



Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan

Non-Technical Summary

This report sets out the plan for managing and enhancing the landscape and wildlife habitats at Two Chimneys, Stotfold Road, Letchworth. It has been prepared to meet planning requirements and ensure that the development delivers a net gain for biodiversity.

The development includes a rear extension with a covered veranda, a first-floor side extension, changes to windows and cladding, repainting, and landscaping improvements. The landscape works will include planting trees and shrubs and improving the grass areas.

A qualified ecologist or Biodiversity Champion will be involved during construction to ensure that all wildlife protection measures are followed. If any protected species are found, work will stop immediately and expert advice will be sought.

Long-term habitat management will be carried out by Branching Out 2 and specialist contractors, following the guidance in this plan. Health and safety will be a priority at all times, with risk assessments and trained staff ensuring safety for workers and the public.

Overall, the plan aims to enhance the natural environment, protect wildlife, and maintain these improvements for at least 30 years.

Introduction

Site name

Two Chimneys

Purpose of report

Ostara Ecological Services Ltd was commissioned to produce a Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan (LEMP) for Two Chimneys, Stotfold Road, Letchworth, SG6 4JS. UK Grid reference: TL 20494 33573. This report has been prepared in order to discharge the pre-commencement condition for application 25/02082/FP, which states:

4. The development shall not commence until a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority and including:

(a) a non-technical summary;

(b) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the LEMP;

(c) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;

(d) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development.

The measures should be delivered and remain on site thereafter.



In conjunction	<i>Reason: In order to safeguard biodiversity and comply with Policy NE4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031.</i>
	The information given in this report is based on the findings of previous surveys and reports. This report should be read in conjunction with the reports listed below: ★ Ostara Ecological Services LTD (2025) Ecological Appraisal ★ Two Chimneys_Biodiversity_gain_plan (submitted to the council on 13th November 2025) ★ 5812-04C PROPOSED PLANS
Aim(s)	This LEMP has been prepared to ensure that the opportunities for mitigation and enhancement are realised. The aim of this LEMP is to: ★ Set out the agreed objectives for landscape management of the site; ★ Set clear standards for the performance of landscape maintenance work; ★ Assist in the development of work programmes for landscape maintenance staff; ★ Establish landscape maintenance responsibilities; and ★ Help monitor success and progress against the aims and objectives.
	The National Planning Policy Framework, 2024 (NPPF) identifies ways in which the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment (Paragraph 174), including minimising impacts on biodiversity and promoting net gains where possible. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity in and around developments are to be encouraged which are resilient to current and future pressures and as such, local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that such opportunities are taken. This LEMP has been prepared to ensure that the opportunities for enhancement are realised.
Development proposal	Erection of rear extension with covered veranda area, first floor side extension, alterations to fenestration and fascias, external cladding, repainting of existing render and brickwork and landscaping works.
Location	Two Chimneys, Stotfold Road, Letchworth, SG6 4JS. UK Grid reference: TL 20494 33573.
Proposals	The proposed Landscape Plan includes: ★ Trees; ★ Introduced shrubs; and ★ Modified grassland.



Personnel Responsible

Management

Branching Out 2 shall be responsible for the implementation of this LEMP and will appoint a land manager to carry out the objectives of this document. Should the site be sold, it will be the responsibility of LEMP to be passed on to the new owner.

Land Manager

The land manager would be responsible for the implementation of the LEMP during the operational phase. The land manager will be provided with a copy of this LEMP and liaise with Applewood Construction for the main build. Branching Out 2 for the landscaping works and consultant ecologist were required to ensure that the stipulated measures are being implemented correctly.

Ecologist

The Ecologist shall be suitably qualified and experienced and be a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). When undertaking monitoring, a Natural England bat licence will be required.

The Ecologist will be appointed to carry out the monitoring as set out within this LEMP. They will also be required to provide advice on the positioning of habitat boxes and potentially advise on other aspects of habitat creation and management.

Environmental Considerations

Horticultural Peat

Horticultural peat is not to be used as mulch on any beds or as a soil conditioner. Wherever possible plants grown without peat will be preferred to those grown using peat.

Recycled Materials

Where appropriate, use should be made of materials made from recycled components e.g. wood chip mulch.

Pesticides / Herbicides

A minimal intervention and organic approach will be used in terms of weed control. In areas of transplant trees, ornamental shrub and herbaceous planting, this is to be achieved by using mulch mats and hand weeding. Weed killers and other chemicals will be used as little as possible on site. Spot removal of weeds will be carried out by hand removal as necessary.

Water Management

Where necessary, maintenance staff are to water plants at appropriate times of the day to ensure minimum water evaporation. If appropriate and available, recycled water should be used e.g. from rainwater harvesting.

General Maintenance Requirements

General Maintenance

It is recommended that all new planting on site is subject to ongoing management to maximise the value of these habitats to wildlife. Minimal use of pesticides and ensuring vegetation pruning works take place outside of the bird nesting season will aid this approach.

Maintenance operations are to be carried out in accordance with BS 4428: Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations. Maintenance of soft landscaping is to be in accordance



General Maintenance Requirements

with BS 7370-4: Grounds Maintenance. Recommendations for Maintenance of Soft Landscape.

Trees and Associated Works

All tree surgery work is to be carried out to BS 3998:2010 Tree Work– Recommendations, and should be undertaken by a suitably qualified operative. Where a tree poses a health and safety hazard, advice will be sought from an arboriculturist.

If planting of new trees is proposed these should have regard to Section 10 of BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape.

All plants to conform to BS: 3936 and be in accordance with the National Plant Specification.

All new tree planting, if included, shall be checked at each maintenance visit for damage, security, firmness, fixing and support. Any trees that fail to thrive in the first year shall be replaced with the same species and variety at the size specified on the original landscape planting plans. Replacements will be planted during the following planting season. If a particular species fails to establish successfully then an alternative, comparable species should be considered as replacement, in agreement with the landscape consultant. Replacement planting of container plants to be undertaken as required, root-ball/bare root planting to be undertaken November to March.

New Planting

Amenity bark mulch shall be topped up annually to a depth of 50mm to ensure maximum coverage as specified and areas of bare soil is prevented. To avoid accidentally damaging plants, herbicides will not be used to control weeds once foliage covers 75% of the ground surface.

An 800mm diameter circle of bark mulch to a depth of 50mm will be retained around individual trees in grass in order to suppress grass and weed growth and minimise the risk of mower/strimmer damage.

Care should be taken not to over-water planting. Until well established all trees are to be watered during the growing season. Following any dry periods of 7-10 days, soil moisture content should be assessed and watering undertaken as necessary. Each tree is to receive 40 litres of water or as required to ensure all tree planted areas are brought up to field capacity at each visit. If trees are showing signs of drought stress the watering regime should be reviewed and increased as required. Care should be taken to ensure applied water is absorbed into the root-zone and does not run off the surface.

Introduced shrubs

Introduced shrubs should be maintained to ensure healthy establishment and long-term visual and ecological value. During the first 1–2 years, regular watering is essential, particularly during dry periods, to support root development. Shrub beds must be kept free of weeds through hand weeding or the use of mulch, which also helps retain soil moisture. Annual mulching with organic material is recommended. Light formative pruning should be carried out in the early years to establish structure, followed by routine pruning to remove dead, damaged, or overcrowded growth. Shrubs should be monitored for pests and diseases, with environmentally sensitive treatments applied as needed. Any dead or diseased plants should be replaced in the next appropriate planting season to maintain coverage. Routine removal of litter and debris should also be undertaken to preserve the site's appearance and health.

Modified grassland

To maintain and enhance the biodiversity, structure, and ecological function of modified grassland areas, ensuring their long-term viability and integration into the wider landscape.



General Maintenance Requirements

Modified (Amenity) grassland should be maintained to provide a tidy, functional, and visually appealing green space suitable for recreational use. Regular mowing is essential, typically on a fortnightly basis during the growing season (March to October), with the grass kept at a height of around 25–50 mm. Arisings may be left in place or removed depending on the desired nutrient levels and site use. Edges should be trimmed or mowed regularly to maintain neat boundaries. Weed control should be carried out as necessary, using spot treatment methods to manage broadleaf weeds without harming the turf. Litter and debris must be collected regularly to ensure the area remains clean and safe. Any bare or damaged patches should be reseeded in the appropriate season to maintain full grass coverage and visual quality.

Litter and Arisings

Litter and debris shall be cleared by hand and removed from the site on a monthly basis. Recycling or composting of arisings should be a priority.

Public use of the habitats is to be monitored at each maintenance visit (six monthly inspection) and any signs or evidence of abuse is to be addressed if necessary, misuse and inappropriate behaviour is to be reported to the police.

Lighting

Lighting within the Site already exists around the car park and pub entrances, however any additional lighting could affect the ways that the bats in the area are able to use the Site. As a result, it is recommended that construction works are to be undertaken in daylight hours only with no night hours work permitted. If additional lighting is required, a sensitive lighting strategy should be implemented on site and follow the guidance set out in Bats and Lighting in the UK (BCT and ILP, 2018). A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will include the following measures:

- ★ Use narrow spectrum light sources to lower the range of species affected by lighting.
- ★ Use light sources that emit minimal ultraviolet light.
- ★ Avoid white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to reduce insect attraction and where white light sources are required in order to manage the blue shortwave length content they should be of a warm / neutral colour temperature <4,200 kelvin.
- ★ Not use bare bulbs and any light pointing upwards. The spread of light will be kept in line with or below the horizontal.
- ★ Light spill will be reduced via the use of low-level lighting used in conjunction with hoods, cowls,
- ★ louvres and shields. Lights will also be directional to ensure that light is directed to the intended areas only.
- ★ External lighting will be on PIR sensors that are sensitive to large objects only (so that they are not triggered by passing bats) and will be set to the shortest time duration to reduce the amount of time the lights are on.
- ★ Wall lights and security lights will be 'dimable' and set to the lowest light intensity settings. There are several products on the market that allow the control of the light intensity and the duration that the lights are on. All lighting on the developed site will make use of the most up to date technology available.

If works are subject to change/ alter and any impacts to the roosts a Natural England Licence will be required.



Construction Phase

Removal of existing vegetation

Where vegetation is to be removed, it will be carried out outside the bird nesting season, i.e. not between March to August inclusive. Where works in the spring/summer are unavoidable, vegetation will be cleared the preceding winter or following a survey by an ecologist to confirm the absence of nesting birds.

Existing Retained Habitats and Features

Prior to any construction works associated being carried out, temporary protective fencing will be installed around areas of vegetation that are to be retained; trees. The temporary protective fencing will be erected in accordance with the guidance set out in BS5837:2012.

The temporary protective fencing shall remain in place until all construction activities have taken place. The fencing should not be moved at any point during construction, with stockpiling of materials prohibited and no vehicles allowed to enter the exclusion area at any point during construction.

There will be clear delineation of working areas and access routes for vehicles entering the site and instructions on these will be given to all site construction staff, delivery drivers and subcontractors.

Bats

Trees will be protected within a protective buffer as above, measuring a minimum of 5 m from the base of the tree.

Birds

Where vegetation is to be removed, it will be carried out outside the bird nesting season.

Where works in the spring/summer are unavoidable, vegetation will be cleared following a survey by an ecologist to confirm the absence of nesting birds.

Reptiles / amphibians / foraging mammals

Standard mitigations to prevent entrapment in open excavations. Avoidance of hibernation period for amphibians, reptiles and hedgehogs (October to February).

Protection of Notable Species

Management Prescriptions

Construction Staff Awareness

Ecology can often be seen as a hindrance to development because the presence of protected species hampers development. This is often caused by a lack of awareness of the presence of flora and fauna on site, and the activities that can be lawfully conducted whilst animals in particular are using the site. To overcome these issues, Aspire management company will include site practices, to raise awareness of ecological issues, and take the required steps to prevent harm coming to any animals that may use the site during the development programme, through training of staff on site for example.

The Biodiversity Champion will be given the authority to pause works whilst remedial actions are taken to reduce the risk of prosecution of the contractor(s), and to input into the construction phasing to ensure that site activities, such as the installation of sedum roofs and bird/bat boxes are conducted at appropriate times of year and at appropriate times in the construction



Management Prescriptions

programme. For example all structures potentially used by birds must be examined for the presence of birds before works.

It is recommended that the Biodiversity Champion role is fulfilled by the Project Environmental Coordinator at Aspire Management, as this will ensure that the ecological requirements of the project are complied with. The Biodiversity Champion, or somebody appointed by the Biodiversity Champion will also develop and deliver training to site staff to enable them to comply with the legal requirements for protecting animals and plants and promote best practice on site.

The Biodiversity Champion will keep a record of the training given to site staff in the induction notes, and will keep a diary or log of site inspections conducted. The effectiveness of the measures described will also be recorded, along with any actions required, such as the use of a falconer to discourage birds from site (e.g. Thursday 27 March. Site inspection conducted by X. Pair of pigeons noted attempting to nest on 5th floor - falconer called in to scare birds off and prevent nesting).

Two new feature olive trees are proposed. Aftercare and establishment works are to be carried out by an approved landscape contractor in accordance with good horticultural practice or the current British Standard with reference to:

- ★ BS 4428: Code of practice for general landscape operations;
- ★ BS 7370: Grounds maintenance;
- ★ BS 8545: Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape – recommendations.

Three broad aftercare and establishment periods for new planting are identified below, these are not mutually exclusive and a programme of monitoring will be necessary to ensure the landscape objectives are met.

Short term (1-5 years)

Refer to table below for details.

Medium term (5-10 years)

As the planting establishes during this period, less frequent maintenance will be required. Initial thinning may be necessary to ensure planting thrives without competition.

Long term (10-30 + years)

As the planting matures, continual monitoring will inform a rolling maintenance programme, to ensure that effective maintenance is carried out at the appropriate time to meet health and safety requirements.

During the Short Term (initial establishment) period, inspections shall take place annually in October/November to determine the effectiveness of the establishment and aftercare provisions to that point, paying particular attention to:

1. Planting disease, damage or death;
2. Vandalism;
3. General appearance and condition;
4. Any invasive or non-native species;

New trees



Management Prescriptions

5. Any evidence of protected species (such as nesting birds).

If required, the LEMP will be revised and forthcoming maintenance operations adjusted accordingly.

Reviews will continue to take place beyond the initial 5 year period subject to an assessment of the prevailing conditions on site as part of the 5 year LEMP review. These shall also identify any necessary remedial works on planting affecting publicly accessible areas. Safety issues reported by the public shall also be investigated as soon as practically possible and remedial works undertaken as necessary.

Young sapling trees, whips and feather planting will be provided with “Treebio Biodegradable Spiral Guards (Green-tech Product Code: 160PS1031-PRO) or similar, ensuring that the main or terminal bud is protruding out above the top of the spirals.

Introduced shrubs

Introduced shrubs, where possible should be of native origin or benefiting wildlife such as nectar rich to encourage insects. For successful establishment and wildlife benefits, plant native or introduced shrubs during the dormant season (late fall to early spring) and prepare the site with proper soil testing, weed control, and mulching. In the first year, weekly watering, maintaining a weed-free zone, and protecting young shrubs. Years 2–3 require minimal pruning, continued mulching, and occasional fertilization if growth is slow. By years 4–5, shrubs reach maturity, benefiting wildlife through fruiting and shelter while requiring light pruning and selective thinning to maintain habitat diversity. Native shrubs like elderberry, serviceberry, and wild plum are excellent choices, while non-invasive introduced species like lilac and rugosa rose also support pollinators and birds.

Modified grassland

For the small areas of amenity grassland proposed, a flowering lawn mixture (such as EL1-flowering lawn mixture¹ or such as WFG20 Eco Species Rich Lawn²) would be a suitable selection that would offer pollen resources and habitat for invertebrates, and increase the overall diversity. These proposed mixes contain slow growing grasses with a selection of wildflowers that respond well to regular short mowing. 20% of the mix is wildflowers, this includes the following species. Leaving areas of this grassland unmown during spring and late summer would increase the value of the grassland to invertebrates.

Injurious Weeds

The land will be managed to ensure that any of the five injurious weeds (Weeds Act 1959) do not proliferate or spread on the site. The five species include:

- ★ Common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*
- ★ Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*
- ★ Creeping or field thistle *Cirsium arvense*
- ★ Broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*
- ★ Curled dock *Rumex crispus*

Should any of these species become problematic (i.e. a spread to more than 10% of the total field), management prescriptions may need to be altered.

¹ <https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/special-habitat-mixtures/flowering-lawn-mixture/>

² <https://germinalamenity.com/wfg20-eco-species-rich-lawn>



Management Prescriptions

Firstly, the weeds will be cut to ground level prior to flowering and the stocking density within that field will be reduced to lessen disturbance to the sward. Ragwort may need to be hand pulled rather than cut.

Should the spread of weeds remain at >10% after two years of cutting/reduction in stocking density, weeds will either be:

- ★ Spot treated with a broad spectrum, non-persistent herbicide; or
- ★ Pulled out by hand; or
- ★ Treated with a species-specific selective weed killer.

The spread of undesirable plants will be monitored by the site operator and through monitoring visits by an ecologist.

General Landscaping

Planting should occur between November – March, preferably in November after the first frost. A dibber should be used to plant bare root trees with suitable biodegradable guards. New planting will be left to establish for a minimum of two years, then cut on an annual basis until well-established to promote a thick, scrubby growth in regards to decorative shrubs.

Remedial Measures

The following remedial measures will be implemented as required:

- ★ Shrub planting will be restocked as necessary (refer to conditions and landscape plans for full details).
- ★ Tree planting and landscaping will be monitored annually and subsequent changes to the management will be provided where necessary.
- ★ A monitoring report will be produced annually and an update of the LEMP will be issued if significant changes are required or after 5 years to ensure the habitats are performing as per the monitoring.

Monitoring

Monitoring will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to assess the ecological development of the site. Monitoring will focus upon several taxonomic groups.

Biological monitoring will ensure the habitat is established as intended and will track the development of the sward, which should increase in diversity over time. Monitoring will also give an early-warning of any injurious weeds or vegetation failure that may occur. Over time the monitoring information will build up a picture of the ecological benefits of the site to a broad range of species.

Recommendations may be made to amend the management prescriptions to promote a more diverse sward and/or ensure the LEMP objectives are met. Recommendations may include a change in management or supply of additional seed or planting.



Working Methods

ECoW / Biodiversity Champion

A suitably qualified ecologist and / or Biodiversity Champion will be available during the construction period to ensure delivery. This will be through the provision of onsite advice and ecological method statements to deliver mitigation. The ECoW / Biodiversity Champion will also perform an essential role in dealing with 'on the ground' and unforeseen issues and provide changes to the guidance documents and / or working practices (agreed consent from the Local Authority may also be required).

If any protected species are encountered during ground works, works must stop immediately, and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Management Responsibility

It is envisaged that the long-term management of the habitats that are the subject of this LEMP will be undertaken by Branching Out 2 along with appropriately qualified contractors and sub-contractors, to manage the site for the benefit of wildlife. The management would be undertaken in accordance with this LEMP.

Specialist Contractors may be used as required to complete specialist operations or occasional works.

Health and Safety

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management Company and all contractors will carry out their own risk assessment in respect of all operations and external hazards. All operatives will be appropriately trained and qualified. The health and safety of the general public will be ensured at all times.



Management Plan for Landscape

Feature	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6 & thereafter
General Landscape	Planting undertaken between November – March.	Annual inspection to identify any remedial actions required.	Repeat as per year 2.	Continue with annual inspections & undertake any remedial action as required. Any habitat management to avoid bird nesting season.	Repeat on rotation as required.	
New Tree planting	The initial establishment period will require more frequent maintenance operations. Replacement planting and remedial works will be carried out and planting sundries maintained in good condition.				Refer to text above for long term management.	
Injurious weeds	Annual inspection to identify any remedial actions required.					

Management Plan per month once established

Prescriptions	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Modified Grassland	Litter pick	Litter pick	light mow and remove scrub	light mow and remove scrub	No Mow May ³	light mow and remove scrub	light mow and remove scrub	Litter pick	Litter pick	Last mow of the year.	Litter pick	Litter pick
Seeding of bare areas												
Management of grassland: Year 1-2 Regular cutting during first year with arisings removed												
Management of grassland: Years 3-10 Management over subsequent years												
Management of injurious weeds: weeds to be cut and/or weed killed where necessary												
Introduced shrubs planting Setting out and planting of locally appropriate native species adjacent to the footpath and identification of areas to be gapped up.												

Management Plan per month once established

Introduced shrubs Management: Management of weed control, checking of shelters, watering, application of fertiliser and cutting as required.		Shape / prune			Dead head spring flowering species only		Trim and remove basal shoots				Plant or replace shrubs / gaps	
New Trees / introduced shrubs	prune dead wood / weed and mulch	irrigation: maintain as needed		irrigation: maintain as needed		irrigation: maintain as needed		irrigation: maintain as needed				
Ad hoc sightings: Observations of species are recorded during the time spent on site; this may include sightings of hare, birds by song or sight, patches of wildflowers, badger latrines, etc												



Conclusion

The proposed development incorporates a comprehensive landscaping strategy that ensures both visual enhancement and ecological benefits. Key elements include:

★ Tree Planting:

- New trees will be integrated into the landscape design to enhance structure and visual appeal. Existing trees located outside the red line boundary will be protected to retain and strengthen the site's ecological value.

★ Grassland Enhancement:

- A species-rich grassland mix will be introduced, creating a diverse sward that supports pollinators and contributes to a varied habitat mosaic across the site.

★ Introduced shrubs Enhancement:

- The scheme includes a carefully selected mix of native and wildlife-friendly shrub species to offer year-round structure, forage, and shelter for invertebrates and other fauna.

★ Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

- Measures include the addition of trees, introduced shrubs and modified grassland, and the protection of existing habitats, aligning with sustainable development goals.

★ Lighting

- While existing lighting will remain, any new installations will be designed to be bat-friendly, using the latest low-spill, warm-spectrum technology to minimise ecological disturbance.

★ Maintenance and Longevity:

- A five-year maintenance plan ensures any failed planting will be replaced during the next planting season, preserving the landscape design's integrity and ecological function. This plan should be reviewed after five years and updated accordingly until the end of the 30 year period.

The proposed development emphasises sustainability and ecological improvement, achieving a balance between visual aesthetics and environmental stewardship. The implementation of the landscape plan and protected habitats ensures a tangible Net Biodiversity Gain while enhancing the ecological quality of the site for the long term.



References

- ★ British Standards Institute (2013) Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development. BS 42020:2013.
- ★ CIRIA (2015) Environmental good practice on site guide, 4th Edition. Construction Industry Research and Information Association, London.
- ★ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework>

