

1 INTRODUCTION

This technical note concerns the subject Land at Hafod, Dowlais and the planning application on behalf of Merthyr Motor Auctions (MMA) ref: P/21/0364 for provision of staff and customer car parking on a parcel of land circa 850 sq m (operational area), adjacent to the existing MMA site.

Advice is taken from BE Ecological Ltd, Suite 2 Rabart House, Pontsarn Road, Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, CF48 2SR and Haire Landscape Consultants Ltd, Upper Brechfa, Llandefalle, Brecon, Powys, LD3 0NG. Both have been instrumental in the evolution of the submitted scheme.

2 ASSESSMENT AGAINST POLICY -PLANNING POLICY WALES: STEPWISE APPROACH AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

In October 2023, ahead of PPW12 being published, the new Chapter 6 came into force with immediate effect. Net benefit must be secured via planning applications using the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures and the need to consider enhancement and long-term management. Green Infrastructure Statements will be used to demonstrate the step wise approach.

The following information will be used in order to show compliance with policy.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Staff and customer car parking on land at Hafod.

4 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA DESCRIPTION

The site is in an area of land, used as open grass land adjacent to housing and MMA, Pant Rd, Dowlais.

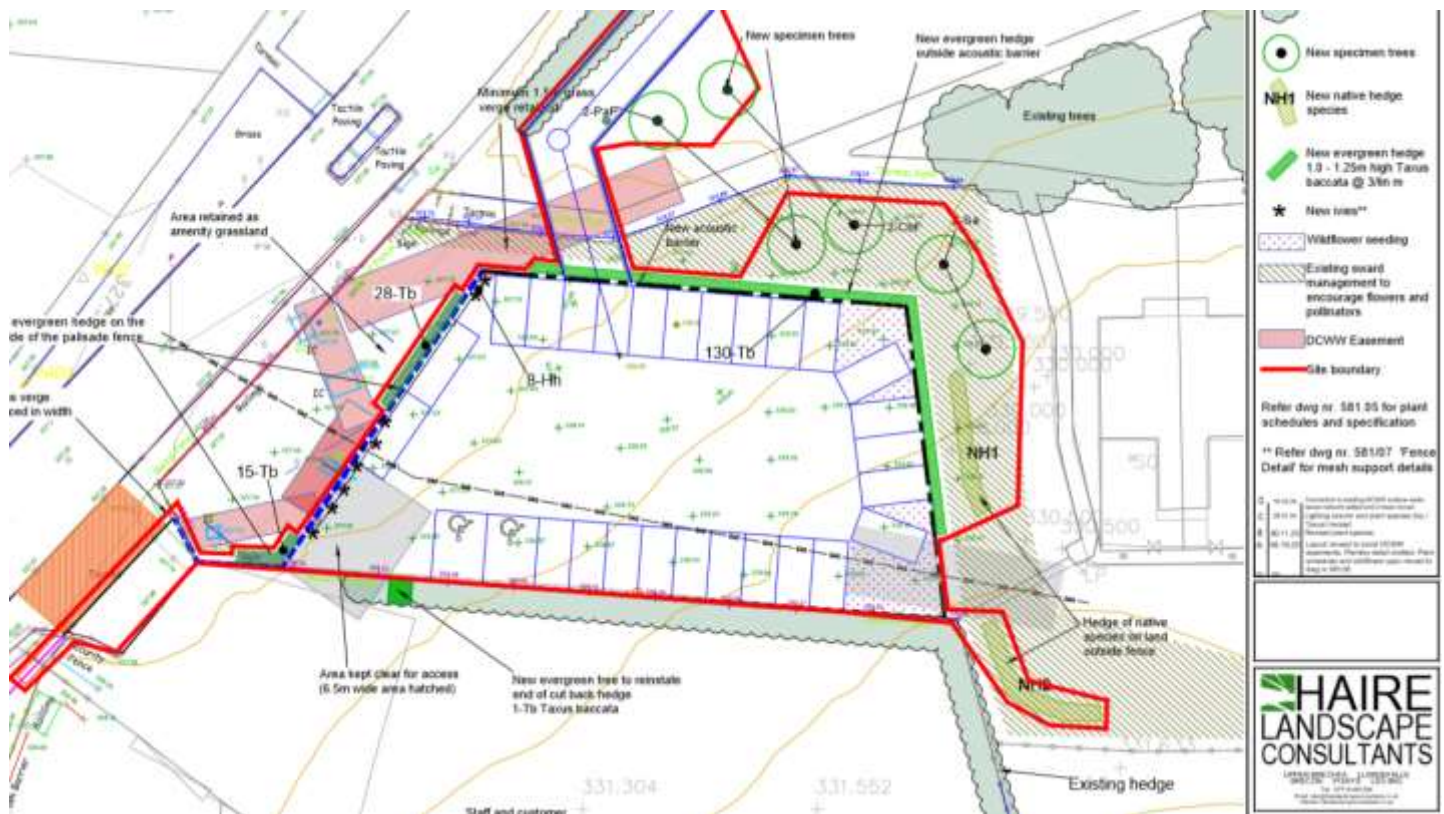
The red line development site boundary (including off site planting) encloses an area of approximately 0.13ha and is located between Pant and Dowlais on the northern edge of Merthyr in South Wales (centred on NGR SO 06500838) (Figure 1). The site is directly adjacent to the northern boundary of the Merthyr Motor Auctions site.

The site is dominated by grassland, there is a single relatively mature willow tree with three smaller scattered trees. The grassland is dominated by perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and is subject of intensive management in the form of regular mowing which results in a short tight sward.

The site is bounded to the south by a conifer hedge, approximately 3m in height. The site is fenced to the west. The site is unbounded to the north and east. There is an area of housing immediately to the east.

The site is located in a wholly urban area, being surrounded to the north, west and south by housing, roads and associated infrastructure. The site itself is not lit; however, streets and houses surrounding the site are constantly lit. The car park to the south has extremely large floodlights that light the area throughout the night.

5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL AND IMPACTS



- Loss of vegetation (semi-improved grassland).
- Loss of 3 semi mature trees and one fire damaged tree
- Loss of 2m section of fir hedge
- Increased site lighting.

6 STEP WISE APPROACH

Step 1- Avoidance

Impacts cannot be avoided on existing habitats due to small size of site and due to the need for the parking area.

Step 2- Minimise

Impacts have been minimised by limiting the development area as far as possible to 850 sq m.

Step 3- Mitigate/Restore

Mitigation will be via appropriate safeguarding method statements to ensure no harm to protected species.

Cautious working will be undertaken when clearing the site to prevent killing or injury to animals (such as hedgehogs)

Proposed site lighting (see submitted Lighting report by Qoda revised Dec 2023) will conform to the following guidance to prevent any indirect impacts on foraging bats:

<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidancenote-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting>.

Step 4- Compensation on site

Provision of Emorsgate EM2 – Standard general purpose meadow mixture Wildflower grass seed to be sown in calm weather between April and October (inclusive). At a rate of 4g/m² on finely cultivated subsoil; spread with 10-15mm layer of compost, worked into the top layer and watered in.

Compensation immediately off site:

Given the nature of the proposal there is limited scope for on site compensation. Immediately off site, a combination of specimen trees and both native hedge and evergreen hedge, are proposed within the design to compensate for the loss of the 4 trees (plus one damaged tree).

No x 6 high quality specimen trees are proposed.

New evergreen hedge *Taxus baccata*: single row, 3/lin m with a stretch of 55m.

New native hedge NH1 and NH2 in double staggered row is proposed.

The combination of all of the above (see below for summary and overleaf for detail) is considered appropriate in order to compensate for the loss proposed.

Total proposed planting:

- No 6 x specimen trees (immediately off site)
- No 8 x New climbing ivy plants along proposed palisade
- No x 110 native hedge planting (immediately off site)
- No x 173 evergreen hedging over length of circa 55m (surrounding site)
- 60 sq m of wildflower planting (on site)

7. SPECIES

Tree species have been selected as native. See below planting schedule:

SPECIES Mixed Native Hedge Planting Schedule

Area of bed lin m				10	12	
Number of plants per lin m				5	5	
Number of plants per area				50	60	
Planting area				NH1	NH2	
SPECIES	TYPE	SIZE(min.)	%	NO of PLANTS	TOTAL	
Acer campestre	1+1 bare root	600-900mm	5	3	3	6
Corylus avellana	1+1 bare root	600-900mm	23	12	14	25
Crataegus monogyna	1+1 bare root	600-900mm	25	13	15	26
Euonymus europaeus	1+1 bare root	600-900mm	5	3	3	6
Ilex aquifolium	1+1 bare root	2L	5	3	3	6
Prunus spinosa	1+1 bare root	600-900mm	24	12	14	26
Quercus robur	1+2 bare root	600-900mm	5	3	3	6
Viburnum opulus	1+1 bare root	600-900mm	8	4	5	9
Totals			100	50	60	110

Trees, Evergreen Hedge and Climber Planting Schedule

Spacing	ID	No	Latin Name	Scheduled size
TREE	Cb	2	Carpinus betulus	12-14cm, RB
CLIMBER	Hh	8	Hedera helix	2L
TREE	Pa	2	Prunus avium	14-16cm, RB
TREE	Sa	2	Sorbus aucuparia	14-16cm, RB
HEDGE	Tb	173	Taxus baccata	80-100cm, RB

Plant	Tree pit size	Backfilling material mixed with:		Stakes	
		Compost	Slow release fertiliser	Overall length of stake	Diameter
Shrub or transplant up to 90cm high	300mm x 300mm x 300mm	5 litres	50g		
Specimen tree	900mm x 900mm x 600mm or larger	100 litres	300g	1.5m (x2)	100mm (with cross bar 50mm x 100mm)

- Carpinus betulus , Prunus avium , Sorbus aucuparia (Sa)
- 5% Acer campestre, 23% Corylus avellana, 25% Crataegus monogyna, 5% Euonymus europaeus, 5% Ilex aquifolium (2L pot), 24% Prunus spinosa, 5% Quercus robur, 8% Viburnum opulus
- Taxus baccata
- Ivies planted beneath fence line, with mesh panels to encourage growth up palisade fence

8. NET BENEFIT FOR BIODIVERSITY

The proposed scheme acknowledges the requirement to achieve a Net Benefit for Biodiversity and from the beginning this has been built into the planning of the project.

The applicant aims to deliver biodiversity enhancements at the local scale by offering the enhancements stated above on the site.

The site will be subject to enhancements along with long term appropriate management (see Landscape management plan Ref 581/06 Rev E).

9. CONCLUSION

As result of the ecological measures within this report, it is expected that there will be a demonstrable net benefit for biodiversity. The vegetated habitats to be impacted have been identified as being of relatively low value, with impacts adequately mitigated on and off-site and net gain being achieved within the site and adjacent land.

All habitats are to be retained/created/enhanced on site, as well as and will be subject to a long management for the foreseeable future.

Should further information be required please , in the first instance, do not hesitate to contact Anna Cheney, Herbert R Thomas Ltd on Email: annacheney@hrt.uk.com or M:07725041308