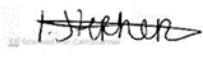
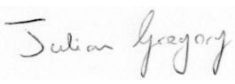
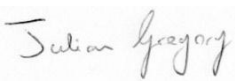


2025

Green Infrastructure Statement

Park View Cottage



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1. Contents

1. Contents	2
Figures	2
1. Introduction	3
1.1 Project Background	3
1.2 Site Description	3
2. Net Benefit for Biodiversity	6
2.1 Objectives for Net Benefit for Biodiversity and Planning Context	6
2.2 Proposed Biodiversity Enhancement.....	8
2.3 Wildflower Management Plan.....	9

Figures

Figure 1 - Property boundary, fence line and grass.	4
Figure 2 - Site Location.....	4
Figure 3 - The house showing external walls and ceilings being removed.	5
Figure 4 - The habitat surrounding the site.	5
Figure 5: Step-Wise Approach - Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12).	7
Figure 6 - Proposed Enhancements within property line	7



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 The property known as Park View Cottage in Merthyr Road, Troedyrhiw, Merthyr it sits on an area of hardstanding and is accessed via a shared driveway onto the property. The site sits within a busy urban residential area, with a large industrial building to the north-west of the site and an active site compound to the south of the site. This compound is illuminated with large external flood lights throughout the night. The site has linear features provided by treelines and hedgerows within the wider area however within the property footprint itself there is no vegetation. This property is under construction, and final plans can be seen below.
- 1.1.2 The current owner of Park View has planned to add an extension to the property to increase the overall size of the property, within the plans. The plans also include adding a wooden fence boundary and installing a grass lawn to the North side of the property.
- 1.1.3 EcoVigour have been instructed to prepare this Green Infrastructure Statement to fulfil the requirements of Planning Policy Wales (PPW 12), Chapter 6. All enhancements will be funded by Chad Morgan, home owner and developer.

1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 The site is located off Merthyr Road, Troedyrhiw, Merthyr.
- 1.2.2 The property location, boundary and location of new fence and grass boundary are shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.

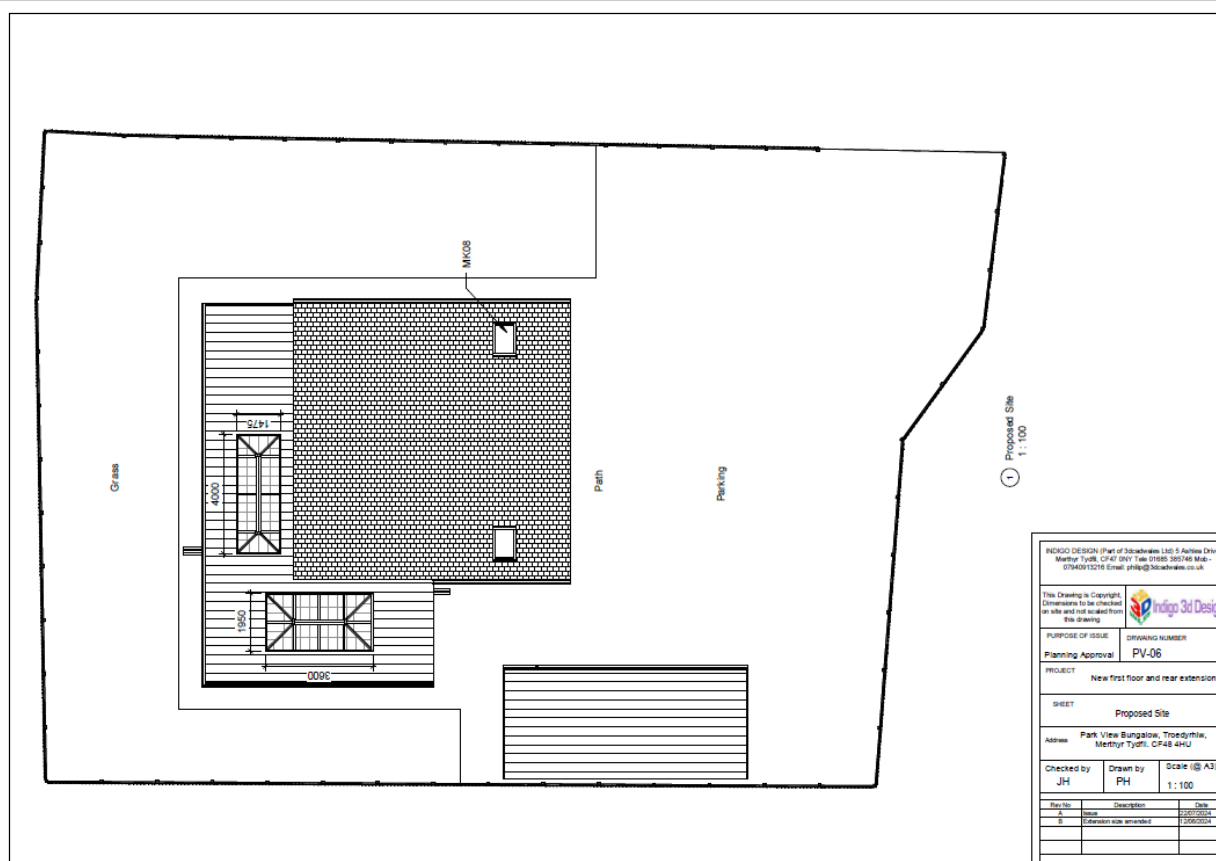




Figure 1 - Property boundary, fence line and grass.



Figure 2 - Site Location

- 1.2.3 When the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken, the site had no existing vegetation within the footprint. It was largely a construction area, with rubble piles, hard standing and some small shrub species such as fern and bramble around the outskirts of the property. The property itself had had two of the outside walls and ceilings removed. From evidence on site and a review of aerial footage, it is apparent that the majority of the garden was laid to lawn.



Figure 3 - The house showing external walls and ceilings being removed.



Figure 4 - The habitat surrounding the site.



2. Net Benefit for Biodiversity

2.1 Objectives for Net Benefit for Biodiversity and Planning Context

2.1.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW 12), Chapter 6 sets objectives for maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, through the planning process, including

- ◆ GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: stronger emphasis on taking a proactive approach to green infrastructure, the submission of a proportionate green infrastructure statement with planning applications and signposting Building with Nature standards.
- ◆ NET BENEFIT FOR BIODIVERSITY AND THE STEP-WISE APPROACH: further clarity is provided on securing net benefit for biodiversity through the application of the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures as a last resort, and the need to consider enhancement and long-term management at each step. The use of the green infrastructure statement as a means of demonstrating the stepwise approach is made explicit. A simplified diagram of the policy approach has been developed (included within PPW12). The importance of strategic collaboration to identify and capture larger scale opportunities for securing a net benefit for biodiversity is recognised.
- ◆ PROTECTION FOR SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST: strengthened approach to the protection of SSSIs, with increased clarity on the position for site management and exemptions for minor development necessary to maintain a 'living landscape'. Other development is considered unacceptable as a matter of principle. Exceptionally, a planned approach may be appropriate where necessary safeguards can be secured through a development plan
- ◆ TREES AND WOODLANDS: closer alignment with the stepwise approach, along with promoting new planting as part of development based on securing the right tree in the right place.

2.1.2 For this assessment we have applied the DECCA Framework:

- ◆ **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.

2.1.3 This NBB assessment uses the following industry recognised best practice methodologies:

- ◆ CIEEM Briefing Paper – Welsh Government's Approach to Net Benefits for Biodiversity and the DECCA Framework in the Terrestrial Planning System – September 2022;
- ◆ Natural England (2019). Biodiversity Metric 2.0 – Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity;



- 2.1.4 A list of principles which local planning authorities should follow when determining planning applications is included in the DECCA, with a summary of the step wise approach illustrated in the drawing below.

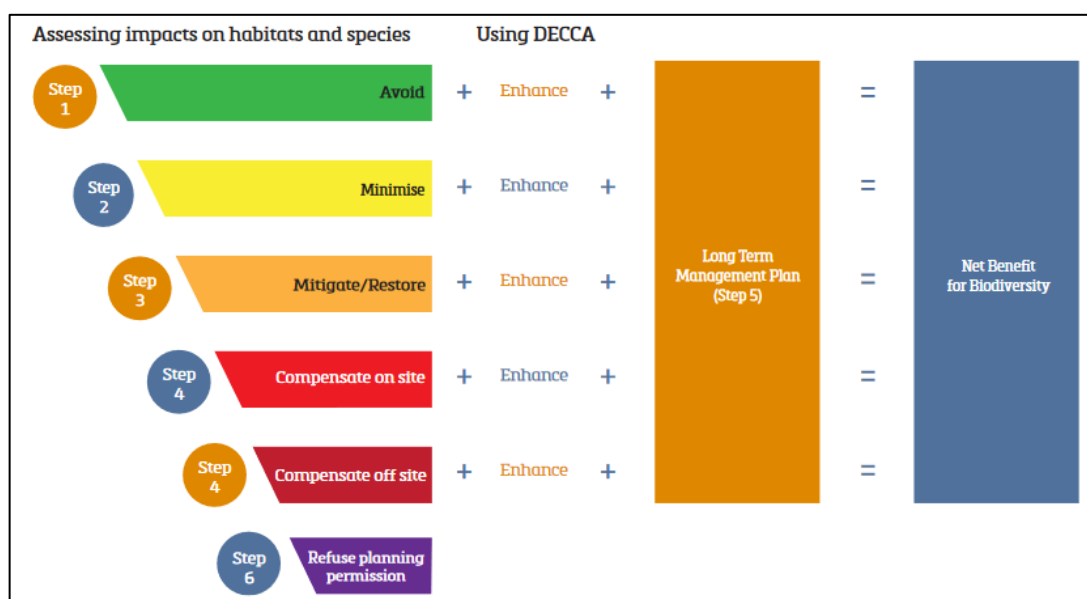


Figure 5: Step-Wise Approach - Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12).



Source: QGIS, Ordnance Survey Data Crown and Database copyright 2023

EcoVigour Ltd, Hardwick Farm, Five Lanes, Caerwent, Monmouthshire, NP26 5PH

Figure 6 - Proposed Enhancements within property line

- 2.1.5 The scale of the development is small restricted to a linear boundary feature, which has not resulted in the



removal of any habitat.

2.2 Proposed Biodiversity Enhancement

2.2.1 The following ecological mitigation / enhancements will be implemented as part of the development:

- ◆ The planting of mixed, native species flowering plants and shrubs for the benefit of pollinators. The mix chosen will also provide a variety of flowers throughout the year. This mix will include: - Area in orange on figure 7:
 - Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*),
 - Forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*),
 - Bugle (*Ajuga reptans*),
 - Stinking hellebore (*Helleborus foetidus*),
 - Honey suckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*),
 - Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*),
 - Vipers bugloss (*Echium vulgare*),
 - Heathers (*Calluna vulgaris*)
 - Aster (*Aster amellus*),
 - Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*),
 - Campion (*Silene dioica*).
- ◆ The creation of a compost heap in an area of the garden for the benefit of invertebrates and in turn reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. These will be constructed by the developer as part of the fencing works. Compost heaps will be constructed from wood and will have gaps to allow air to move freely around the heap and an access at the base to allow matured compost to be removed.
- ◆ Mammal holes left in the gravel boards to allow small mammals to pass through, 15cm x 15cm. Care should be taken when creating these to ensure the routes do not lead onto roads or other dangerous areas for small mammals.
- ◆ A hedgehog box should be placed in the against the fence, within the planted wildflowers adjacent to the compost heap. Model should be similar to: <https://www.livingwithbirds.com/nest-boxes/the-schwegler-hedgehogs-dome> and be made of Woodstone/woodcrete for longevity.
- ◆ 3no Woodstone Bird Boxes should be erected on the pine end of residential properties. These can be a combination of 32mm hole and open general nest boxes and house sparrow boxes. <https://www.birdfood.co.uk/woodstone-seville-32mm-nest-box-green>

2.2.2 In consideration of the DECCA Framework:

- ◆ **Diversity between and within ecosystems:** The size of the areas within the plot are limited, with the majority likely to be laid to patio or lawn for amenity use. However, this should be supplemented with the planting of native species flowering shrubs to provide benefit for pollinators.
- ◆ **Extent:** The green areas of the plot had been previously laid to lawn. Within the proposed development, the hedgerows around the periphery of the plot will be maintained. The footprint of the proposed building is similar to the existing. The majority of the green estate within the plot will be amenity lawn but provision will be made for the planting of native flowering plants within the area on the southern side of the driveway and in the NW corner of the garden.
- ◆ **Condition:** The condition of the habitat will be moderately improved, through planting of native species flowering plants, the addition of a compost heap and 3 no bird boxes on the fence.
- ◆ **Connectivity:** will be unchanged by the project, with connectivity into the surrounding landscape being retained.



- ◆ **Aspects of ecosystem resilience** (adaptability, recovery and resistance): It is anticipated that the ecosystem of the area surrounding the site will be unaffected. Gravel boards with cut outs for small mammals will be incorporated into any sections of new fencing to ensure ecological permeability of the site.

2.3 Wildflower Management Plan

- 2.3.1 A During the first year, it is essential to get the mowing regime right. Cut to 5-7 cm whenever the height reaches 10-20 cm. The number of mows required can range from one to four. Control weeds like thistles (*Cirsium vulgare*), nettles (*Urtica dioica*) and docks (*Rumex acetosa*) by hand-weeding.
- 2.3.2 After this, two cuts a year should be enough. Once in late July/early August and then again in early autumn. After mowing, always leave the clippings for a couple of days to drop any seed, then rake up and remove to keep soil fertility down.
- 2.3.3 **Top tips**
- Be careful when mowing – small mammals, amphibians and reptiles may be hiding in the grass. Some birds nest in larger meadows, so don't mow until after the beginning of August.
 - Wildflowers are available in plug form and in ready-planted turf rolls, which can make establishing the plants even easier.
- 2.3.4 **Ground Preparation** - Endeavour to select ground that is not highly fertile and does not have a problem with perennial weeds. First remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll, or tread, to produce a firm surface.
- 2.3.5 **Sowing** - Seed is best sown in the autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out divide the seed into two or more parts and sow into overlapping sections. Do not incorporate or cover the seed but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.
- 2.3.6 **First Year Management** - Most of the sown meadow species are perennial and are slow to establish. Soon after sowing there will be a flush of annual weeds, arising from the soil seed bank. These weeds can look unsightly, but they will offer shelter to the sown seedlings, are great for bugs, and they will die before the year is out. So, resist cutting the annual weeds until mid to late summer, especially if the mixture contains Yellow Rattle, or has been sown with a nurse of cornfield annuals. Then cut, remove and compost. Early August is a good time. This will reveal the young meadow, which can then be kept short by grazing or mowing through to the end of March of the following year. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.
- 2.3.7 **Management Once Established** - In the second and subsequent years sowings can be managed in several ways. The best results are usually obtained by traditional meadow management based around a main summer hay cut in combination with autumn and possibly spring mowing or grazing.
- 2.3.8 Meadow grassland is not cut or grazed from spring through to late July/August to give the sown species an opportunity to flower. After flowering in July or August take a 'hay cut': cut back with a scythe, petrol strimmer or tractor mower to approx. 50mm. Leave the 'hay' to dry and shed seed for 1-7 days then remove from site. Mow or graze the re-growth through to late autumn/winter to approx. 50mm and again in spring if needed.