

Green Infrastructure Statement

Planning Portal Reference: PP-13602352

Site Address: 22 Lansbury Road, Gellideg, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1HA

Proposed Development

Proposed change of use application for the conversion of the Passivhaus unit from example dwelling only to an office space (B1 Use).

Site Description and Surrounding Context

The application site is situated adjacent to Merthyr Valleys Homes offices in Gellideg, Merthyr Tydfil. It is centred on the grid coordinates: X: 303227, Y: 207026 and what3words ///eager.bake.living. The site comprises of a single modular Passivhaus unit, located to the south east of the main Merthyr Valleys Home office building (detached, two-storey). The site is relatively flat, with the building situated to the south east of the site and is orientated towards the main Merthyr Valleys Homes office. Grass lawns, hardstanding footpath/parking areas and a border of interspersed trees and bush/shrub are found at the southern portion of the site, alongside a larger hardstanding parking area in the north. These elements are planned to remain unaffected by the change of use proposals, which only apply to the usage of the Passivhaus unit itself.

In terms of wider surroundings, residential dwellings are located to the north on Heol Twyn Du, south off Maen Dy and west on Lansbury Road. Ysgol Coed Y Dderwen and Coed-y-Dderwen Community Primary School are situated to the east, and Gellideg Foundation Group Wellbeing Centre is found to the north.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Paragraph 6.21 of Planning Policy Wales defines green infrastructure as *“the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Component elements of green infrastructure can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels. At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways, peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands. At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, ponds, natural green spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks.”*

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure. Its protection and provision can make a significant contribution to the sustainable

management of natural resources, and in particular to protecting, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in terms of the diversity within and connections between ecosystems and the extent and condition of these ecosystems, so that they are better able to resist, recover from and adapt to pressures. This means that the development of green infrastructure is an important way for local authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes.

The DECCA Framework

The DECCA framework is used for evaluating ecosystem resilience based on five attributes and properties specified in the Environment (Wales) Act. These are: Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Aspects of ecosystem resilience. A summary of the definitions is described below:

- **Diversity:** maintaining and enhancing diversity at every scale, including genetic, structural, habitat and between-habitat levels. This supports the complexity of ecosystem functions and interactions that deliver services and benefits.
- **Extent:** incorporating measures which maintain and increase the area of semi-natural habitat/features and linkages between habitats. In general, smaller ecosystems have reduced capacity to adapt, recover or resist disturbance.
- **Condition:** The condition of an ecosystem is affected by multiple and complex pressures acting both as short term and longer term types of disturbance. Both direct and wider impacts should be considered, for example avoiding or mitigating pressures such as climate change, pollution, invasive species, land management neglect etc.
- **Connectivity:** This refers to the links between and within habitats, which may take the form of physical corridors, stepping stones in the landscape, or patches of the same or related vegetation types that together create a network that enables the flow or movement of genes, species and natural resources. Developments should take opportunities to develop functional habitat and ecological networks within and between ecosystems, building on existing connectivity.
- **Aspects of ecosystem resilience (adaptability, recovery and resistance):** ecosystem resilience is a product of the above four attributes. Adaptability, recovery and resistance to/from a disturbance are defining features of ecosystem resilience.

Paragraph 6.4.11 of Planning Policy Wales states that *“planning authorities must follow a step-wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for.”*

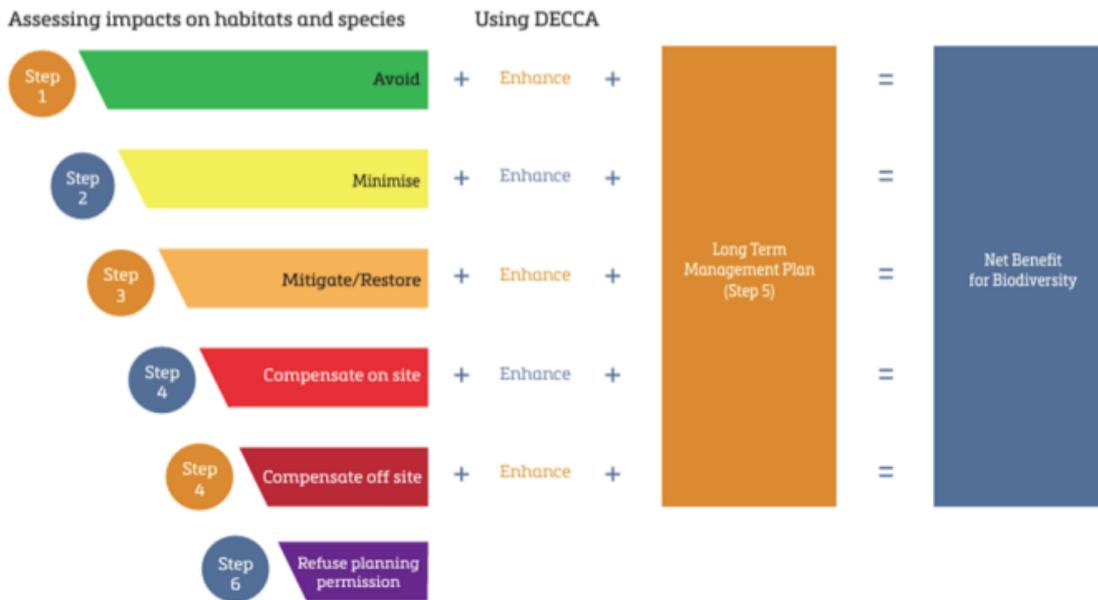


Figure 1: Summary of the Step-Wise Approach

Paragraph 6.2.12 of Planning Policy Wales states that *“a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied.”*

Development Impacts

As aforementioned, the proposal relates to a change of use planning application. No external alterations are proposed. As such, no trees, hedgerows, vegetation or any other habitats will be removed as part of the development, and a European Protected Species License is not required to undertake the proposed works.

The above demonstrates that the proposals adhere to Step 1 of the Step-Wise Approach as it avoids the unnecessary removal of existing trees, hedgerows and vegetation on site, demonstrating that the baseline position in terms of green infrastructure provision will remain unaltered. It is therefore considered that the proposal will not lead to any negative impacts on existing green infrastructure at the site as a result of the proposed development.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development would not cause any detrimental impacts to green infrastructure at the site as the existing green infrastructure will be fully retained.

Dated: 16th January 2025