SKERRYVORE DESIGNS

Green Infrastructure Statement

10 Japonica Close,

Newport,

NP20 6 JQ

CHANGE OF USE TO RESIDENTIAL, ERECTION OF FENCING AND OTHER ASSOCIATED WORKS

(RETROSPECTIVE)

Introduction

This Green Infrastructure Statement supports the retrospective application for the change of use from to residential, erection of fencing and other associated works. It has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and local policy, which seek to ensure that all development proposals contribute positively to the natural environment.

Although the scale of the development is small, every application is expected to demonstrate how biodiversity and green infrastructure have been considered and enhanced as part of the design. This statement explains how the scheme has followed the “stepwise approach” to deliver a measurable net gain for ecology and green infrastructure on site.

Site and submission history

The client submitted the first application on 27th June 2025, and was refused on grounds of:

1. By reason of its location, scale and poor design, the development has a significant adverse impact upon interests of acknowledged importance, namely the Pilton Vale Green Corridor environmental space, community amenity and wellbeing, existing landscape features, visual amenity and the appearance of the host property and streetscene. No information has been provided to mitigate these objections. This is contrary to Policies CE3, GP2 and GP6 of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026 (Adopted January 2015).

2. The development will have a significant adverse impact upon interests of acknowledged importance, namely existing tree and landscape features and no Green Infrastructure Statement or ecological information has been submitted to mitigate this objection to the detriment of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. This is contrary to Policy SP1, SP9 and GP5 of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (adopted January 2015), Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) and Policy 9 (Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure) of Future Wales and Paragraph 7.2 of the Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Development Sites Supplementary Planning Guidance

The green infrastructure statement relates to point 2 but also the first point mentions Pilton Green Vale, and as discussed in further detail in the Design and Access Statement, this statement also contains the information to show that we are upgrading the ecology of the “environmental space’.

Understanding the Site and Its Context

The site is an existing residential property set within a typical suburban plot, with a hardstanding parking area to the front, a private garden to the rear, and no known ecological constraints, within its boundaries. The submission relates to the area to the side of the existing property:

The new area of land now owned by the client used to be a flat area of land to the front and heavily slopes away to the rear, with heavy clay soil and grass to the front, and a small section of brambles (overgrowing from the section to the rear of the houses that is not maintained). The rear half of the new land floods significantly, as shown below:

As this site is retrospective, we will look at works completed as the site has already been enhanced but there are also further proposed works that help further increase the biodiversity.

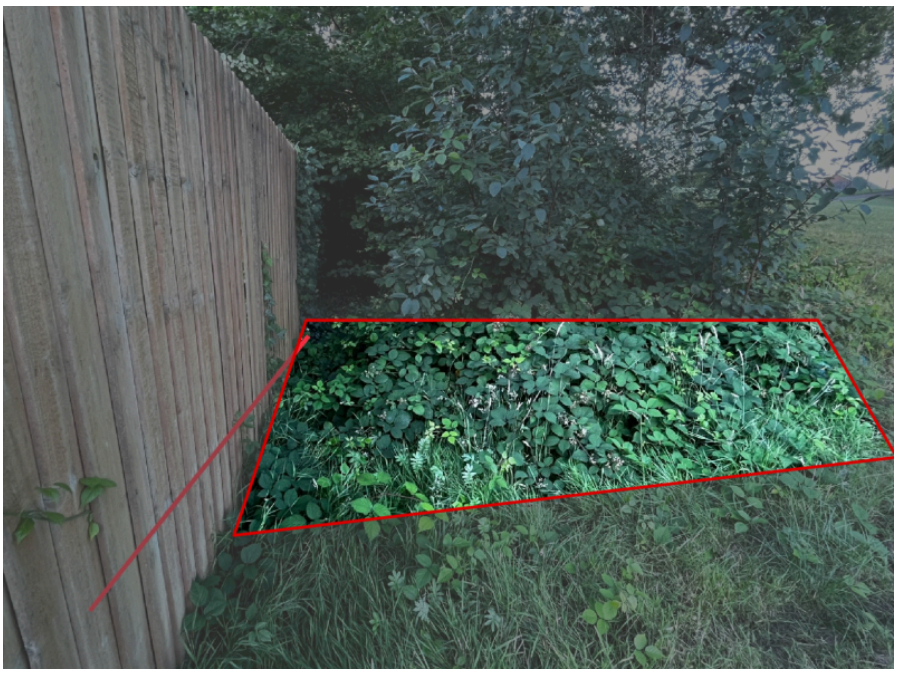
Stepwise Approach

Avoidance

The scheme avoids any direct impact on existing high quality green infrastructure or biodiversity features. The tree on the boundary of the site, which sits on the public land, but has roots and overhang on the site has remained standing, protected and has a healthier habitat due to bees, and removal of flood risk.

Minimisation

Low quality green infrastructure is lost as the driveway to the front covers existing grass. The area to the rear of the existing plot is brambles and pioneer species of trees (hard to determine due to access restriction), and this area has been left intact apart from 1m of bramble growth at low level. It should be noted these bramble bushes have not been removed, they are branch overspill as shown below:



Mitigation

High quality spaces are protected and low quality has been lost, however large enhancement has been carried out as mitigation for any potential indirect disturbance and to ensure a large net gain.

Compensation and Enhancement - EXISTING

To enhance site biodiversity and meet the requirements of local and national planning policy, the following green infrastructure enhancements are proposed:

- Pond and stream
    - Short term flooding with road run off is environmentally negative. Below shows the historic flooding:

The new system is a pond, stream and soakaway. The pond and stream provide still and moving water which covers all insects and birds needs. Below the stream is a 1 to 2 cubic metre soakaway to help with the flooding:

- Laurel hedge
    - This was chosen to provide a natural boundary treatment that creates privacy but also provide habitats and food for wildlife, such as birds, bees, and butterflies

These simple but effective measures ensure that the development delivers an ecological enhancement appropriate to the scale and setting of the project.

Compensation and Enhancement - PROPOSED

To enhance site biodiversity and meet the requirements of local and national planning policy, the following green infrastructure enhancements are proposed:

- 2.5 sq.m of Lavender shall be planted within planting season.
    - One of the reasons Bugloss is such a good plant is that it flowers during a midsummer gap. There is surprisingly little forage about and honey bee colonies are at their biggest and hungriest. Look around in June/July and you'll be surprised how little colour you see in gardens or countryside. Professor Francis Ratnieks, one of our leading honey bee scientists, is very keen on helping colonies through this period. Ask Francis for the best plant for gardeners to grow for honey bees and he will tell you without hesitation that it's lavender. Why? Lavenders are certainly rich in nectar, but the most important thing about them is that they flower through the gap. Research suggests that the larger lavender cultivars are the best for bees. You can find varieties from fragrant white to luscious dark purple. Look for the hardier and less picky Lavandula angustifolia or Lavandin x intermedia cultivars for individual plants or to make a lovely hedge. - HABITAT AID

- Hedge to side of fence
    - Hawthorn - "Common hawthorn can support hundreds of other species. It is the foodplant for caterpillars of moths, including the hawthorn, orchard ermine, pear leaf blister, rhomboid tortrix, light emerald, lackey, vapourer, fruitlet-mining tortrix, small eggar and lappet moths. Its flowers are eaten by dormice and provide nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinating insects. The haws are rich in antioxidants and are eaten by migrating birds, such as redwings, fieldfares and thrushes, as well as small mammals.
      The dense, thorny foliage makes fantastic nesting shelter for many species of bird." - Woodland trust.

- Bee hotel
    - A Bee Box upon the building or within the curtilage of the property in a south or south east facing direction sited at a minimum height of 0.75m above ground level and of a minimum volume of 1200 cubic cm

These simple but effective measures ensure that the development delivers an ecological enhancement appropriate to the scale and setting of the project.

A Coherent Strategy

We are looking for a coherent strategy that has an aim and a direction, not simply passing the lowest bar with copy and paste of aimless additions.

Our strategy is simple, providing a measured and cohesive approach to helping the UK's A1 environmental and ecological problem - Bees.

There are 3 main plants: New hedge, existing tree(s) and new flowers. There, all provide flowers at different times of the year, Willow provides early bee season flowers, the Hawthorn comes in at mid season and the lavender comes at late season for the bees. With this food availability and a new habitat, we have greatly increased the environmental factors through synergy of our choices.

Happy accidents

The client added a stream and a pond, with a soakaway below to help the drainage problems. Flooding in species that cannot accept it is a negative, so we have reduced flooding with this measure, however, the addition of Hawthorn and willows, means we have added flood resistant plants. Greater helping the small scale eco system in the area and therefore benefitting the wider network of Wales.

Management and Maintenance

The client has done the existing works before any planning issues and is a keen gardener and also had the environment in mind before any requirements. He has maintained and kept the existing features in a good state. And they will also look to do so to the proposed works.

The hedges will be trimmed due to height restrictions from planning issues, the tree is owned and protected by the client, the stream and pond (and soakaway) work without maintenance any lack of care would return it to nature as per original plot before works.

The features that provide the most biodiversity are self maintaining - hedges, tree, pond.

With the previous statements, there can be no net loss of biodiversity even if care was given up on all aspects. The only possible problem would be the removal of the tree and hedges, so we are happy to have these conditioned to stay in the planning.

Summary

The development as existing, is an increase on the existing space that preceded it, and with further enhancement that follows the stepwise approach by avoiding harm to existing green infrastructure and incorporating meaningful, and well thought out enhancements we can ensure the development complies with national and local policy requirements for biodiversity net gain.