

Green Infrastructure Statement & Landscaping Plan

Site Address

Church Farm, Llanmartin Newport NP18 2EB

Proposed Development

Change of use of part of the existing farmyard to B8 storage and distribution/haulage operations (retrospective)

Planning Reference number

26/0680

Site description

This Green Infrastructure Statement has been prepared in support of the retrospective planning application for the use of part of the existing farmyard at Church Farm, Llanmartin, Newport, for the storage and operation of vehicles, trailers and plant associated with PG Plant Limited.

The proposal relates to an existing working farmyard and does not involve the construction of any new buildings or significant changes to the physical character of the site. The existing farmyard is already predominantly hard surfaced and used for agricultural purposes. The proposed use therefore makes use of an established and appropriate area of the farmyard without requiring the loss of additional agricultural land or undeveloped habitat.

The Statement demonstrates how the proposal has considered green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape matters in accordance with the requirements of national and local planning policy.

Surrounding area description

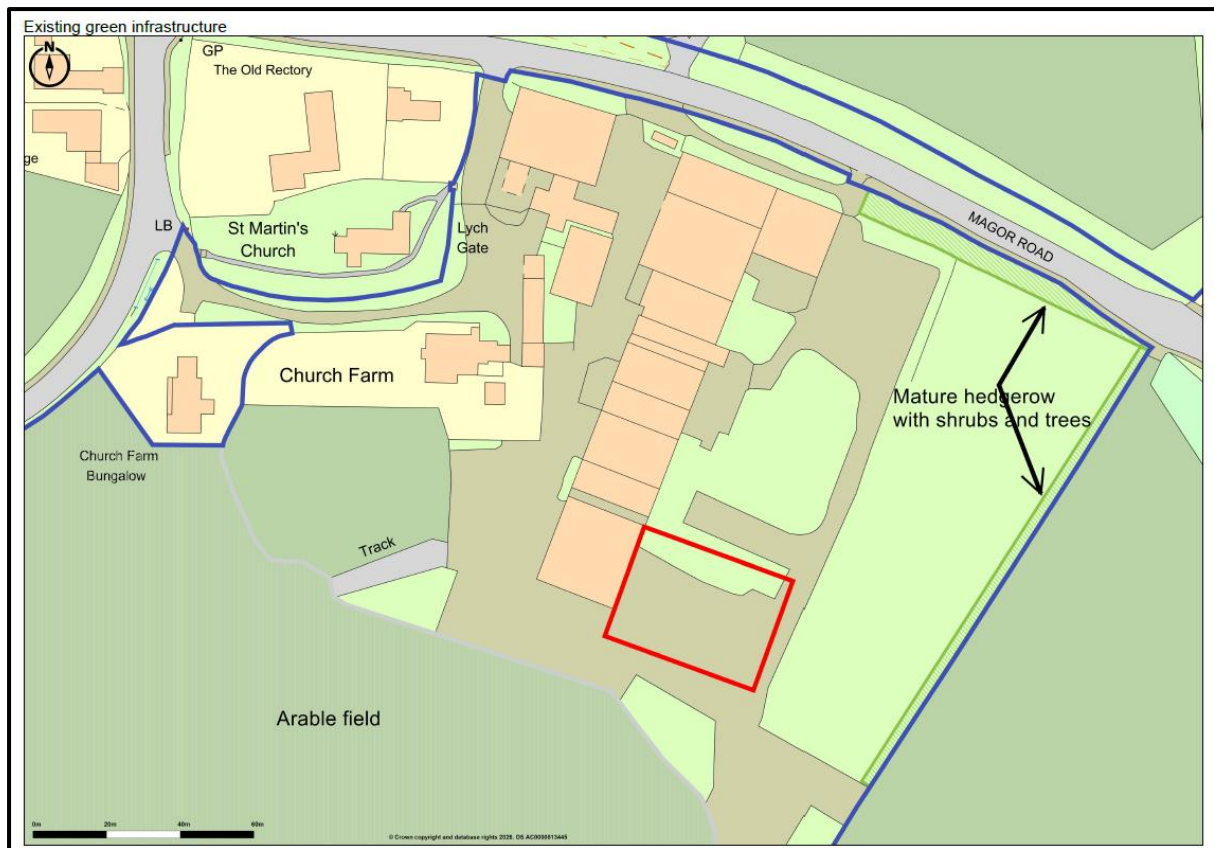
The application site forms part of the established farmyard at Church Farm. It is surrounded by existing agricultural land, farm buildings, hedgerows and other established vegetation.

The site is visually contained by existing hedgerows, particularly along the boundary with the B4245 Magor Road. The hedgerow provides an established landscape feature and ecological corridor, with only occasional views of the existing farm buildings through the vegetation.

There are no proposals to remove existing hedgerows, trees or other established landscape features as part of the development.

The proposal does not result in the development of an undeveloped greenfield site. Instead, it utilises an existing farmyard which is already subject to agricultural activity and associated vehicle movements. No habitats will be directly affected by the alternative use of the yard.

The existing green infrastructure is shown on the plan below.



Development impacts

The development is located within an established working farmyard and does not result in the loss or fragmentation of any identified habitat, ecological corridor or established green infrastructure feature. The proposal makes use of an existing developed area within the farmyard and does not require the construction of new buildings, the removal of established hedgerows or trees, or the introduction of additional external lighting.

The site is already visually contained by the existing boundary hedgerows, particularly along the boundary with the Magor Road. These hedgerows form an established green infrastructure feature within the wider agricultural landscape, providing habitat, shelter and connectivity for wildlife. They will be retained as part of the proposal and will continue to perform their existing ecological and landscape functions.

The proposal therefore avoids the principal forms of harm to green infrastructure which can arise from development, including the removal of established vegetation, habitat fragmentation, the creation of isolated habitat areas and the introduction of intrusive lighting. The use of the existing farmyard also ensures that the proposal does not extend built development into adjoining agricultural land.

GI Enhancements proposed

Tree and Shrub Planting

An area of approximately 0.064 hectares will be established for additional tree and shrub planting.

The planting has been designed to complement the existing boundary hedgerows whilst providing additional habitat, visual screening and ecological connectivity.

A 2-metre-wide clear maintenance strip will be retained immediately adjacent to the existing boundary hedgerows. This is an important element of the planting design. It will enable the existing hedgerows to continue to receive adequate sunlight and remain healthy, prevent newly planted trees and shrubs from becoming established directly against the hedge and adversely affecting its condition, provide access for future hedge maintenance and management and provide a practical route around the planted area for ongoing maintenance.

The proposed trees will generally be planted at 2.0–2.5 metre centres, allowing sufficient space for establishment whilst creating an area of woodland-style planting over time.

The proposed tree planting will comprise a mixture of native species, providing variation in height, structure, seasonal interest and wildlife value.

The proposed planting comprises:

- 15 no. Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) – providing relatively rapid height and vertical structure and assisting with longer-term screening;
- 10 no. Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) – providing flowers, berries and autumn colour, with the berries providing a valuable food source for birds;
- 8 no. Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) – providing spring blossom, fruit and additional habitat value;
- 5 no. Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) – providing additional evergreen structure and year-round height within the planting mix.

The planting will be arranged in groups rather than as a rigid single-species plantation. This will create a more natural appearance and provide a varied structure which is beneficial to biodiversity.

Additional native shrub planting will be provided along the inner boundary of the planting area, comprising:

- 10 no. Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) – providing spring blossom and fruit which will benefit wildlife; and
- 10 no. Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*) – providing flowers, foliage and characteristic red autumn berries, together with additional habitat and foraging opportunities.

The shrubs will be planted at approximately 1.5–2.0 metre centres.

The combination of trees and shrubs will create a varied vegetation structure, comprising ground, shrub and canopy layers. This will provide greater ecological value than a uniform block of single-species planting.

Bat and Bird Boxes

It is proposed to install one bird box and one bat box on two boundary trees on the eastern of the site as follows:

1x 2F Schwegler Bat Box

The 2F bat box can be sited on a tree or building and is best positioned at a height of between 3m to 6m in an open sunny position.



1x Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Box

These 32mm hole nest boxes are suitable for blue tits, tree sparrows, house sparrows, great tits, crested tits, nuthatches, coal tits and pied flycatchers. The best height for the nest box is between 1.5m and 3m high.

The boxes will be positioned and securely fixed in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and in locations suitable for the species they are intended to support.



Their incorporation into the existing boundary vegetation provides a simple but effective biodiversity enhancement without requiring the removal or significant alteration of existing habitat.

Planting and Management

The planting will be undertaken during the appropriate planting season, with preference given to the period between October and March, when ground and weather conditions are suitable.

Trees and shrubs will be planted in accordance with good horticultural practice and will be appropriately protected during establishment where necessary.

The planting area will be managed to allow the trees and shrubs to establish successfully whilst preventing the vegetation from becoming excessively dense or adversely affecting the existing boundary hedgerows.

The whips will be protected by tree shelters, fixed using cable ties and secured in place with a single stake driven into the ground.

The whips should be bare root 60-90 cm in size other than the Scots Pine which will be 80-100 cm.

Annually for four years, keep areas clear of weed growth by spot herbicide treatment as appropriate from mid-April to late September.

The 2-metre maintenance strip will be kept clear of encroaching tree and shrub growth and will provide continued access for management of both the new planting and existing hedgerows.

Any trees or shrubs that die, become damaged or fail to establish satisfactorily will be replaced with the same or an appropriate equivalent species during the next available planting season.

The planting will be maintained for a minimum period of five years following planting, in accordance with the landscaping condition.

The agreed biodiversity measures, including the bird and bat boxes, will be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Proposed green infrastructure

