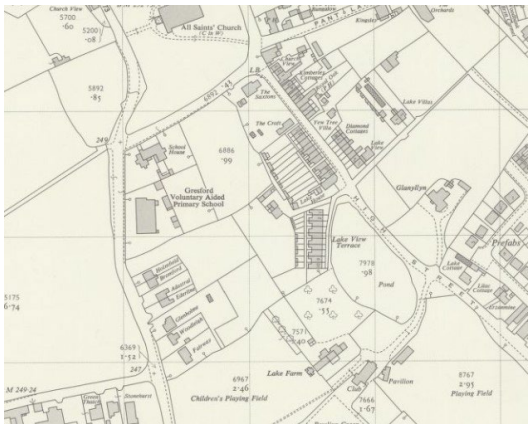
Google Earth image showing the proposal site

3. Historical Green Infrastructure Assets

An Ordnance Survey Plan from 1900 shows predominately 19th century housing concentrated around 3 sides of the churchyard spreading south eastwards along High Street towards Gresford Pond, with the original School building surrounded by agricultural land to both the west and to the south towards Lake Farm, with typical small field enclosures and hedge lines.



OS Plan 1900



OS Plan 1961

Lake Farm and the remaining agricultural land further south of the school site were later altered to a community leisure use which included a recreation ground with tennis courts and a bowling green and led to the subsequent loss of many of the original field enclosures and hedge lines in order to create larger open green spaces suitable for sports use.

An aerial photograph probably taken in the early 1970's clearly shows the original field enclosures and hedge lines defining the school site at that time, in particular the original field boundary between the school site and the residential mid Victorian terrace properties on High Street. The eastern site boundary follows the line of the original field boundary extending from School Hill in a south easterly direction towards Lake House before turning in a westerly direction towards Clappers Lane to enclose the original school site. A small length of the hedgerow remains between School Hill and the rear boundary of 'The Sextons' the residential property on the corner of School Hill and High Street, the remaining hedge having been removed in the recent past.



Aerial Site Photograph of Gresford, circa 1970 photo 86-c-0087 © CPAT, 2013

4. Existing Green Infrastructure Assets

The site for the modular building is currently laid to poor quality modified grassland which is of is of little value to wildlife or visual amenity and given the small scale nature of this Green Infrastructure feature and the limited opportunities that it currently provides for biodiversity or connectivity in the wider landscape, it is considered that the loss of the area of poor quality grassland will not result in any significant impact on the existing Green Infrastructure of the site.



Proposal site facing northeast

The existing Green Infrastructure Assets adjacent to the proposal site are therefore currently limited to the remaining section of hedge line which originally extended from east to west across the full width of the school site and currently forms the boundary between the school playground and the playing fields. Evidence from historical OS Plans and the aerial photograph of the site shows that this hedge line formed part of the original field enclosure and local land management system and is also still used along its full length to define the southern boundary of the Gresford Conservation Area. Part of the hedge line forming the southern boundary of the proposal site also bounds the Forest School area with a mix of mature Common Holly and Hawthorn trees maintaining the original hedge line.

A section of the original hedge line, close to Clappers Lane was removed in the 1980's to enable the development of the remaining plot of land between the existing mid-century housing development to the south and the school site boundary and a further section was later removed to provide access between the school playground and the netball court and play area constructed on the school playing field. This section of hedge line will be replaced under works relating to planning approval reference P/2025/0754.

Other Green Infrastructure Assets adjacent on the school site include an enclosed School Garden area with a polytunnel greenhouse and raised planting beds to grow plants and vegetables for the school kitchen and which helps to provide hands-on learning opportunities for the pupils about nature, ecosystems, and conservation.

In addition, the pupils have also recently helped to plant a small School Orchard and have also installed a large number of bird and bat boxes together with several hedgehog houses around the school site.

4. Existing Green Infrastructure Assets – continued.

The historical OS Plans and the aerial photograph of the site also show that the original field boundary and hedge line between the school site and the mid Victorian terrace properties on High Street originally extended the full length of the boundary from School Hill to the Forest School area and its junction with the field enclosure and hedge line running from east to west across the school site. The majority of the eastern boundary hedge line was removed fairly recently, with only a short 20m section of hedge line remaining adjacent to the car park on School Hill.



Remaining mature hedge to school car park boundary on School Hill

Two large Category A mature Common Copper Beech trees (Fagus sylvatica purpurea), located around 20m west of the proposal site provide shelter and shade for the pupils on the school playground, and a mature Common Whitebeam (Sorbus aria) on the eastern boundary of the school site will all be retained and where indicated will be protected during the installation works by suitable tree protection fencing as recommended in the Tree 21 Tree Protection Plan 260430-1.0-MCBGS-TPP-LH.





Existing Common Copper Beech trees and Common Whitebeam tree

5. Proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy

The existing amenity grass on the proposal site is of little value to wildlife or visual amenity and given the small scale nature of this GI feature and the limited opportunities that it currently provides for biodiversity or connectivity in the wider landscape, it is considered that the loss of the poor quality grassland will not result in any significant impact on the existing Green Infrastructure of the site.

Since the second world war, hedgerows have been removed at a much faster rate than they have been planted, with around 118,000 miles of hedgerows lost since the 1950's, due in part to the implications of modern farming and development. Hedgerow removal has been identified as a factor in the decline of many plant and animal species which benefit from the habitat and source of food these hedges create.

Native hedgerows act as wildlife corridors through the landscape by connecting isolated habitats and provide a safe pathway for animals like hedgehogs, bats and insects to move between areas for feeding, breeding and shelter and also help create a robust ecosystem that offers a variety of food sources and nesting opportunities, helping to boost local biodiversity.

In order to achieve a net benefit for biodiversity on the proposal site in accordance with Chapter 6 of the Planning Policy Wales, it is proposed that the following measures will be implemented as part of the development proposals to help contribute towards enhancement of the school site and to increase biodiversity and improve connectivity opportunities within the wider landscape.

- It is proposed that the section of existing hedge line that has been removed along the eastern boundary of the school site will be replanted with a random mix of Hawthorn, Hazel, Dogwood, Dog Rose and Crab Apple saplings planted in two staggered rows @ 500mm centres with Silver Birch, Rowan and Wild Cherry tree planting at random centres in order to reinstate the original hedge line and wildlife corridor, as indicated on drawing 5035 PL-04.





Site photographs showing the location of the new hedge planting.

- In addition to the existing birdboxes around the school site, the School will also install 4No additional tree sparrow boxes on the existing Hawthorn trees bounding the Forest School area, as indicated on drawing 5035 PL-04.
  There are also future plans for a Wildlife Pond in this area.

5. Proposed Green Infrastructure Strategy - continued.

To facilitate the proposed measures, the school have applied to the Woodland Trust, under the "Trees for Schools and Communities Initiative", and have ordered sufficient 'Hedgerow' packs of native saplings to be delivered to the school to be able to reinstate the original hedge line to the length of the eastern boundary. The packs will be from the Hedgerow Pack and will consist of native species saplings of between 20-60cm in height and include, a mix of Hawthorn, Hazel, Dogwood, Dog Rose and Crab Apple, interplanted with Silver Birch, Rowan and Wild Cherry trees from a Woodland Trust Copse Pack.

Any saplings remaining from the packs after planting the proposed measures, will be planted elsewhere on the school site in small groups to help reinforce existing tree planting groups.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not result in any negative impacts to Green Infrastructure at the site or in the wider environment and positive benefits would be delivered in accordance with the principles set out in Chapter 6 of the Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024) and Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which will result in a biodiversity net gain and Green Infrastructure benefits across the school site.

HORSLEY HUBER ARCHITECTS LTD
July 2026