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Biodiversity Enhancement Statement

The Nook, Ancton Lane, Middleton, PO22 6NN

Construction of a single-storey rear/side infill extension adjoining the existing conservatory, replacement of the existing conservatory roof with a new lightweight pitched roof incorporating two rooflights, and associated external alterations.

1. Introduction

This Biodiversity Enhancement Statement has been prepared in support of a householder planning application for proposed alterations and a modest extension to the existing dwelling at The Nook, Ancton Lane, Middleton-on-Sea, PO22 6NN.

The proposal comprises the construction of a small single-storey infill extension alongside the existing rear conservatory together with replacement of the existing semi-transparent lightweight conservatory roof with a new solid lightweight mono-pitched roof incorporating two rooflights.

The development is confined to an established residential property and affects only a very small area immediately adjacent to the existing dwelling and conservatory.

The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate that the proposed development appropriately considers the existing ecological characteristics of the site, avoids unnecessary loss of habitat and provides opportunities for proportionate biodiversity enhancement within the retained domestic garden.

2. Planning Policy and Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposal has been considered in relation to Policy ENV DM5 of the Arun Local Plan, which seeks to protect existing habitats and encourages development to achieve biodiversity enhancement where appropriate.

Arun District Council confirms that Policy ENV DM5 requires development schemes, in the first instance, to seek a net gain in biodiversity and protect existing habitats on site.

The proposal is a householder planning application for alterations and an extension within the curtilage of an existing dwelling.

Householder development, including domestic extensions and conservatories, is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement. Current Government guidance expressly identifies householder applications as exempt development.

Accordingly, a statutory Biodiversity Metric and Biodiversity Gain Plan are not required for the development.

Notwithstanding this exemption, the proposal has been considered with regard to the avoidance of unnecessary ecological impacts and the opportunities available for reasonable and proportionate biodiversity enhancement.

3. Existing Site and Ecological Context

The application site comprises an established residential dwelling, existing conservatory and associated domestic rear garden.

The rear garden is relatively simple in character and is predominantly laid to lawn with ordinary domestic planting around its margins.

The garden has a generally south-facing aspect and consequently benefits from good levels of sunlight, providing opportunities for additional garden planting and flowering species in the future.

The area directly affected by the proposed extension is a narrow strip alongside the existing conservatory.

This area is currently predominantly surfaced with gravel and contains no established shrubs, hedging or other significant vegetation.

No trees are located within or immediately adjacent to the proposed building works that would be affected by the development.

There are no ponds or other identified aquatic habitat features within the area affected by the proposal.

The applicants are not aware of any evidence of bats, nesting birds or other protected species using the gravel extension area or the existing conservatory roof.

The existing conservatory roof is formed from lightweight semi-transparent plastic sheeting rather than a traditional tiled or boarded roof construction.



Figure 1 – Aerial View of the Site

The aerial view illustrates the established residential setting of The Nook and the relationship between the existing dwelling, rear garden and surrounding residential properties.

4. Proposed Development

The proposed works are limited in scale and are concentrated immediately alongside the existing dwelling and conservatory.

The principal works comprise:

- construction of a small single-storey infill extension alongside the existing conservatory;
- replacement of the existing semi-transparent conservatory roof with a solid lightweight mono-pitched roof;
- installation of two rooflights;
- associated internal alterations; and
- alteration of a very small section of existing boundary fencing where required to accommodate the new construction.

The new extension has an approximate roof area of only 2.5 m² and occupies an area currently surfaced predominantly with gravel.

No demolition of other buildings or structures is proposed beyond removal of the existing lightweight conservatory roof.

The proposed drawings show the extension contained within the narrow space alongside the existing conservatory, with the remainder of the rear garden unaffected.

5. Existing Vegetation and Habitat Retention

The proposal has been designed so that the established soft landscaped rear garden can remain substantially unchanged.

No trees, established shrubs or hedges require removal to accommodate the development.

The new extension is positioned principally over an existing gravelled area rather than an area of established soft landscaping.

The only boundary alteration required is a very small section of existing timber fence, approximately 250 mm in extent, necessary to accommodate the proposed extension.

This limited alteration does not result in any meaningful loss of vegetation or wildlife habitat.

The remainder of the rear garden will remain as lawn and domestic planting and will continue to provide the same general opportunities for garden wildlife following completion of the development.

6. Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities

Although the development is very modest and does not result in significant habitat loss, the retained garden provides opportunities for biodiversity enhancement over time.

The applicants have recently moved to the property and intend to introduce additional planting within the garden as it develops.

Where new planting is undertaken, consideration can be given to locally appropriate and wildlife-friendly shrubs, flowering plants and other garden species capable of providing nectar, pollen, shelter and seasonal food sources.

The precise planting species, quantities and locations do not need to be fixed as part of this small householder application and can appropriately evolve as part of the normal management and improvement of the domestic garden.

Other simple biodiversity enhancement opportunities may include, where the householders consider them appropriate:

- provision of bird nesting boxes;
- provision of suitable bat boxes;
- incorporation of pollinator-friendly garden planting;
- retention of areas of lawn and soft landscaping; and
- creation of small-scale garden habitat features such as log or leaf piles.

These measures are opportunities rather than fixed requirements of the proposed building works and can be introduced progressively as part of the future use and management of the garden.

7. Birds and Bats

No known evidence of bats or nesting birds has been identified within the part of the property affected by the proposed works.

The existing conservatory roof comprises lightweight semi-transparent plastic sheeting and does not contain the traditional tiles, roof voids, eaves or similar features commonly capable of providing significant roosting opportunities.

The proposed extension area comprises gravel rather than vegetation capable of providing nesting habitat.

The main roof and eaves of the existing dwelling will not be altered as part of the proposal.

There is consequently no anticipated direct disturbance to the principal roof structure of the house.

Notwithstanding the limited ecological potential of the affected area, normal precautionary measures will be followed during construction.

Should evidence of a protected species unexpectedly be encountered during the works, construction affecting that feature will cease while appropriate ecological advice is obtained.

Bird and bat boxes could also be installed within the wider residential curtilage in the future should the occupants wish to provide additional nesting or roosting opportunities.

8. Soft Landscaping and Future Planting

The existing south-facing rear garden will remain substantially unaffected by the development.

Its predominantly lawned and planted character will be retained.

The good levels of sunlight received by the garden provide suitable conditions for a range of flowering and wildlife-friendly garden plants.

The applicants intend to introduce additional shrubs and planting as they establish and develop the garden.

Where practicable, future planting can favour species that provide ecological value as well as normal domestic landscaping benefits.

This could include plants providing:

- pollen and nectar for bees, butterflies and other insects;
- berries, seeds or other seasonal food for birds;
- shelter and cover for small garden wildlife; and
- flowering interest at different times of the year.

The intention is not to prescribe a formal ecological landscaping scheme for this very small householder development, but rather to allow biodiversity enhancement to form part of the normal future development of the domestic garden.

9. External Lighting and Night-Time Environment

No new external lighting is proposed as part of the development.

The existing conservatory currently has a semi-transparent lightweight roof through which internal illumination can be transmitted upwards when the room is occupied during hours of darkness.

The proposal replaces this with a substantially solid lightweight roof, with only two rooflights incorporated within the roof slope.

The change from a predominantly semi-transparent roof to a solid roof is likely to reduce the amount of upward light transmission from the occupied conservatory at night.

While modest in scale, this represents a potential incidental improvement to the night-time environment by reducing unnecessary upward light spill.

This may provide a small associated benefit for bats, insects and other nocturnal wildlife using surrounding residential gardens.

No additional external lighting is required as part of the proposal, and therefore the development does not introduce a new source of external illumination along garden boundaries or within the retained soft landscaped area.

10. Construction Works

Reasonable care will be taken during construction to minimise unnecessary disturbance to the retained rear garden and neighbouring garden environment.

The proposed construction area is very limited and principally comprises the existing gravel strip and conservatory roof.

Construction materials and waste will be appropriately stored and managed to avoid unnecessary damage or contamination of retained garden areas.

No substantial vegetation clearance is required.

Should any unexpected evidence of nesting birds or protected species be identified during the works, the relevant area will be left undisturbed and appropriate advice obtained before work affecting that feature continues.

The retained lawn and garden areas outside the immediate construction zone will remain substantially unaffected.

11. Biodiversity Net Gain

The development comprises a householder planning application for extensions and alterations within the curtilage of an existing residential dwelling.

Government guidance confirms that householder development, including domestic extensions and conservatories, is exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement.

Accordingly, the statutory biodiversity gain condition does not apply and a formal Biodiversity Metric calculation is not required.

The development is nevertheless designed to avoid unnecessary habitat loss.

The extension is positioned over an existing predominantly gravelled area, no trees or significant vegetation will be removed and the established lawn and domestic garden will remain.

There are therefore no significant existing habitats being displaced by the proposed development.

The retained south-facing garden also provides opportunities for additional wildlife-friendly planting and other simple biodiversity enhancement measures in the future.

12. Conclusion

The proposed development comprises a very modest householder extension and replacement conservatory roof within the established residential curtilage of The Nook.

The works are concentrated on an existing conservatory and a small adjoining area currently surfaced predominantly with gravel.

No trees, established shrubs or hedges require removal.

No pond or other significant habitat feature is affected.

Only a very small section of existing timber boundary fencing, approximately 250 mm in extent, requires alteration.

The remainder of the south-facing rear garden will remain substantially unchanged as lawn and domestic planting.

The main dwelling roof and eaves remain unaffected by the development and there is no known evidence of bats, nesting birds or other protected species within the area directly affected by the works.

The replacement of the existing semi-transparent conservatory roof with a predominantly solid roof is also likely to reduce upward transmission of internal light during hours of darkness, providing a modest incidental improvement to the night-time environment.

No new external lighting is proposed.

Although the proposal is exempt from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement as householder development, opportunities remain for proportionate enhancement through future wildlife-friendly planting and optional bird, bat or other simple garden habitat features.

The proposal therefore avoids significant biodiversity impacts, retains the established garden habitat and provides reasonable opportunities for biodiversity enhancement proportionate to the very small scale and residential nature of the development.