



Ecological Enhancement Strategy

for

**Meridian Gate Phase 1,
North of Norfolk Road,
Royston**

on behalf of

Vistry Central Home Counties

**December 2024
Rev A – March 2025
Rev B – February 2026
Rev C – March 2026**

© James Blake Associates Ltd 2026



Registration no: 08169866 | VAT no: 512 4127 91



Revision	Purpose	Originated	Checked	Authorised	Date
		AW	PS	JBA	December 2024
Update Plan	A	MB	AW	JBA	March 2025
Client comments	B	JW	SW	JBA	February 2026
Client comments	C	JW	SW	JBA	March 2026
Job Number: 23/358		JAMES BLAKE A S S O C I A T E S Title: Ecological Enhancement Strategy for Land at Meridian Gate, Phases 1, North of Newmarket Road, Royston.			

Disclaimer

James Blake Associates Ltd have made every effort to meet the client's brief. However, no survey ensures complete and absolute assessment of the changeable natural environment. The findings in this report were based on evidence from thorough survey: It is important to remember that evidence can be limited, hard to detect or concealed by site use and disturbance. When it is stated that no evidence was found or was evident at that point in time, it does not mean that species are not present or could not be present at a later date: The survey was required because habitats are suitable for a given protected species, and such species could colonise areas following completion of the survey.

This report was instructed by Vistry Central Home Counties. Neither James Blake Associates Ltd nor any associated company, nor any of their employees, nor any of their contractors, subcontractors or their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or any third party's use of the report.

© **James Blake Associates Ltd 2026** (Copyright of this report remains with James Blake Associates Ltd:
Content must not be reproduced, in whole or part, without formal written consent

CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY 4

1. INTRODUCTION..... 5

2. ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY 7

3. CONCLUSIONS.....10

REFERENCES11

APPENDIX12

Non-technical Summary

Site:	Land at Meridian Gate, Phases 1, North of Newmarket Road, Royston
Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference:	TL 36878 41208
Report Commissioned by:	Vistry Central Home Counties
Date of report:	December 2024

Considerations	Description	Potential impacts
Production of an ecological enhancement strategy	Enhancement measures include provision of bat and bird boxes.	Improvement of conditions on site for bats and birds.

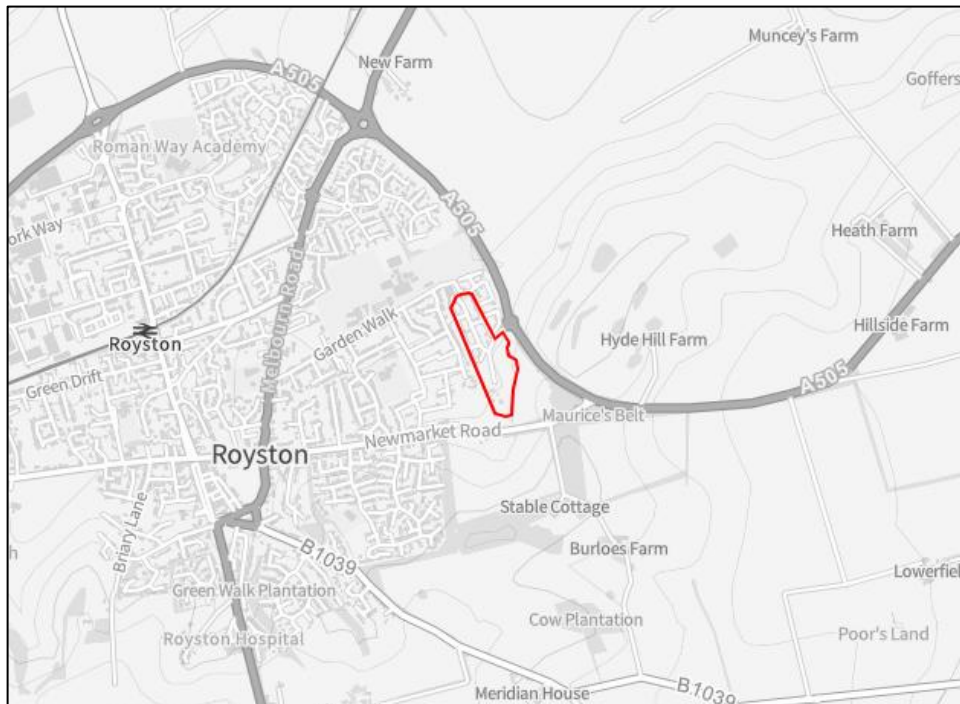
1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 James Blake Associates Ltd. (JBA) was commissioned by Vistry Central Home Counties to provide an ecological enhancement strategy for the proposed development site at Meridian Gate Phase 1 North of Newmarket Road, Royston (Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference: TL 36878 41208, taken from the centre of the site).
- 1.2 The site has planning permission (planning application ref: 14/02485/1) for residential development and community open space with new access onto the A505.
- 1.3 An ecological enhancement strategy was produced by Green Environmental Consultants (2018) for Phase 1 of the development scheme. Bird and bat boxes were included within the enhancement strategy. JBA (2023) undertook an ecological site review to ensure that the agreed ecological enhancements were fully incorporated into Phase 1 of the development. It was concluded that two out of the ten sparrow boxes were present, and one out of the five bat boxes were present.
- 1.4 This letter report addresses the recommendation for the full provision of the ecological enhancements specified as part of the Phase 1 scheme, to now be incorporated into the woodland surrounding Phase 1 and the wider site. The report provides further details regarding the nature and implementation of the ecological enhancements.

Site Description

- 1.5 The site is located to the west of the A505 and north of Newmarket Road, in Royston, Hertfordshire, and as a whole is approximately 17 hectares in size (see Figure 1) approximately 7.2 hectares in total. The site itself consists of residential dwellings with associated hardstanding and vegetated gardens.

Figure 1: Site location plan of phase 1.

Reproduced from Magic Map Application by permission of licence number 100059700(c) Crown Copyright and database rights 2021.

Aims and objectives

- 1.6 The aim of this report is to provide an ecological enhancement plan for phases 1 in relation to the residential development scheme incorporating the provision of community open space with new access onto the A505 (planning application ref: 14/02485/1).

Wildlife Legislation and Planning Policy

- 1.7 The relevant wildlife legislations and planning policies are listed below:
- Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) (WCA). [Amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)].
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006 (NERC).
 - The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996.

2. ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

Purposes and conservation objectives for the proposed works

- 2.1 The purpose of the proposed works outlined within this document is to enhance the site for wildlife following construction.
- 2.2 The conservation objectives for the proposed works are to provide habitats of biodiversity value, composed of native plant species, within the proposed landscape design for open spaces as well providing artificial habitats such bird and bat boxes on existing trees, where such measures are appropriate. These measures will contribute to the biodiversity interest of the area in the long term.

Measures during construction

- 2.3 During construction:
- Bird boxes to be integrated on/into existing trees. Bat boxes should be integrated into existing trees. Boxes should not be lit by security lighting.
 - General bird boxes installed onto proposed trees at the boundaries of the site, where suitable.

Detailed design to achieve the stated objectives

- 2.4 The open space scheme and programme design for the development has been provided by ACD Environmental (ACD Environmental, 2017). See Appendix A.
- 2.5 There is scope for ecological enhancements to be incorporated within proposed public open spaces. The enhancements are based on the recommendations detailed within the species-specific survey reports. The enhancements proposed were as follows:
- Provision of bat boxes on existing trees around the site, where possible.
 - Provision of standard bird boxes onto proposed and retained trees, where possible.

Extent and location of works on scale plans

- 2.6 The suggested locations of selected biodiversity enhancements are given in the proposed site layout mark-up (see Appendix B).

Type and source of material to be used where appropriate, e.g. native species of local provenance

- 2.7 The following bird and bat boxes are recommended. Please note that these can be replaced with similar products if not available at time of construction (to be agreed with ecologist).

To be erected:

- 8 Schwegler Flat Bat Box 1FF (or similar) on existing trees around the site boundary. These should be:
 - South to southeast facing
 - At least 3m high.
 - Clear of obstructions such as tree branches and have a clear flight line.
 - Positioned away from artificial light sources and sheltered from strong winds
- 8 no. Schwegler Nest Box 1B (or similar) onto retained or proposed new trees. These should be north or northeast facing and at least 3m high.

2.8 Planting should include trees and shrubs of local provenance where possible.

Persons responsible for implementing the works

2.9 Initial construction works and installing the various forms of enhancement to be implemented by the Site Management Team and suitable appointed contractors, such as landscape contractors, fencers, brick layers etc.

Details of initial after care and long-term maintenance

2.10 All bat boxes proposed are 'self-cleaning' and would not require annual cleaning; however, these should be inspected annually from the ground without torches for any damage and should be replaced if broken, following a bat licensed ecologist advice.

2.11 Once erected bat boxes should only be inspected or disturbed by a suitably qualified and licenced ecologist.

2.12 Bird boxes should be inspected and cleaned annually outside of the breeding season; the breeding season is deemed to be between March and September. Damaged boxes should be replaced as and when required.

3. Conclusions

- 3.1 An Ecological Enhancement Strategy has been devised which will increase the schemes potential to support wildlife, and in particular bats and nesting birds, through the implementation of a bat and bird box scheme. Suggestions for the management of the enhancements are also included.
- 3.2 The Ecological Enhancement Strategy is necessary to support phase 1 of the scheme, which involves the development of residential dwellings, as well as the provision of community open space and new access onto the A505 (planning application ref: 14/02485/1).

4. References

JBA (2009) *Ecological Site Review of land at Meridian Gate, Phases 1 and 2, North of Newmarket Road, Royston. On behalf of Stiles Harold Williams Partnership.*

ACD Environmental (2017) *Open Space Scheme and Programme. On before of Lindon Homes.*

Web references:

MAGIC:

<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Nest Box 1B » Schwegler Nature

Nest Box 2M » Schwegler Nature

Flat Bat Box 1FF » Schwegler Nature

Appendix A. Open Space Scheme and Programme (ACD Environmental, 2017)

Open Space Programme



Open Space Scheme

This plan is to be read in conjunction with ACD drawings LIN21280-11 & 12 which contain detailed hard and soft landscape proposals
Layout is indicative, see latest site layout from Thrive- drawings ref: LIN170123.



Phase 1 Community Open Space.



Phase 1 Open Space

Included in the phase 1 open space are:-

- An existing route along the western boundary is to be maintained and improved with a hoggin pathway. This is to maintain access to existing rear gardens along the boundary. The pathway runs alongside a swale and will link into the new development over pedestrian bridges
- The area at the north-west of the development includes an attenuation basin, this will be seasonally wet and will be planted with damp loving trees and plants. This is an open area with access to pedestrians all around the basin.
- Existing informal pedestrian routes along the northern boundary and northern section of the eastern boundary will be maintained as existing, including the link to the tunnel under the A505. These paths are used by local walkers and dog walkers. Existing foliage along these routes will be maintained.
- The central spine road will include an avenue of trees with drifts of bulb planting beneath. This provides an identity to the main route through the development which will be used by vehicles and pedestrians.



Phase 1 Plot Landscape contains a LAP which provides a secure fenced area with seating for young children to play



Phase 2 Open Space

This includes a LEAP - see ACD drawing LIN21280 20 for detailed LEAP proposals. The LEAP provides a range of play equipment and play experiences for children of varying ages.



Phase 2 Plot Landscape



Phase 3 Open Space

This area links the community open space, through the residential plots, and connects to the central spine road and LEAP. This area provides an informal grassed area, with planting and clusters of trees, for recreation, walking and activity.



Phase 3 Plot Landscape



Phase 3 Infrastructure

- The central spine road will include an avenue of trees with drifts of bulb planting beneath. This provides an identity to the main route through the development which will be used by vehicles and pedestrians.



Site Boundary



B	18.01.18	Client comments	DPM
A	10.01.18	Client comments	DPM
REV	Date	Details	Drawn



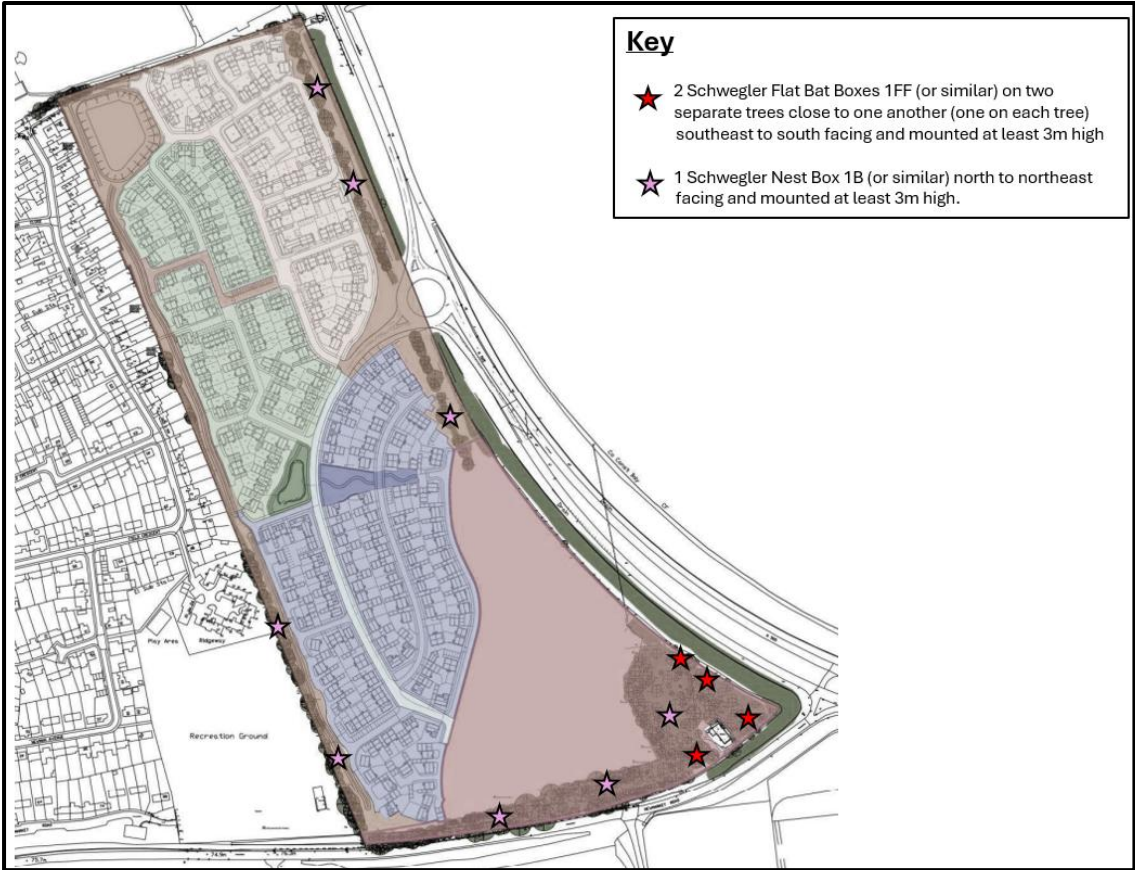
HEAD OFFICE
Ridbourne Hall Business Centre, Orange Lane,
Maldenbury, S18 0ES
Tel: 01966 525645
Courtyard House, Mill Lane, Godalming, GU7 1EY
Tel: 01483 425776
Suite 6, Crescent House, Yonge Close, Eastleigh, SO50 9SX
Tel: 02382 026300
9 Brownlow Road, Cambridge, CB4 3NG
Tel: 07625 959554
email: mail@acdenv.co.uk
www.acdenv.co.uk



scheme: Land North of
Newmarket Road,
Royston
client: Linden Royston LLP
drawing: Open Space Scheme
and Programme
date: Dec 2017
scale: 1:2000@A1
drawing no: LIN21280-51B
drawn: DPM checked: HCS

Copyright of ACD Environmental Ltd. All rights described in
Chapter IV of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988
have been generally assumed 2017. Copyright of this plan
remains with ACD until all fees have been paid in full.

Appendix B. Locations of tree mounted Bat and Bird Boxes



Appendix C. What3Words Locations of Bat Boxes

Photograph	Label	Box Type	What3Words
	1516	1 Bat, 1 Bird	Arranges.design.outings
	1517	1 Bat, 1 Bird	Photocopy.detonated.pursuit
	No label	1 Bat, 1 Bird	Singled.transit.grafted

Photograph	Label	Box Type	What3Words
	1518	1 Bat, 1 Bird	Shot.dreamer.undertone
	No label	1 Bat	Ahead.petulant.study
	1519	1 Bat	Nightlife.octagonal.locate

Photograph	Label	Box Type	What3Words
	1520	1 Bat	Newer.activates.singer
	1521 + 1522	2 Bat	Coil.bonkers.awoke
	1523 + 1524	2 Bat	Heartened.emailed.earlobes

Photograph	Label	Box Type	What3Words
	1525	1 Bat	Dolls.processor.throats
	1526	1 Bat, 1 Bird	Revolts.novel.loading
	1527 + 1528	2 Bat	Cork.preparing.deputy

Photograph	Label	Box Type	What3Words
	1529 + 1530	2 Bats	Drums.collect.impeached
	1531	1 Bat	Rewrites.safe.ferrets
	1532	1 Bat, 1 Bird	Faced.balanced.playroom

Photograph	Label	Box Type	What3Words
	1533	1 Bat	Presuming.nail.sampling
	1534	1 Bat, 1 Bird	Units.ratty.wound