Proposed Housing Development at
Glynhir Road, Pontarddulais

Green Infrastructure Statement

(in accordance with Section 6.2.5 of PPW)

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mh/753

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CONTENTS

Text makes reference to the following:

'Proposed Site Plan' 23066 (05) 200 F (Powell Dobson Architects)
'Strategic Landscape Plan' 753.01 (Haire Landscape Consultants Ltd)
Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by Excal (March 2024)

1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared by Michael Haire, who is a Chartered Landscape Architect. It is a simple statement *'proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal'*

2. The Site

The site is roughly rectangular in plan, being 250m long (north to south) and 60m wide and lies to the west of Glynhir Road as it runs north from Pontarddulais. Glynhir Road eventually runs along the eastern side of the Loughor valley. Housing along it forms an extension of the town, with the site being some 1km northeast of the town centre.

The site is a pasture field of limited ecological value and is contained by housing to the east and south, and by a mixed woodland/hedge to the west. The land slopes down gently across the site from Glynhir Road to the west before rising (outside the site) to a low rounded hill. The adjacent area comprises more pasture fields that in are, in general, contained by agricultural hedges some of which are outgrown.

The western and southern boundary hedges are dense and well established, containing Hawthorn, Hazel, Holly, Rowan and some Ash and Oak. There is an understorey of Bramble and some Dogrose.

The eastern boundary is housing, where garden boundary fences and walls contain the site. There is an access space between houses, to Glynhir Road close to the northern end. The northern boundary is a track that gives access to a farm, Ty'n y Coed. A public footpath runs west along this track from Glynhir Road and climbs the sloping ground for a short distance before running south, along the slope, following the track to Ty'n y Coed, which it passes before connecting to Pontarddulais Comprehensive School to the south.

Wider Landscape (refer PEA)

The site is at the edge of a built-up area that is initially enclosed by farmland but there is a mixed landcover in the surrounding landscape with numerous recognised features of biodiversity value including SINCs within 1km comprising the Loughor Corridor, Camffrwd Valley, Ynys Marshes and Slopes and Banc Darren Fawr. These sites provide a range of habitats.

There are also numerous ancient woodland sites close to the site and the landscape is relatively well connected by agricultural hedges and linear woodlands along railways, roads etc.

The pastoral landscape to the west of the site, that lies between Glynhir Road and Tyn y Bonau Road and which is contained to the north by Glanffrwd Road will be developed for housing. This large development, which includes a junior school and a community park, will retain much of the existing landscape framework of hedges and tree groups. This will preserve and perpetuate established Green Infrastructure links as they affect the site.

3. The proposed development (refer Proposed Site Plan)

The proposal is to construct housing in two rows 'along' the site. These will be accessed via an estate road that will enter the site at its southern end from Maes Teg, which is a cul-de-sac. The access road will be located towards the eastern side of the narrow site, with open space retained along the western boundary. This will preserve the outgrown hedge (broad-leaved woodland) along this side of the site as a 'green buffer'. This feature will link two proposed drainage attenuation basins, one at each end of the site.

The dwellings (29 units) will be a combination of buildings of 2, 3 and 4 units arranged along the eastern and western sides of the access road. The buildings will in the main be separated by parking areas, with a greater concentration of parking at the northern end of the road.

The houses along the road will have small front gardens. The slightly larger rear gardens will be fenced and laid to lawn. The small front gardens will contain areas of shrub planting and lawn and there will be street trees.

There is a services easement (water main) across the northern end of the site, this passes through the gap in the housing along the western edge of Glynhir Road. No housing development is proposed to the north of this feature, although there will be a pedestrian link through to Glynhir Road and a play area.

4. GI Baseline

Refers to Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by Excal, summarised below

The site consists of the following habitat types:

- Semi-natural Broadleaved Woodland (outgrown hedge). Tree species identified consisted primarily of Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and Hazel (Corylus avellana), with occasional Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and Holly (Ilex aquifolium) and some English Oak (Quercus robur), Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia) and Dogrose (Rosa canina)
- Dense/Scattered Scrub (poor quality due to its fragmented and scattered nature)
- Improved Grassland. The range of grasses and flowering plants making up this habitat type were observed to be low, likely due to historical intense grazing, herbicide/fertiliser use and/or as a result of being historically subjected to high doses of manure as part of historical agricultural activities
- Marshy Grassland The habitat was dominated by Soft Rush (Juncus effusus), with occasional Creeping Buttercup (Ranunculus repens) and Creeping Bent (Agrostis stolonifera)
- Walls. The walls are modern in nature and were observed to be in good condition, with no areas of damage which maybe suitable for nesting reptiles being recorded, however, the walls may afford basking opportunity for reptiles.

Proposals for the land to the west and north.
This development comprises housing and a school within the existing landscape framework. A network of Green Infrastructure is included within this proposal.

5 GI Strategy

Green Infrastructure is defined by the Town and Country Planning Association as follows:

Green infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space and other green features, urban and rural, which can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities.

Green infrastructure is not simply an alternative description for conventional open space. It includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands – and also street trees, allotments, private gardens, green roofs and walls, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and soils. It includes rivers, streams, canals and other water bodies, sometimes called 'blue infrastructure'.

Key features:

The key features of green infrastructure are that it is a network of integrated spaces and features, not just individual elements; and that it is 'multi-functional' – it provides multiple benefits simultaneously.

These can be to:

- *support people's mental and physical health*
- *encourage active travel*
- *cool urban areas during heat waves*
- *attract investment*
- *reduce water run-off during flash flooding*
- *carbon storage*
- *provide sustainable drainage*

The extent to which green infrastructure provides these benefits depends on how it is designed and maintained, and the maturity and health of the elements (such as trees) that form it.

In accordance with the latest updated Chapter 6 policy, the stepwise approach has been followed in protecting (creating) and enhancing Green Infrastructure at the Glynhir Road site. Refer to **Strategic Landscape Plan**.

A Identify and Assess
B Avoid
C Respond and Design
D Mitigate
E Compensate
F Enhance
G Manage
H Monitor

The site lies within a landscape that has a relatively high level of connectivity. It is bordered by the linear woodland (outgrown hedge) and this will link to the open countryside to the north or, once the Pontarddulais North development has been implemented, this site will link to the Green Infrastructure network of this development.

5.1 Identify and Assess (A)

The preliminary ecology assessment has identified the main features of value and assesses them. These are:

Grassland, Woodland, Scattered scrub, Species-poor hedge, Marshy grassland, and Walls

5.2 Avoid (B) Respond and Design (C)

Of these features, the woodland along the western boundary will provide a core element of the post development Green Infrastructure. The proposed layout has taken this into account and avoids affecting this feature, which has been recognised as a 'Green Buffer' in response to the finding of the PEA.

Although of limited biodiversity value, the (garden) walls and much of the marshy grassland will also be avoided.

The outgrown hedge at the southern end of the site will be affected by the construction of the new site access. This loss will be offset by compensation planting elsewhere (principally at the northern hedge: refer below).

The avoidance of these features retains them as the basis of an enhanced Green Infrastructure and improved interface and connectivity between the site and its surroundings.

5.3 Mitigate (D) and Compensate (E)

This has been recognised in the proposals. Some loss of trees at the southern end of the site will be compensated by reinforcement planting at the northern boundary, where there is an existing species-poor hedgerow that will be reinforced. Native trees will also be planted along the ecological buffer and where space allows elsewhere in the margins of the site.

Some marshy grassland will be lost, but this will be more than compensated for by the proposed damp/wetland habitats proposed as part of the drainage strategy.

5.4 Introduce new habitats, manage (G) and monitor (H)

The development of attenuation basins at the northern and southern ends of the site (as a consequence of the SAB regulations) will generate a new range of habitats that will complement the established woodland belt and retained understorey and grassland of the 'green buffer'. This will increase the biodiversity of the site, allowing wildlife to colonise a currently denuded area. This infrastructure will be monitored and managed as required by the SAB approval.

Other biodiversity enhancements include bird and bat boxes and hibernacula/refugia and the introduction of fruit-bearing trees where possible as street trees. This will increase the amount of good habitat for nesting birds, in particular. Monitoring of these measures is recommended by the ecologist.

The modest amount of amenity planting associated with the front gardens and communal areas will include flowering shrubs and berry-bearing trees. The food source and structure provided by these features will support birdlife.

6 Conclusion

The site 'baseline' is of limited biodiversity value although it does have some positive species and is situated close to a diverse landscape.

The site is constrained by topography and access considerations, but the proposed layout recognises and retains the existing G I assets and the drainage strategy will boost biodiversity. The presence of a services easement near its northern end is beneficial for G I in that it requires a green space to be retained in this area.

The proposed development will introduce new habitats associated with the site drainage and will reinforce existing features that are of limited quality or in poor condition. This will increase the range of habitats and improve links with the surrounding landscape. Also proposed are new biodiversity enhancements in the form of bird and bat boxes and refugia for small animals (including Hedgehog) and invertebrates.

Green Infrastructure connectivity will be enhanced as a result.