

Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

15 Lime Avenue
Blackmore End
Wheathampstead
AL4 8LQ

September 2023



Contents

1 Introduction	3
1.1 Background to the scheme	3
1.2 Site context	3
1.7 Purpose of this management plan	4
2 Aims and Objectives of the Management Plan	5
2.1 Scope of the management plan	5
2.2 Biodiversity	5
2.3 Management Responsibilities	5
2.4 Health and Safety	5
2.5 Landscape	5
3 Information Gathering	7
3.1 Sources of information used	7
3.2 Results	7
3.2.1 Site baseline – biodiversity	7
3.2.2 Site baseline – landscape	8
4 Landscape and Biodiversity	
4.1 Management prescriptions	8
4.2 Opportunities for Ecological Enhancements	10
4.3 Proposed Products	11
4.4 General management prescriptions	15
5 Implementation	16
5.1 Biodiversity Net Gain	16
5.2 Landscape and Ecological Management Plan	17
5.3 Landscape Proposals	19
5.4 Management	19
5.5 Management Plan Programme	20
5.6 Conclusion	21
Appendix 1 – Soft Landscape Proposals Drawing 1639_218	
Appendix 2 – Existing and Proposed Habitat Maps Drawings 1639_220, 221	
Appendix 3 – PRA	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) demonstrates how the recommendations of the submitted Proposed Landscaping Plans, the Arboricultural Report, and the Ecology Report will be delivered, and how the landscape within the site will be managed and maintained during and after construction, to meet a range of landscape and ecological aims and objectives.

A planning application has been approved in respect of proposals to develop a small site in Wheathampstead following the demolition of the existing dwelling and garage and the construction of two new dwellings at 15 Lime Avenue, Blackmore End, AL4 8LQ with garages, a new access and landscaping.

The proposals have received planning permission Ref 21/03437/FP which was issued subject to conditions. This Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) has been produced for Toms Wood Homes Ltd to discharge Condition 12 whilst also promoting net landscape and biodiversity gains as a result of the proposed development.

1.2 Site context

- 1.3 The site is located on Lime Avenue, in the settlement of Blackmore End. The site is in close proximity to the village of Gustard Wood, approximately 589m to the southeast, and comprises a total area of 0.288 ha (see Figure 1)
- 1.4 The submitted Proposed Landscaping Plans recommend the strengthening of the visual containment of the site. This will be achieved through tree and hedgerow retention and enhancement on the site boundaries and by additional tree planting throughout the development and the strengthening of existing hedgerows and infill planting.
- 1.5 The site comprises of predominantly residential garden with areas of dense scrub at the south, scattered trees, and a tall, unmanaged boundary hedgerow. The site is bounded by a residential plot to the south, residential properties to the east and north and an open field to the west. As shown in Figure 1, the site is located in an area of suburban fringe / rural mosaic and is located on the western outskirts of Blackmore End, Wheathampstead. The red line indicates the proposed development area.
- 1.6 The submitted Ecology Report recommended bird boxes to improve nesting opportunities, native hedgerow planting to infill gaps and diversify the species mix of existing hedgerows, the use of 'wildlife friendly' species in the planting of the development and a lighting scheme that is sensitive to bats.



Fig 1. Aerial view of the site outlined in red

1.7 Purpose of this management plan

This management plan has been produced for two purposes, which are;

- to assist with discharging Condition 12 of the planning permission,
- to promote landscape and biodiversity net gains as a result of the proposed development.

Condition 12 - Prior to the commencement of the approved development (excluding demolition), a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority demonstrating a biodiversity gain within the site. The Plan if approved shall then be implemented prior to occupation of the development, and the approved measures shall remain unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

In this report, the content of the LEMP includes the following;

- a) Description and evaluation of the principal features to be managed such as;
Existing trees, Existing Hedgerows, New Trees, New Hedgerows, Infill planting, Amenity grass, On plot planting
- b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- c) Aims and objectives of management.
- d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- e) Prescriptions for management actions.
- f) Preparation of a work schedule
- g) Details of the organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.
- h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The approved plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
Reason: To mitigate against the loss of existing biodiversity and nature habitats, in accordance with Section 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 The overarching aim of this management plan is:

“To set out management and enhancement prescriptions to promote the landscape and ecological biodiversity value of the site and adjacent biodiversity enhancement area, based on an integrated and complementary approach where possible”.

This management plan shows how mitigation and avoidance of harm to key habitats as well as enhancement measures have been included in the development and that the proposals comply with wildlife laws and policies.

2.2 Biodiversity

In respect to geographical coverage, the management plan covers the red line boundary shown in Figure 1. With regards to the focus of the management prescriptions, the scope is defined by the existing landscape that is proposed for retention, along with the proposed landscape/ habitat that forms part of the proposals.

The biodiversity receptors are therefore as follows:

- Semi-improved neutral grassland
- Hedgerow and trees - to promote structural diversity in the existing hedgerow,
- to control the growth of bramble scrub and invasive non-native species,
- Bats - to promote the use of the site by bats
- Birds - to promote the use of the site by target bird species

The planting design provides new trees and hedge infill planting which will increase feeding, roosting and nesting opportunities for birds. Similarly, the native grasslands will provide habitat for a range of insects and invertebrates which are potentially beneficial for birds. The existing semi-improved lawns will be retained and will form an open space.

Bird boxes will provide additional nesting opportunities to those offered by the natural vegetation. Management operations will take care to avoid their disturbance.

2.3 Management Responsibilities

The implementation of this management plan will be the responsibility of the developer Toms Wood Homes Ltd. Any transference of responsibility of this plan should be undertaken with the appropriate appointment of a competent body capable of delivering the detailed measures within this document.

2.4 Health and Safety

The site will be managed to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation, approved codes of practice (ACOP's) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance.

2.5 Landscape

With respect to landscape considerations for the application site, as described above, the scope of the proposals is defined by what is already present on site, and habitats that will be created as part of the proposals.

In respect of landscape, the supporting aims reflect those outlined above. With particular reference to:

1. the enhancement of the existing hedgerow; and
2. the control of bramble scrub and invasive non-native species

In addition, the following aims guide the basis for specific management operations;

3. Conserve and enhance the ecological and landscape value of the site through safeguarding and enhancing the ecological and physical integrity of the site.
4. Creation of species-rich habitats for UK wildlife which include UK protected species, through providing appropriate planting and management of habitat-friendly maintenance methods and applications that do not cause harm or injury to flora or fauna.
5. To provide a safe and secure site that establishes and maintains health and safety procedures for management and maintenance of the site complying with all statutory legislation and best practices.
6. Maintains a flexible management approach that responds to the changing needs of the landscape and ecology of the site.

3.0 Information gathering

3.1 Sources of information used;

Sources of information considered in the production of this management plan are set out in Table 3.1.1 below.

Table 3.1.1 – Desk study sources of information

Source	Date	Information obtained
Bird Presence / Absence (Elite Ecology)	July 2023	No evidence of nesting birds was found on or within the structure. Therefore, there are no compulsory recommendations. Enhancements are proposed to provide a number of bird boxes to be installed around the site to enhance nesting opportunities within the local landscape. See Details of bird boxes attached.
Bat Activity and Survey Report (Elite Ecology)	July 2023	Information relating to bat activity and the survey report. In the interest of public human safety, due to the dangerous existing structure on site, Herts Constabulary approved the demolition of the house with simultaneous video footage provided of the removal of the roof tiles, proving that no bats were present. The ecologists were made aware of the Police recommendations. Enhancements are proposed to provide a number of bat boxes to be installed in each dwelling.
Ecological value of Building units (Elite Ecology)	May 2021	Deemed negligible - No DNA results were obtained as no droppings of any species were found during a desk study of the site therefore no further surveys were required.
Google Earth	August 2023	Contextual information for the site and surroundings
National and Local Landscape Character Assessments	August 2023	Contextual information for the site and surroundings

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Site baseline – biodiversity

The site predominantly comprises garden grassland with areas of scrub to the rear, scattered trees and an unmanaged perimeter hedgerow.

3.2.2 Site baseline – landscape

The application site and its surrounds are characterised by large gardens with mature scattered trees, it is also well connected to hedgerows and woodland providing foraging and commuting opportunities for bats.

The site falls within the rural context of the settlement on the western edge of Blackmore End.

4.0 Landscape and Biodiversity

4.1 The management prescriptions are summarised in Table 4.1.1 below. These are fully described in the text below. The management prescriptions below reflect both the retained vegetation and the proposed vegetation as part of the proposed development.

Table 4.1.1 – Summary of management prescriptions, receptors and aims of the management plan

Management Prescription reference	Relevant receptors	Relevant aims
A	Hedgerow	1, 3, 4, 5
B	Removal of scrub and vegetation on site	2
C	Boundary treatment	3
D	Trees and landscaping	4, 5, 6
E	Bats	5
F	Birds	6

The recommendations for 15 Lime Avenue, Wheathampstead can be summarised as follows:

Recommendations;

Artificial lighting should be avoided around compensatory roosting features.

No breathable roofing membrane is to be used on the structure.

Install a variety of bird boxes around the site post development to enhance the site for the local bird populations. Some suitable examples are shown in Section 5.

A – Retention and enhancement of the existing hedgerow along the northern boundary to the site

Each boundary of the site supports a mature hedgerow. Although the hedgerow is not important under the Hedgerow Regulations, these habitats are recognised as UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats. As such, the perimeter hedgerow will be retained as far as possible as part of the proposed development, with the exception of some loss as a result of the access. This loss will be compensated for through the provision of further hedgerow planting to the boundaries of the site and within the site (see proposed landscape plan Drawing 218 in Appendix 1).

Enhancement of the hedgerow would be beneficial and should be pruned or laid to create a shorter, thicker and sturdier hedge.

B – Removal of scrub and vegetation on site

No DNA evidence or evidence of nesting birds was recorded on site. Removal of any vegetation should be undertaken via a systematic removal programme.

C – Treatment of boundaries

A biodiversity sympathetic treatment for the site boundaries is advised. Where possible, this should include the use of native species hedgerows to local authority approval, which will enable access for wildlife into the internal structure for shelter and hibernation, but also planting of flowers and shrubs. (see the proposed landscape plan at Appendix 1).

D – Trees and landscaping

The site contains a number of trees, although they're not protected by Tree Preservation Orders or by virtue of being in a conservation area. The most significant mature trees within the site would be retained, and sufficient protection measures are proposed. Sufficient protection is also proposed for trees outside but near the site. The balance of hard and soft landscaping was considered acceptable for the planning approval.

E – Installation of bat boxes

In the interests of public human safety and following the recommendation by the Police regarding dangerous structures, Toms Wood Homes Ltd demolished the unsafe existing structure and recorded all roof tiles being taken off individually, confirming no bats were present.

Construction of the new dwellings will have non-breathable felt, bat boxes etc, as per the recommendations of the ecologist. Further compensation, enhancement, and mitigation are proposed as appropriate in the attached details. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with these

approved details to ensure the continued ecological functionality of bats and their roosts is maintained in accordance with legislation.

Bats are protected, and while the location represents good foraging habitat, there are no notable roosting locations. Therefore, the value of the site may be enhanced by providing bat boxes as detailed.

Appropriate trees/locations on the dwellings should be selected for the placement of artificial bat boxes, and ideally, boxes may be installed on each tree (although two may be used if the tree lacks sufficient girth). The largest and thickest trees should be selected for this purpose, and the bat boxes should be installed at a minimum height of 4m. The boxes should face east, west or south, but not north.

A variety of box types should be used. They should be suitable for use by pipistrelle and woodland species, and should be accessed through cavities in the base; not the middle. This is necessary because annual cleaning of the boxes is not proposed. The boxes should include at least one of each of the following types: Schwegler 1FF, Schwegler 2FN, Schwegler 1FFH, Schwegler 3FF. Once installed, the bat boxes need not be monitored, but should be checked annually to ensure that they have not been damaged, vandalised, or become unstable. Any such problems should be corrected by a licensed bat worker, and replacement within the management period should be undertaken as necessary.

F – Installation of bird boxes

Prior to the occupation of the approved development, a minimum of four bird nest boxes/tubes shall be provided within both the fabric of the buildings and trees

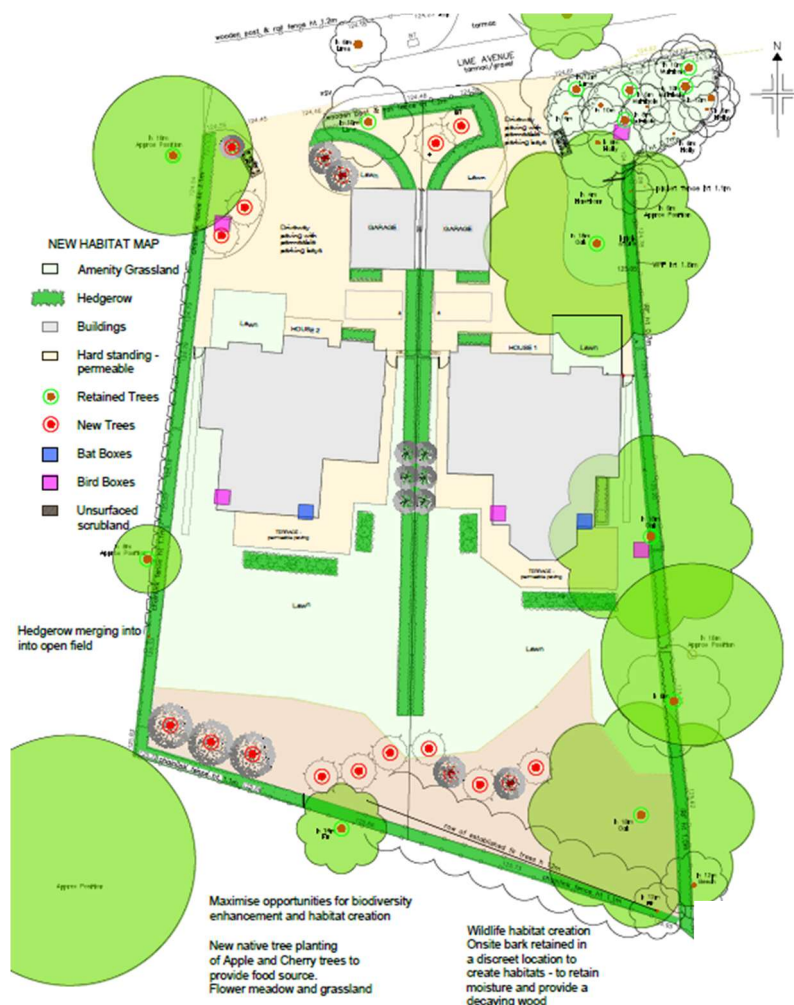
within the site to provide habitats for protected species and to provide ecological benefits.

Bird boxes provide excellent, safe opportunities for species that may be present in the area. They are frequently used and therefore provide significant benefits to the bird assemblage.

Three trees should be selected for the installation of bird boxes. These should be different from the trees used for the installation of bat boxes. One box should be installed per tree. Various types may be used, which should be suitable for garden and woodland species including starling, various species of tits, and other small passerines. Suitable examples include Schwegler 3S, Schwegler 2H, Schwegler 1B, Schwegler 3SV, Schwegler 1N and Schwegler 2GR.

4.2 Opportunities for Ecological Enhancement:

1. Incorporation of native plants and those of wildlife importance into landscaping scheme to provide opportunities for birds, invertebrates and bats. (Refer to the proposed landscape plan Drawing 218 in Appendix 1)
2. Provision of new bat roosting opportunities within existing buildings, new buildings and retained mature trees (See proposed habitat map, Drawing 221)
3. Provision of bird nesting opportunities within new dwellings and retained mature trees (See proposed habitat map, Drawing 221)



4.3 Proposed Products:



Refer to proposed habitat map, drawing 221 to locate the product.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Manufacturer: Schwegler

Product: 1FF SCHWEGLER BAT BOX WITH BUILT-IN WOODEN REAR PANEL

Dimensions: 43 x 27 x 14cm

Entrance hole dimensions: 12cm x 24cm

Weight: 9.5kg

Material: Schwegler Woodcrete

Colour: Black with stable hard-wearing wooden insert

Supplied with: Galvanised steel hanger and aluminium tree-friendly nail



Refer to proposed habitat map, drawing 221, to locate the product.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Manufacturer: Schwegler

Product: 2GR SCHWEGLER NEST BOX

Material: Woodcrete

External dimensions: 31 x 20 x 27cm (height x width x depth)

Internal dimensions: 14 x 19cm (width x depth)

Entrance hole: 30 x 45mm (oval) or 27mm diameter (3 x round)

Weight: 6.7kg



Refer to proposed habitat map, drawing 221, to locate the product.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Product: BARN OWL NEST BOX

Height: 74cm

Width: 59cm

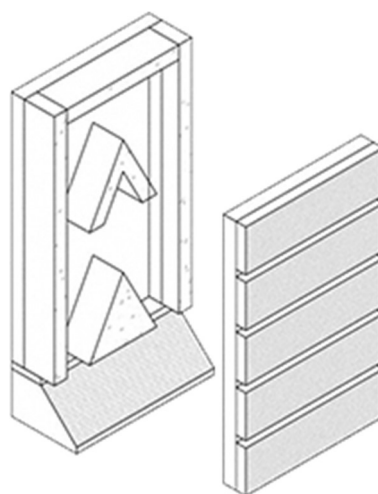
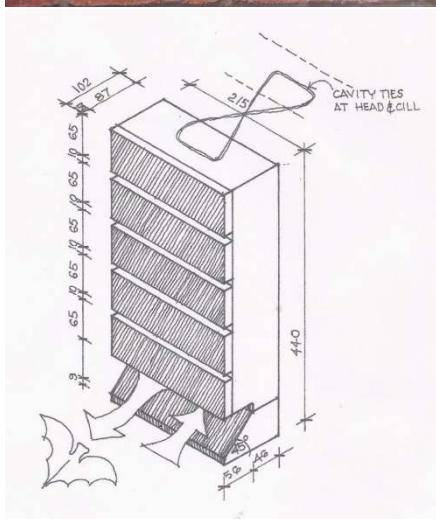
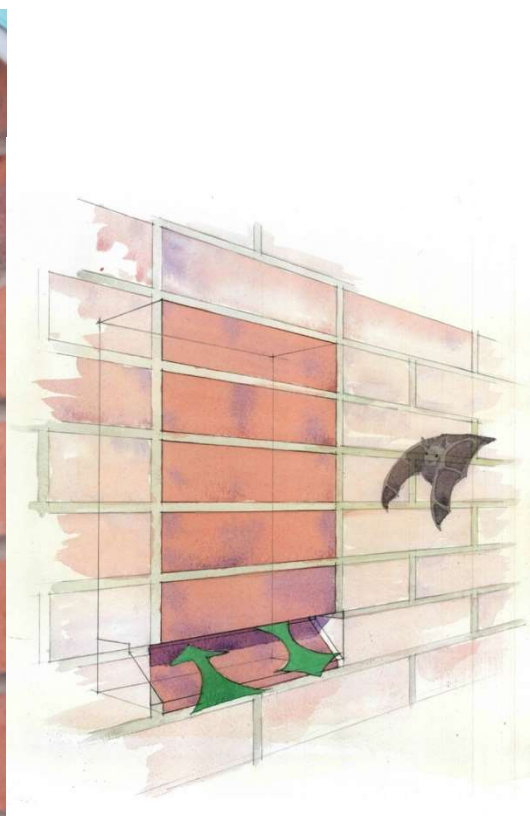
Depth: 50cm

Depth of enclosed box: 34cm

Entrance hole: 13cm high x 12cm width

Weight: 8kg approx.

Material: FSC certified exterior grade plywood



Refer to proposed proposed habitat map, drawing 221, to locate the product.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Product: HABITAT BAT BOX

Type: Integrated bat box

Material: Concrete plus brick facing

Dimensions: 215mm (width) x 440mm (height) x 102mm (depth)

Weight: approximately 9kg

4.4 General Management Prescriptions

The main green spaces border the development and should act as a buffer to it. The Landscape and Ecological Management Plan demonstrates details of species and seed mixes for new native hedges and wildflower grassland and bird and bat boxes. Biodiversity Net Gain is an expectation following additional buffer planting, new hedgerows and new trees.

4.4.1 Location

The proposal is to divide the existing residential garden into two residential gardens with enhanced boundary treatments and planting.

This will be approx. 23m x 25m (575m²) x2 rear garden amenities with enhanced soft landscaping planting and soft landscaping to a generally flat topography will be used around the perimeter of the site to form screening, which will be enhanced with native flora seeding and planting.

Toms Wood Homes Ltd can demonstrate to the North Herts District Council (NHDC) that the proposal will have no detrimental effect on the site and surrounding areas and on ecology in particular. The proposals take into account the interest of biodiversity and put forward mitigating compensation recommendations.

4.4.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment Appraisal

A Preliminary Assessment of the ecological features present, or potentially present, within the site and its surrounding area or the zones of influence was carried out by Elite Ecology. The existing condition of the site was surveyed, ecologically assessed and evaluated. From the analysis of the findings, an assessment was made of any potential biodiversity loss that may occur from the proposal and mitigation put forward to address these issues.

4.4.3 Area Designation

Management and protection of biodiversity within the UK planning system is set out through European and UK legislation. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) is the main protection for wildlife. There is also legislation for specific species, EU Habitats and Birds. Directive and more general guidance, EU Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2020. These all are aimed at ensuring the environment of Hertfordshire and its wildlife is adequately protected.

4.4.5 Condition

A full Phase 1 Habitat Survey was not deemed necessary following a Preliminary Roost Assessment Appraisal as this is a site where the existing natural features of the area would appear to have minimal ecological value.

The residential garden has been managed by the previous owner and therefore the lawn grassland of limited native herbs and grass species, is the main habitat. Hedges are somewhat sparse.

Surrounding land is also similar residential gardens divided by native hedges. This small cul de sac of houses is still rural but is wedged between urban intrusion on both sides.

4.4.6 Ecological Assessment

The site is a typical parcel of residential garden with few ecological merits. The grass contains few weeds (clover) or moss. Wildlife opportunities are therefore limited. It is only

along the boundaries with the hedgerow with limited understorey, that some ecological value is found. This offers scope for wildlife, with bird nesting sites and commuter routes for foraging bats.

The main area of ecological potential is the adjacent area to the west, with a field. It could therefore be an ecological corridor for bats for foraging and communing, as well as birds.

Native flora is also limited, but the opportunities for pioneer or other ephemeral species will be improved by mitigation in the form of the proposed landscaping enhancements, offering new trees on the boundaries of the site which are mainly apple and cherry, all of ecological value. These natural features have biodiversity value, trees and shrubs that are good for blossom and berries including fruit trees support a range of specialist native wildlife and can provide for them.

4.4.7 Ecological Evaluation

There was no evidence of any DNA droppings or any other mammals (runs through the vegetation) during the PRA desk study. Smaller species will probably pass through the site as ecological corridors. Thus, these areas offer far more opportunities for wildlife to occupy with minimal ecological value as there are no extensive areas of “un-managed nature” on site they will not use this for foraging or hibernation. Similarly, reptiles such as grass snakes, slow worms and common lizards need a habitat and no signs of paths though the vegetated were observed on the site inspection.

Extensive native flora of rich diversity is sparse, in this grazed landscape but with the proposed mitigation along the boundary edge, a more diverse habitat could develop.

This would offer opportunities for pioneer species to allow insects such as bees and butterflies to find food/pollen and shelter or refuge for small mammals (hedgehogs).

4.4.8 Analysis

From the above ecological evaluation, it can be seen that the proposed site has minimal ecological impact on the overall ecology of the wider area. The 15 Lime Avenue residential proposals will allow sensitive species, in particular bats, to continue to use the wider landscape when foraging.

The PRA survey and evaluation assessed that no significant ecological features were observed on the survey. Proposals to create natural areas of wild flora and re-enforced hedges and tree planting within the site boundaries will all help to integrate the scheme into the overall development.

5 Implementation

5.1 Biodiversity Net Gain - The Environment Act 2021 has a mandatory requirement on new developments of biodiversity net gain. As the proposal is just for one replacement dwelling and one additional dwelling on the same residential plot of existing residential garden, this BNG can only assess the basic areas of the development.

5.1.1 As the proposed replacement dwelling and additional dwelling are located on approximately the same footprint as the existing dwelling and garage, the landscaping design enhancements can be evaluated based on the existing site layout.

This basic metric sets out the key calculations, assessments and recommendations for implementation. The Small Sites Metric has been used for this exercise. See attached.

The existing overall site (0.28 hectares) consists of residential garden with native

hedges. It is proposed to subdivide the existing residential garden into two equal large gardens.

Environmental proposals will be included in the mitigation to enhance the development and increase biodiversity.

Existing Site Calculations

The following tables set out the BNG of the existing elements of the site,

On-site baseline Habitat units 0.3580

On-site baseline Hedgerow units 0.8744

On-site net % change Habitat units 38.28%

On-site net % change Hedgerow units 95.74%

Off-site Units 0 0

The headline results indicated all the proposals will be done on-site.

Grassland enhanced

New native hedges with new trees and planting

This BNG calculation has indicated that a net gain in biodiversity can be achieved. However, at this stage of the proposals, a detailed landscape scheme has also been prepared and included in Appendix 1, with the proposed mitigation, in the form of native flora seeding to the new gardens and reinforcing the existing hedges with gapping up of native hedgerows together with screen planting.

5.2 Landscape & Ecological Management Plan

A Landscape & Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) is a site-specific document which details the management and long-term commitment to manage the preparation, implementation and establishment of an ecological project to ensure that enhanced biodiversity is achieved.

5.2.1 This LEMP has five objectives which will ensure that protected habitats and species are safeguarded throughout the development and in the future operation of the site. Each objective is outlined below, along with how each objective will be achieved.

Objective 1 To protect retained habitats on site from damage and disturbance during construction with retained trees and scrub enforced in accordance with BS 5837 (2012) and any necessary temporary protective fencing retained throughout the construction, and no works including excavation, tipping and storage of materials will take place within the fenced off areas.

Objective 2. The tree screens on the boundary present good quality foraging and nesting habitat for bird species. Vegetation clearance, including enabling works, could result in harm to individual birds and the damage of nests, eggs and habitat suitable for nesting. Any necessary vegetation clearance will take place outside of the bird breeding season.

Objective 3. The tree screen on the boundary is a potential foraging / commuter route for bats. However, impacts on this area are anticipated to be minimal. Provided that contractors do not work too closely to any part of this area for bats, no construction impacts are envisaged. Any external temporary lighting must not be directed towards the tree screen.

Objective 4 The enhancement proposals will include wildflower seeding and screening planting of native species. These will support a functioning ecosystem by providing a range of habitats such as year-round shelter for bird species and other sheltering wildlife. Once mature, the planting will develop to provide nesting and roosting opportunities for both birds and bats. Fruiting trees such as apple and cherry will provide a food source for wildlife and

will support invertebrates throughout their life stages. When flowering, this will attract a range of butterflies, moths, flies and other insects. This will in turn provide a food source for birds, bats, other mammals and amphibians.

Objective 5 The landscape enhancement proposals provide a range of foraging opportunities at different times of year. Bird boxes will be installed on site and will provide nesting opportunities for breeding birds. Correct positioning of the nest boxes will be ensured, at a minimum height of 5m, where feasible. They may be installed in pairs or threes, with an easterly aspect.

Bat boxes will be installed on site, as directed. They will be fitted at a height of between 3m and 6m, and once a bat inhabits a bat box, it can only be disturbed by a licensed bat worker. To increase biodiversity the area near the edge of the site will be allowed to grow naturally and only cut infrequently.

5.3 Landscape Proposals

Landscape design proposals and specifications have been prepared Drawing 218 (Appendix 1) taking into account the results from the ecological PRA studies and reports, incorporating the detailed BNG objectives, with any necessary additional mitigation. This takes into account native wildflower seeding and native gapping up of selected hedgerows and screen planting, to agreed areas of the site.

Work is to be carried out by suitably competent landscape contractors to BS 2248 (1989) Code of Practice for General Landscape Operations. Only peat free compost, mulches, soil conditioners to be used. All stock to be native species from approved British sources, where possible. All wildflower seeds to come from British sourced stock and no substitutes unless approved by consultant ecologist.

Bat Boxes - For use by small bats (pipistrelle) and woodland species using Schwegler 1FF, 2FN or 1FFH bat boxes 2-5 together, placed 3m-6m high on suitable trees, not facing north, checked annually but no need to monitor, unless damaged and may need to be inspected by qualified bat worker.

Bird Boxes - For use by garden and woodland species (starling, tits, warblers) using Schwegler 3S,2N or 1B bird boxes not facing south and only one per tree (not on the same as bat boxes) placed 5m high, checked, cleaned annually (in winter) with predator protection.

5.4 Management

A 5-year management plan of work schedules shall be prepared when the Detailed Landscape Design proposals are developed as set out in the above Management Plan Programme and can be used for the long term (i.e. 30 years). This will include monitoring of the scheme to ensure that biodiversity goals are met, to be agreed as the BNG is developed. Following implementation and approved aftercare responsibilities have been completed by the landscape contractor the scheme will be handed over to the owners to maintain the development to increase overall biodiversity.

5.5 Management Plan Programme

Landscape & Ecological features	During construction	End of construction	Operations year 1	Operations year 2	Operations year 3	Every 5 years
Existing hedges	Protective fencing	Maintain regime	Hedge laying as agreed	Maintain at agreed height	Maintain at agreed height	Review management regime
Maintain grassland buffer zone	Grasslands to be protected	Maintain until all works completed	Cut and remove arisings twice	Cut and remove arisings twice	Cut and remove arisings twice	Review and continue if required
Wild flora seeded areas	Ensure beds are fully prepared for seeding	Any areas that have failed need to be reassessed	Check for any invasive weeds and remove	Check for any invasive weeds and remove	Check for any invasive weeds and remove	Review and monitor
New hedge planting	Gap-up selected hedges with native whips	Replace any stock that has failed	Weed bases of planting to ensure good growth	Weed bases of planting to ensure good growth	Weed bases of planting to ensure good growth	Review and monitor
Selected screen planting	Plant with mixed native stock in protective fenced areas	Replace any stock that has failed	Weed areas to ensure good growth	Weed areas to ensure good growth	Weed areas to ensure good growth	Review protective fencing
Bat boxes	Select trees and install to manufactures instructions	Inspect to see all secure	Continue inspection	Continue inspection	Continue inspection	Review and if in use monitor by qualified bat worker
Bird boxes	Select trees and install to manufactures instructions	Inspect to see all secure	Continue inspection	Continue inspection	Continue inspection	Review and if in use monitor and clean out as necessary

5.6 Conclusion

Toms Wood Homes Ltd has instructed an ecological assessment of their approved planning application Ref 21/03437/FP taking into account the Conditions of North Hertfordshire District Council for a Landscape & Ecology Management Plan with biodiversity net gain proposals including provisions for planting enhancements, new trees, new hedgerows, new bat boxes and bird boxes. These have all been completed in the PRA, BNG and LEMP as set out in this report.

The site survey and subsequent desktop studies indicate that the immediate location around the proposal is not an area of high risk for any specific species or sensitive habitats, particularly bats. The detailed ecological enhancements of the proposal accompany this development on the site in the Hard and Soft Landscaping conditions. When the Landscape design is implemented the BNG and LEMP can be developed further.

The general Condition 12 of Ref 21/03437/FP in the NHDC approval letter can now be discharged. The landscape enhancements in Appendixes 1 and 2 have been recommended to reduce the effect of the scheme on surrounding areas and habitats. This will also increase the ecological value of the existing site and boundaries in particular and will provide enhanced biodiversity for wildlife in general.

Therefore, this assessment concludes that the proposed development by Toms Wood Homes will have minimal impact on the overall ecology of the area. The scheme will provide a net biodiversity gain and will be implemented to ensure that existing wildlife and habitats are not affected, and that long-term management of the project will enhance biodiversity.

We conclude that no further environmental studies are necessary to satisfy the requirement for ecological assessments and that the proposal can be determined on this basis.