



APPLIED ECOLOGY

Hillcrest and Tussocks, The Causeway, Therfield

Ecological Enhancement Plan

Client: Hanson Services Ltd

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
	Background	1
2	Ecological Enhancement Plan	3
	Purpose and Objectives	3
	Detailed Designs	3

Figures

Figure 1.1:	Site location.	2
Figure 2.1:	Ecological enhancements.	6
Figure 2.2:	Swift and bat box locations – elevations.	7



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1 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 In 2023, on behalf of Hanson Services Ltd, Applied Ecology (AE) conducted a range of ecological surveys of an area of land at Hillcrest and Tussocks, The Causeway, Therfield (“the Site”) in order to inform a planning application for residential development at the Site (“the Development”)¹. A plan showing the location of the Site is provided in **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.2 Subsequent to Hanson Services Ltd receiving planning consent for the Development. AE was appointed by Hanson Services Ltd to produce an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the Development.
- 1.3 The EEP is required in order to fulfil Condition 4 of planning permission 24/01371/FP granted by North Herts District Council:
- 1.4 *“No development shall take place until an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EES) for the creation of new wildlife features such as hibernacula, the inclusion of integrated bird/bat and bee boxes in buildings/structures and hedgehog holes in fences and tree, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.”*

¹ Applied Ecology (2023) *Hillcrest and Tussocks, The Causeway, Therfield – Ecology Report*. Report to Hanson Services Ltd.





Hillcrest and Tussocks, Therfield

Site location

 Site boundary

Figure 1.1

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2 Ecological Enhancement Plan

Purpose and Objectives

- 2.1 It is recommended that the following biodiversity enhancement measures are incorporated into the new development:
- Construction of enclosed brick-faced bat boxes in external walls of suitable dwelling houses;
 - Installation of integrated swift *Apus apus* nest boxes in external walls of suitable dwelling houses;
 - Installation of general bird nest boxes on larger trees;
 - Installation of bug hotels in areas of suitable open habitat in proximity to meadow planting;
 - Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* holes in fencing to allow free movement of hedgehogs across the Site;
- 2.2 Bats frequently make use of buildings particularly near areas of open space or countryside. However, the majority of modern building constructions do not offer features for roosting bats. Integrated (enclosed) bat boxes can be easily incorporated into building walls with no negative effects to the aesthetic design. Similarly, bird species that rely on buildings, eaves and ledges are also increasingly under threat, with modern building designs lacking features that can be utilised by nesting birds. Swift is an Amber-listed species of conservation concern but swift boxes will be utilised by a range of species.
- 2.3 The provision of bug hotels will provide refugia and breeding sites for a range of invertebrate species.

Detailed Designs

Bat boxes

- 2.4 Enclosed bat boxes should be incorporated into suitable residential buildings within the Development Site. An enclosed bat box should be installed ideally on the south-facing side of new residential dwellings of a suitable size and form where the boxes can be placed at a height above 4 m, close to the roof eaves, away from lighting or any obstruction below the roost entrance. Buildings selected should have south-facing aspect and where possible be adjacent to suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat.
- 2.5 It is recommended that Habibat 003 Bat Boxes or similar product are installed within the external walls of new buildings within the Site. Details can be found online:
- 2.6 <https://www.habibat.co.uk/bat-boxes>
- 2.7 The Habibat 003 Bat Box provides suitable roosting conditions for most of the bat species found in the UK and can be faced with the same bricks as the wall they are to be enclosed and so are visually unobtrusive. The boxes require no long-term maintenance.
- 2.8 **Figure 2.1** shows the recommended locations of four bat boxes within the Site. **Figure 2.2** shows the proposed locations of these bat boxes on the building elevations.



Bird boxes

Swift

- 2.9 Enclosed swift nest boxes should be incorporated into suitable residential buildings within the Development Site. An enclosed swift nest box should be installed on the north or east-facing side of new residential dwellings of a suitable size and form where the boxes can be placed at a height above 4 m, if possible.
- 2.10 It is recommended that Habibat 003 Swift Boxes or similar product are installed within the external walls of new buildings within the Site. Details can be found online:
- 2.11 <https://www.habibat.co.uk/bird-boxes>

General

- 2.12 Woodcrete nest boxes for hole-nesting species should be installed on larger retained trees within the Site. These should face north or east, and where possible be mounted above 2 m.
- 2.13 It is recommended that Schwegler 1B nest boxes or similar product are installed on the retained larger trees. Details can be found online:
- 2.14 <https://www.nhbs.com/1b-schwegler-nest-box>
- 2.15 **Figure 2.1** shows the recommended locations of five swift nest boxes and three tree-mounted nest boxes within the Site. **Figure 2.2** shows the proposed locations of the swift boxes on the building elevations.

Bug hotels and log piles

Bug hotels

- 2.16 Bug hotels should be located in areas with some shade and some direct sunlight. It is recommended that small, durable hotels consisting of a woodcrete frame are installed at suitable locations around the Site. These can be positioned on a post or tree, as shown below. Details can be found online:
- 2.17 <https://www.wildcare.co.uk/insect-block.html>



- 2.18 **Figure 2.1** shows the recommended locations of three bug hotels within the Site.

Hedgehog holes

- 2.19 Garden fencing can prove an impermeable barrier to hedgehogs foraging in gardens. The addition of holes at the base of fences to allow hedgehogs free access between gardens removes this barrier to their movements. It is recommended that each boundary between two gardens within the Site contains at least one hedgehog hole – a 13 cm x 13 cm hole at the base of the fence. Additional holes should be placed at intervals in any other fencing, such as boundary fencing, that would be otherwise impassable to hedgehogs. Hedgehog-friendly gravel boards are available, and details can be found online:
- 2.20 <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/link-your-garden/>
- 2.21 **Figure 2.1** shows the recommended locations of hedgehog holes in garden fences within the Site.



Ecological enhancements

- Figure 2.1

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Hillcrest and Tussocks, Therfield

Swift and bat boxes - elevations

- Swift box
- Bat box



Figure 2.2

Map Scale @ A4:

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