

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: David Cross
From: Matt Davies (Ecologist)
Ext: 5278
Memo number: 1
Date of previous memo: -
Date: 30/08/2024

SUBJECT: P/24/0200 | Erection of Coffee Shop with drive thru facility | Land To The South Of Cyfarthfa Retail Park Swansea Road Merthyr Tydfil

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF THE ABOVE APPLICATION

1. Cyfarthfa Retail Park. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Wardell Armstrong on behalf of Corona Vulcan Merthyr Limited. Job number: CA13008. Report number: 001. Version: V5.0. Status: Final. Date issued: August 2024.
2. Cyfarthfa Retail Park, Merthyr Tydfil. Soft Landscape Proposal prepared by Sarah Byrne Ltd. SB/CyfarthfaRP/P/01. Revision B. Date: 8 August 2024.

COMMENTS

Document 1

The *Executive Summary* outlines a list of receptors upon which may be affected adversely due to the proposed scheme in the absence of mitigation. There is no mention of adverse impacts on the habitats present on site (neutral grassland, scattered scrub, scattered trees, dense scrub). Amendments required.

Page 6. Para 2.5.4 – “*The vegetation on Site had been strimmed to ground level which reduced the ability to identify some plant species on Site.*” Technically, this is a pre-emptive clearance prior to a planning application.

Page 30, para 4.2.8 – “*If allowed to regrow, the areas of dense scrub and neutral grassland on Site could have potential to support common reptiles.*”

An impromptu, but brief site visit by the LPA ecologist (on the 30/08/2024) has confirmed that the site has been allowed to re-grow since the PEA was undertaken in January 2024 (see below)



January 2024



August 2024

An amendment to Document 1 is therefore required regarding reptiles.

Document 1 includes reference to 18 species of plant (mostly native), but stresses the reference is not limited to these species – due to the suboptimal time of year the survey was undertaken (January 2024) and the pre-emptive clearance.

NB during the impromptu and brief site visit by the LPA ecologist in August 2024, at least 21 further species were observed over and above those recorded during the January 2024 survey. Taking the total species onsite to at least 39.

Document 2 includes 19 species (mostly ornamental non-native or cultivars). Clearly, therefore this does not represent maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity or Net Benefit for Biodiversity. All species within the landscaping plan must be native species of local (if not Welsh/UK) provenance. The number of native species within the final scheme must exceed the number currently recorded to date on site. In addition, whilst there is compensation for the onsite tree and scrub habitat in the form of tree and hedgerow planting, there is no such compensation for the loss of the neutral grassland habitat.

Suggestions for improving the number of native species plus compensating for the loss of grassland habitat:

- Use of all native species
- Use of at least x5 woody species in the proposed hedge
- Creation of a green roof
- Creation of areas of wildflower grassland.

Document 2

In addition to the other changes required (as outlined in the section above - could the hedge not extend around the whole of the south western boundary?

Planning Policy Wales 12 (PPW 12)

Planning Policy Wales (PPW 12), Chapter 6 must be considered where relevant to this application. The following is required:

- A Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) that:
 - will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into planning proposals;
 - must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach has been applied; and
 - should highlight baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans etc.
 - In addition, the policy indicates that the step wise approach is the means of demonstrating the steps taken towards securing a net benefit for biodiversity. The onus is on developers to bring forward proposals in a way that will achieve a net benefit for biodiversity demonstrating how they have used the step-wise approach.

NB each stage of the step-wise approach must be accompanied by a long-term management plan. The management plan should set out:

- the immediate and on going management of the site;
 - future monitoring arrangements for all secured measures;
 - the funding mechanisms in place to meet the management plan objectives;
 - how a net benefit for biodiversity will be achieved within as short a time as possible and be locally responsive and relevant to local circumstances.
- Having provided evidence in the Green Infrastructure Statement that the step wise approach has been followed, a scheme of enhancements must also be provided to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity.

- o The resilience of ecosystems must also be considered, in particular, the following attributes, known as the DECCA Framework.
- o Planning Policy Wales 12 also requires that where trees are unavoidably lost due to development - *'Replacement planting shall be at a ratio equivalent to the quality, environmental and ecological importance of the tree(s) lost and this must be preferably onsite, or immediately adjacent to the site, and at a minimum ratio of at least 3 trees of a similar type and compensatory size planted for every 1 lost.'*

Enhancements

Full details of the enhancement measures are required, including model type, specifications, design, position, orientation etc (i.e., for bat and bird boxes, hibernacula, woodpiles/loggeries, bug hotels). Wildlife box models will be constructed from woodcrete or woodstone for reasons of longevity.

Enhancements must be clearly marked on all relevant architect plans/drawings/elevations.

PLANNING CONDITIONS (NB further conditions or changes to the conditions may be required following the required amendments as set out above)

- o No development shall take place (including ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan - Biodiversity (CEMP-B) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- o No development shall take place (including ground works, vegetation clearance) until a detailed long-term Landscaping, Habitat & Ecology Scheme (LHES) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The LHES must include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - o Details of retained landscaping/habitat/green infrastructure
 - o Details of new landscaping/habitat/green infrastructure
 - o A planting plan
 - o Long term (at least 25 years) maintenance and management measures for all onsite landscaping/habitat/green infrastructure (both retained and new)
 - o Details of other ecological measures, e.g., bat boxes, bird boxes, hibernacula, gaps in boundaries for hedgehogs etc
 - o Monitoring post-development for all onsite landscaping/habitat/green infrastructure and other ecological measures
 - o Details of the funding mechanisms to meet the maintenance, management and monitoring objectives.
 - o Details of the responsible person
- o No development shall take place (including ground works, vegetation clearance) until an Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- o No development shall take place (including ground works, vegetation clearance) until an internal and external Lighting Scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Lighting Scheme must conform to the latest guidance for wildlife-friendly lighting¹.

¹ Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night. Bat Conservation Trust and The Institute of Lighting Professionals 2023 - <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>