

Green Infrastructure Statement

Site Address: Porthcawl Hotel, John Street, Porthcawl CF36 3AP

Proposed Development: Revised scheme for P/18/758/FUL comprising the proposed refurbishment & redevelopment (partial demolition) including the provision of 22x 1 & 2 bedroom residential units and commercial units at ground floor

Planning Portal Reference: PP-13501951

Site description: The application site is located within the Porthcawl Town Centre. The proposed site lies to the far South of the town and is within a 5 minute walk of Porthcawl's Esplanade. The site comprises 0.08ha which lies on the busy corner of Dock Street and John Street in the town centre of Porthcawl.

The application site is currently a residential development site under planning permission P/18/758/FUL for the refurbishment and redevelopment of the site to provide 17 no. residential units and commercial units of the former Porthcawl Hotel which is a Victorian building with later additions built between 1887 and 1897.

Surrounding Area description: The site is surrounded predominantly by small shops with the exception of one medium sized retail unit that sits directly opposite on the Southern boundary. The closest residential street is to the eastern boundary of the site. The existing boundary of the site is adjoined at only one point. The northern building boundary which adjoins the neighbouring at ground floor level completely, first floor level partially and second floor level partially. The site is located within walking distance of all local primary schools and secondary schools.

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 and Net Benefits for Biodiversity: 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. Enhancement*

must be secured by delivering a biodiversity benefit primarily on site or immediately adjacent to the site, above that mitigate or for any impact.”

over and required to compensate negative



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.

Baseline Data

In accordance to paragraph 6.4.16 of Planning Policy Wales, when a site has been cleared prior to development, its biodiversity value should be deemed to have been as it was before any site investigations or clearance took place. The baseline data will therefore be taken prior to the approval of the planning application P/18/758/FUL.

As mentioned in the site description section, the application site only comprises of the Porthcawl Hotel with no hedgerows nor trees located within the site boundary. It is therefore considered that there is no green infrastructure on site. The bat survey report confirms the above and it is considered the building and its condition offered limited features for bat occupation. The location of the building, being in an urban environment with poor ecological connectivity to suitable feeding areas and moderate street lighting surrounding the building made the local of the building suboptimal for bat use/ The building did not offer significant potential for hibernating bats. No direct evidence of bat use was identified

Bridgend County Council GI Baseline Map: As shown below, the Bridgend Green Infrastructure Assessment 2022 echoes the above and confirm that there are no green infrastructure present on site.



Development Impacts: Throughout the bat surveys, a very low number of bat calls were recorded and no bats were observed using the building. Therefore, it is suggested that the impact of the proposed building works will have a negligible impact on the local bat population.

Demonstrating Net Benefits for Biodiversity [NBB]: It is proposed that new roosting for crevice dwelling species of bat will be created underneath the entire row of ridge tiles. This will be accessed by 6 number raised ridge tiles. The raised ridge tiles will have two access apertures measuring 100mm long by 25mm high on the front elevation and one on the rear.

The roosting area will benefit from uninterrupted access to the sun on its southern aspect. This along with the heat generated from the living space will create a favourable temperature range for bats. The roosting area will be sufficient in size for a maternity colony to establish.

The enhancement proposal will assist with the creation of a resilient and biodiverse ecological network to provide biodiversity net benefits at the application site.

Conclusion: It is acknowledged that the application site only comprises the existing building of the former hotel with no green infrastructure present on site. However, by providing biodiversity net benefits via the provision of bat roofs at the application site, it is considered to be an acceptable solution. No other provisions through enhanced landscaping are possible given the site boundary only incorporates the building itself. On this basis, it is considered that this application demonstrates compliance with PPW and follows the Step-Wise Approach.

Signed: Glenn Lee

Dated: 12th November 2024