

Green Infrastructure Statement

PROJECT TITLE: Construction of 1 pair of semi-detached houses

SITE ADDRESS: Land to the rear of 16-24 Chestnut Way, Gurnos, Merthyr Tydfil

PLANNING REF: P/25/0094

DATE: 23rd July 2025

1. Introduction

1.1) The applicant is seeking planning consent to to construct two, semi-detached, residential dwellings within the site boundary. The development site is centred at SO 04990 08027 to the rear (south) of 16-24 Chestnut Way, Gurnos, Merthyr Tydfil.

1.2) The development focuses on the flat plateau of land to the rear of 16-24 Chestnut Way, Gurnos, Merthyr Tydfil which is accessed via a concrete track leading of Chestnut Way. At present, the development site contains concrete hardstanding, scattered scrub, ornamental shrub, short perennial and tall ruderal habitat.

1.3) 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.

1.4) 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.

1.5) 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 be 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.

1.6) 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 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.

2. Site Location

2.1) The site is located on a level rectangular parcel of land measuring approximately 19m by 30m. It is understood that the site was previously occupied by garages, which have since been demolished, leaving only a concrete hardstanding. The site abuts and is largely enclosed by the rear and side gardens of properties located on Chestnut Way, Laburnum Way, and Beech Grove.

2.2) Approximately 390 m to the west of the site lies the Prince Charles hospital. Cyfartha Park lies approximately 785 m to the southwest of the site. The A465 is located approximately 540 m north of the site and runs east to west across the wider landscape. The residential areas of Merthy Tydfil extend to the south east and west from site. The Taf Fechan flows north to south through the wider landscape, approximately 1.5 km to the west of the site.

3. Existing Green Infrastructure

3.1) A walkover survey of the development site was conducted on the 5th June 2025 by Ecological Services Ltd. The survey visit found the site to contain concrete hardstanding, scattered scrub , ornamental shrub, short perennial and tall ruderal habitat.

3.2) The proposed development site has no habitat connectivity to surrounding areas of undeveloped land as it is immediately surrounded by residential housing. The residential gardens spaces of surrounding properties could provide some habitat connectivity and foraging space for more mobile species such as birds.

3.3) The habitats currently found within the site boundary are considered to have biodiversity value at a local level only. The majority of the site is concrete hardstanding and the site is understood to have been used as garages in the past. A small amount of vegetation has established within the site boundary in the recent past. The scrub and ornamental shrubs have some potential to be used by nesting and foraging birds.

3.4) All habitat currently found within the site boundary will be lost as part of the development proposals. No further ecological surveys have been recommended for the site.

3.5) The development aims to create two new dwellings within the site boundary. Residential gardens will be provided to the rear of the new dwellings and two car parking spaces will be provided for each property at the front.

4. Proposed Green Infrastructure

4.1) Given the limited size of the development site the potential to deliver green infrastructure features within the site is limited.

4.2) The turf used within the garden space to the rear of each unit will be species rich lawn turf. This can be sourced from a variety of suppliers such as Sherborne Turf <https://www.sherborneturf.co.uk/wildflower-turf-1/wildflower-turf-species-rich-lawn-turf> . By using high diversity turf as opposed to standard turf greater floral diversity within the garden spaces may be achieved.

4.3) At least one native species tree will be planted within the garden of each new property. It is recommended a rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) or apple (*Malus sylvestris*) tree is used.

4.4) A small amount of hedgerow planting will be provided at the front of each unit. Native hedgerow planting will be used. A double row of staggered saplings will be planted using 60% hawthorn, 20% hazel, 20% field maple. All planting must be native species to the UK.

5. Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

5.1) Biodiversity enhancement measures are also proposed for the development site. While these measures aren't strictly green infrastructure features they help improve the overall biodiversity value of the development site.

5.2) It is proposed that one PRO UK Rendered Build-in Swift Box is installed on the gable end of each building. These boxes must be integrated into the brickwork during construction, positioned as close to the gable apex as possible, and no lower than eaves level. Care must be taken to ensure that the access hole remains unobstructed and open.

5.3) It is proposed that one Vivara Pro Build-In Woodstone Bat Box is installed on gable end of each building. The bat boxes must be built into the brickwork during construction and positioned as close to the gable apex as possible, at a height no lower than eaves level. The access hole must remain unobstructed and open. To prevent disturbance or exclusion of bats, no windows or external lighting should be installed within 2 m of any bat box location

5.4) All fencing across the site must be hedgehog friendly in design. A friendly design is considered to allow passage of small animals across the site. Close board or mesh fencing should provide either a continuous gap between the bottom of the fence and ground of approximately 13cm or 13cm by 13cm gaps cut every 3m along fencing.

6. Conclusions

6.1) The proposed development site is being promoted for development due to its strategic location within an urban environment. As such the site has good transport connections and is close to existing utilities, sewerage and drainage features already in place.

6.2) The proposed development site has limited biodiversity value. The Site Assessment Survey completed in June found the site to contain concrete hardstanding, scattered scrub, ornamental shrub, short perennial and tall ruderal habitat. It is not possible to deliver a residential scheme within the site boundary without the loss of these habitats.

6.3) The habitats on site are considered suitable for use by nesting birds. Recommendations are made within the site assessment survey report to avoid bird nesting season for habitat removal. Section 4 of this report provides details on compensation measures for habitat loss. Section 5 of this report provides details on overall biodiversity enhancement measures that the development can deliver.

6.4) The landscaping proposals detailed within sections 4.2 - 4.4 of this report will provide a more diverse habitat structure within the development site. The proposals will also help to increase the extent of green space within the site boundary. More species diverse native or pollinator friendly planting also helps to improve the condition of habitats within the site boundary.

6.5) The development proposals will not aid direct habitat connectivity between the development site and surrounding green spaces. However the landscaping provided within the site boundary could act as a stepping stone for more aerial species such as birds to use the features for commuting and foraging.

6.6) The development proposals have limited scope to help aid habitat adaptability directly given the small size of the site and urban nature of the wider environment. However the provision of nesting sites for birds and roosting provision for bats within the new building will help such species find areas of shelter in the long term.

Best Wishes

Ash Harris
Director
Ecological Services Ltd

Signed: Ash Harris Date: July 2025

Bibliography

- 'Site Assessment Survey; Land to the rear of 16-24 Chestnut Way, Gurnos, Merthyr Tydfil' V1.0 dated 17th June 2025 by Ecological Services Ltd

Appendix 1 - Aerial Image of Development Site

