



10 Mount Pleasant,
Llanelly Hill,
Abergavenny
Monmouthshire
NP7 0NT

Tel: 07305143857

Email:
ash@ecologicalservices.wales

Web:
www.ecologicalservices.wales

Green Infrastructure Statement

PROJECT TITLE: Barn Conversion & Creation of Stable Block

SITE ADDRESS: Land North of Rock Cottage, NP26 3AJ

DATE: 10th July 2024

The applicant is seeking planning consent for the conversion of dilapidated barn back into a cottage with garden space and an access road. As the building conversion will affect its use by bat species, compensatory roosting space is proposed in a stand alone bat house to the south west of the barn. The applicant would also like to create a domestic stable block and orchard within the grounds of the site.

The site is centred at approximately ST 41310 92279. An aerial image showing the development site within the context of the wider complex is provided in Appendix 1 at the end of this report. This report focuses on the land and habitats within the site boundary only.

Section 6.2 of Planning Policy Wales 2024 (12th Edition) requests that all Planning Authorities adopt a strategic and proactive approach to green infrastructure. Paragraph 6.2.12 advises that a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. The approach to green infrastructure within planning applications needs to be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposals.

Paragraph 6.4.15 details a step-wise approach for the consideration of green infrastructure within development proposals. In summary this approach follows the below steps:

- **AVOID** - Consider options to avoid any potential harm to an ecological feature,
- **MITIGATE** - If negative effects are unavoidable, measures should be implemented to minimise and reduce potential effects,
- **COMPENSATE** - If negative effects are still likely to be experienced, despite measures to reduce impacts being implemented, appropriate compensatory measures should implemented,
- **ENHANCEMENT** - Works should always seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity to help meet the section 7 & 6 requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The DECCA Framework helps to implement the Section 6 biodiversity duty of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016. In summary the DECCA Framework requests:

- **DIVERSITY** - can the proposals deliver a more diverse habitat and species assemblages.
- **EXTENT** - can the proposals help to maintain or increase the extent of habitat or species assemblages.
- **CONDITION** - can the proposals help to maintain or increase the the conditions of habitats and species range within a site or local area.
- **CONNECTIVITY** - can the proposals deliver opportunities to connect ecological networks within the local or regional area.
- **ADAPTABILITY** - do the proposals help to provide measures which ensure ecological networks can adapt to external pressures.

Site Location

The proposed development site is roughly rectangular in shape and is generally flat. The site measures approximately 1.1 acres in size. The site sits within a larger agricultural field and is considered to be located within a rural setting. A narrow country lane runs along the eastern boundary of the site.

Castell Prin Wood is located approximately 50m to the west at its closest point. The residential area of Parc Seymour is located approximately 470m to the south west of site at its closest point.

Supporting Information

Ecological survey work has been completed to inform the proposed development plans. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was completed by Ecological Services Ltd on the 17th June 2022. The PEA found the site to contain semi improved neutral grassland, bramble scrub, hedgerow and a mature tree.

The dilapidated stone cottage had potential for roosting use by bats. Bat activity surveys were recommended focused on the structure. A suite of bat activity surveys were completed in 2022 by Ecological Services Ltd which confirmed the presence of a maternity roost of Lesser Horseshoe bats within the building. A maximum count of 58 Lesser Horseshoe bats were recorded using the building.

Given the rural location of the proposed development site and the importance of the bat roost present at site, detailed discussions have been undertaken with the Local Planning

Authority (LPA) regarding the development proposals. A landscape plan has been developed by Ty Green Ltd. Drawing TG2203-25 by Ty Green Ltd details the location and type of all soft landscaping proposed for deliver as part of the development proposals.

This report should be read in conjunction with:

- TG2203-25 rev B Soft Landscaping Plan by Ty Green Ltd
- '*Preliminary Ecological Services; Land at Penyworlod Farm, Caldicot*' V1.0 dated 28th October 2022 by Ecological Services Ltd
- '*Bat Survey; Penyworlod Farm Barn, Penhow, Caldicot, NP26 3AJ*' V2.0 dated October 2022 by Ecological Services Ltd
- Hedgerow Translocation Method Statement

Existing Green Infrastructure

The green infrastructure features within the site boundary at present are semi improved neutral grassland, scrub, a single mature tree and hedgerow. The site has no boundary features along the north, western and southern boundary, sitting within a larger agricultural field.

Given the open rural nature of the site location there is excellent habitat connectivity to the wider landscape. The site sits between Catell Prin. Wood, to the west and a small expanse of woodland to the east. Grassland fields are present to the north and south of site. The narrow country lanes that dissect the immediate landscape around the site are not considered to restrict connectivity for wildlife being used infrequently.

There are a number of statutory and non statutory protected sites within the local area. Protected sites considered to be of relevance include:

- Hedgerow is considered to be Section 7 habitat under the Environment Wales Act (2016) therefore, any loss of this habitat must be avoided where possible.
- The Parc Seymour Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lies approximately 60m west of the site.
- Penyworlod Farm Wood Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) which lies approximately 50m east of the site.

Proposed Green Infrastructure

The development proposals seek to convert the current dilapidated barn into a residential development with a small extension. An access road will lead into the site via the north east corner of the site. A domestic stable block is proposed for creation along the eastern

edge of the site. These area of hard landscaping will result in a loss of green features within the site boundary.

To create a suitable visibility splay for safe access to the site, hedgerow along the eastern boundary of the site requires removal. 75m² of hedgerow requires removal, however this impact will be temporary. Drawing TG2203-25 details that 51m² of hedgerow will be translocated to the north of the development site following the adjacent road. 24m² of hedgerow will be translocated around the new block.

The soft landscaping plan details that 130m² of native species hedgerow will be planted along the north, west and southern boundary of the site. Hedgerow is a priority habitat for creation and an important biodiversity feature. Mature well managed hedgerow will increase habitat provision for wildlife, create a visual screen for the development and improve habitat connectivity around the site. Ornamental hedger is also proposed however this feature will be planted entirely with native beech. This provides cover, is fast growing and non invasive compared to some ornamental species which could have been used.

The soft landscaping plan also details the delivery of orchard planting to the south of the development site. 44 fruit trees are proposed for planting with a long term aim to create a traditional orchard. Traditional orchards are a Section 7 habitat under the Environment Wales Act (2016) and are of principle importance for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity.

Given the residential nature of the development, the applicant will require garden space around the newly created property. Garden space will likely require a high intensity mowing regime. Well mown grassland has a lower biodiversity value but it is still of benefit to wildlife and allows foraging and commuting by a range of species. The remaining grassland to the south of the site, around the orchard area can be subject lower intensity management.

Low intensity management where all cuttings are collected and removed to an agreed compost location, provides greater floral diversity and cover wildlife. Some light grazing of the grassland in the orchard area may, on occasion be experienced. If mowing is the favoured management technique, pathways through the grassland will need to be cut more frequently to allow access for maintenance of orchard trees. This can help create a habitat mosaic of shorter and longer vegetation which benefits species such as slow worm.

Drawing TG2203-25 details a compost frame location where cuttings will be removed to and allowed to naturally rot down. This aids biodiversity by reducing nutrient enrichment of grassland habitat which encourages floral diversity and also creates a feature which reptiles and invertebrates will use.

A newly constructed stand alone bat house will be provided to the south west of the barn as compensation for the loss of roosting space by Lesser Horseshoe bats within the dilapidated barn. The proposed bat house design can be found on drawing TG2203-24 rev B by Ty Green Ltd. The location of the bat house can be found on drawing TG2203-25. This location has been chosen as it sits on the flight path the bats are known to use but is also sheltered from the dwelling and any disturbance the residential use may have via light or noise. The provision of a beech hedgerow around the bat house along the north and eastern elevations will help screen the bat house as well. A beech hedgerow is fast growing and will retain cover all year round.

Best Wishes

Ash Harris
Director
Ecological Services Ltd

Signed: Ash Harris Date: July 2024

Appendix 1 - Aerial Image of Development Site

