

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

Proposed Development at:

**Land North of Pound Farm
London Road
(Phase II & III) St Ippolyts
Hitchin, Herts SG4 7NE**

OS 3291-25-Doc 2

March 2026

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy and Management Plan

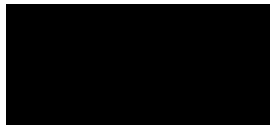
For

Proposed Development at

Land North of Pound Farm, London Road, St Ippolyts, Hitchin, Herts, SG4 7NE, (Phase II & III)

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Document

Open Spaces Landscape & Arboricultural Consultants Ltd (Open Spaces) was commissioned by Elivia Homes Limited to prepare a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy relating to Phase II and III of the proposed development at land north of Pound Farm, London Road, Hitchin, Herts SG4 7NE (the Site). The Site comprising “*of the erection of 48 dwellings and associated works*”.

The Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy has been prepared pursuant to consultee comments and general requirements contained therein. The Site has full planning permission granted by North Hertfordshire District Council (21/00434/HYA) subject to a number of planning conditions. The report aims to discharge the following condition:

24. Prior to the commencement of any landscaping works with any particular phase, an ecological management plan which details the how ecological units will be delivered within that phase shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include the following:

- a) aims and objectives of management;*
- b) existing and proposed features to be managed, including specific reference to improvements to retained hedgerows;*
- c) species composition of habitats to be enhanced and created;*
- d) a programme for implementation;*
- e) the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the Plan; and*
- f) monitoring and remedial measures of the Plan.*

The plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and the programme as approved and the measures shall be maintained and retained thereafter. Reason: To ensure that the agreed landscaping and biodiversity gains are delivered and maintained in the interests of local biodiversity, ecology and the visual amenity of the site.

1.2 Aims of the Report

This Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy has been prepared to set out the proposed biodiversity enhancement measures associated with the development and to demonstrate how these measures will contribute to habitat creation and ecological enhancement within the site.

The Strategy identifies opportunities to incorporate biodiversity features within the development in a manner that responds to the existing landscape context. The proposed measures are intended to create new habitat niches and provide shelter, nesting, foraging and breeding opportunities for birds, bats, invertebrates and small mammals.

The information contained within this report is intended to ensure that biodiversity enhancement features are appropriately specified, located and managed to achieve their stated conservation objectives.

Specifically, this report:

- i) Identifies the types and sources of biodiversity enhancement features proposed.
- ii) Provides guidance on the siting, placement and orientation of those features.
- iii) Sets out the purpose and conservation objectives of each enhancement measure.

This Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan RevA-3291-OS-DR-LA-01 and RevA-3291-OS-DR-LA-02

Landscape and Ecology Management Plan OS 3291-25-Doc 1 Land no Pound Farm Phase II, III LEMP

Soft Landscape Plan – 8653.PP.1.0D Phase 2 Soft Landscape Overview Plan Overall

1.3 Limitations to this report

This Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy relates solely to the identification and specification of biodiversity enhancement measures required to satisfy the relevant planning condition.

This report does not address ecological mitigation measures, precautionary working methods, lighting design, or detailed landscape proposals, which are typically set out within separate ecological assessments, arboricultural reports, lighting strategies, or landscape documentation prepared for the development.

Where such documents exist, this Strategy should be read in conjunction with them. This report does not supersede or replace any previously identified mitigation measures and is limited to enhancement proposals only.

1.4 The Site - General Baseline Site Description

The proposed residential development (Phases I, II and III) comprises a field bordered by London Road to the west, the field and dwelling comprising Pound Farm to the south, housing and associated amenity landscaping to the north and a stream, Ippollitts Brook, and wooded corridor to the north-east.

The entire site has been assessed as having a very low ecological value but with greater importance given to adjacent land. There are no identified impacts to protected species.

Site Description – All Phases

Phase I (not the focus of this report) comprises the western end of the site, including the site access driveway off London Road, the spine access driveway through the centre of the site (broadly on a west-east axis) which further extends through Phase II and III to the eastern end, parts of the broadly north-south access driveways, and the eastern end of the

site (SUDS area, grassland open space and play provision). The SUDS area provides a buffer between the housing and the adjacent Local Wildlife Site and an existing balancing pond.

Phases II and III comprise some parts of access roadways, communal landscape 'square' to the centre of the entire development and landscape buffers, largely to the northern and southern boundaries. The landscape buffer to the southern boundary comprises native trees set within flowering lawn, native hedging and native shrub mix. The landscape buffer to the northern boundary comprises native and fruiting trees, swathes of wildflower meadow mix, flowering lawn and native shrub mixes.

2.0 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

The supporting ecological assessment identified opportunities to enhance biodiversity in association with the proposed development. The scale and nature of the scheme allow for the incorporation of proportionate biodiversity enhancement measures in accordance with national and local planning policy. The measures set out within this Strategy are informed by the findings of the desk study and are designed to provide additional habitat opportunities.

2.1 Existing Habitats

Some trees and other vegetation are to remain adjacent to the boundaries of Phases II and III of the development (but outside of the red line). The species composition of trees on this adjacent land to the north include sycamore, pine, ash and oak.

2.2 Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

This biodiversity enhancement strategy is designed to increase biodiversity on site by the soft landscaping proposals. Where appropriate, native species have been selected, and where non-native planting is proposed, this has been chosen for its ability to provide evergreen structure, flowers and/or fruit, which will provide year-round shelter and foraging opportunities.

Proposed planting will be enhanced by the extent of retained vegetation to maintain and continue movement corridors and habitat connectivity which, in combination with new proposals, will facilitate local wildlife migration and the provision of shelter for birds, bats, mammals and invertebrates during works and the long-term future.

Biodiversity is further augmented by increasing opportunities for shelter, nesting and breeding through the provision of bat and bird boxes, invertebrate towers and hedgehog highways. Differing orientation and two variations of bat boxes extend the season of potential roosting by encouraging a greater number of bats to the site as they are able to select the most appropriate temperature for their needs. The bird boxes will be of two differing types to attract different species of birds that have specific nesting requirements.

Additional habitat diversity will be created through the provision of invertebrate features such as insect hotels. These features provide shelter and overwintering opportunities for invertebrates and provide food sources to other small fauna contributing to increased ecological complexity within the site.

Hedgehog highways/access gaps incorporated within boundary treatments will allow small mammals to move freely through the development, maintaining connectivity with surrounding habitats. Creation of these green networks prevent hedgehogs from becoming trapped in small, isolated areas. Creating larger traffic free areas for roaming mimics natural behaviours increasing opportunities for breeding and nesting helping to prevent populations from dying out.

2.3 Biodiversity Enhancement Installation Products

2.3.1 Bird Box



The Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Roost –

Source (https://www.schwegler-natur.de/portfolio_1408366639/sperlingskoloniehaus-1sp/?lang=en)

Sparrow populations play an essential part in natural pest control and the provision of shelter and nesting boxes can support local bird populations. The wood concrete construction creates a large and well-lit brood chamber within a long-lasting permanent nest box. Expected occupants are House and Tree Sparrows, and in some instances other birds which use nest boxes such as Tits, Redstarts and Spotted Flycatchers.

- i) Bird boxes should be placed a minimum of 2-3 m above ground on a sound surface.
- ii) Should not be placed in direct sunlight, should face north to northeast and be protected from driving rain and strong winds.
- iii) There should be a clear flight path to the nest box free of vegetation, cabling and branches.
- iv) The nest box should be free from sources of access by predators.
- v) Not to be placed close to bird feeders as activity will deter nesting.
- vi) Installed to the manufacturer's specification and can be surface mounted or integrated within building construction.

2.3.2 Bird Box



The Schwegler Swift Nest Box Series type No.17

Source (https://www.schwegler-natur.de/portfolio_1408366639/mauersegler-nistkasten-nr-17a/?lang=en)

Swift populations are in decline largely due to loss of nesting sites. The provision of shelter and nesting boxes can augment local bird populations by providing permanent nesting locations. The certified, asbestos-free, vegetable fibre-reinforced concrete and SCHWEGLER wood-concrete construction creates a lightweight long-lasting permanent nesting site.

- i) Swift boxes must be fitted in accordance with manufacturers specifications.
- ii) Swift boxes should be installed at a minimum height of 6-7 metres above ground or protruding structure/parts of a building.
- iii) A clear and unobstructed flight path free from vegetation, service cabling, infrastructure protrusions, branches and predator access is essential as swifts enter and exit the nest in an almost vertical flight path.
- iv) Orientation of swift boxes should be in an easterly direction as this should receive adequate morning sun without risk of overheating.
- v) Swift boxes should be protected from driving rain and strong winds.
- vi) Can be integrated or surface mounted.

The nesting bird season is generally accepted as between March to September (with some overlap dependant on localised environmental conditions). Therefore, following installation the bird boxes should not be disturbed, as disturbance may result in an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000. Recommended maintenance to conform to manufacturer's recommendations.

2.3.3 Bat Boxes



The Schwegler Bat Winter Roost 1WQ

Source (https://www.schwegler-natur.de/portfolio_1395072079/fledermaus-winterquartier-1wq/?lang=en)

The provision of bat boxes increases potential habitats and shelter available for declining bat species. The self-cleaning maintenance free wood-concrete boxes are long lasting and with a double panel system are suitable to provide safe winter hibernation locations. The roosts will also serve as a safe colony and nursery roosts during the summer and typical species including Pipistrelle and Serotine.

- i) Bat boxes should be installed minimum of 3 metres above ground on a sound surface.
- ii) Must have access to direct sunlight for 6-8 hours in a south or westerly facing direction. The boxes should be placed with differing orientation within this range.
- iii) Not to be placed near sources of bright artificial light.
- iv) Not to be placed directly above hard landscaping.
- v) Clear unobstructed horizontal flight path to the box is required free from foliage, branches or cabling.
- vi) Box to be placed away from sources of access by predators.
- vii) Must be installed in accordance with manufacturers specifications.

2.3.4 Bat Boxes



The Schwegler Bat Winter Roost 1FQ

Source (https://www.schwegler-natur.de/portfolio_1395072079/fledermaus-fassadenquartier-1fq/?lang=en)

The provision of bat boxes increases potential habitats and shelter available for declining bat species. The self-cleaning maintenance free waterproof wood-concrete boxes are long lasting. The 1FQ has been designed to support inexperienced bats ease of use with a roughed front panel and step like access. The boxes will also serve as a large summer day roost, nursery or small colony site designed specifically building dwelling species.

- i) Bat boxes should be installed minimum of 3 metres above ground on a sound surface.
- ii) Must have access to direct sunlight for 6-8 hours in a south or westerly facing direction. The boxes should be placed with differing orientation within this range.
- iii) Not to be placed near sources of bright artificial light.
- iv) Not to be placed directly above hard landscaping.
- viii) Clear unobstructed horizontal flight path to the box is required free from foliage, branches or cabling.
- ix) Box to be placed away from sources of access by predators.
- x) Must be installed in accordance with manufacturers specifications.

Bats are a protected species, and any object they utilise for roosting is therefore also protected. Therefore, following installation the bat bricks should not be disturbed, as disturbance may result in an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000. Bat boxes are robust and no maintenance and therefore are at their most effective if left undisturbed. Should, for any reason, disturbance of the boxes be envisaged, an appropriately licensed ecologist should be appointed to undertake any work required.

2.3.5 Invertebrate Tower



Large Timber Free Standing vidaXL Insect Hotel

Source (<https://www.vidaxl.co.uk/e/vidaxl-insect-hotel-15x11x150-cm-firwood>)

This firwood insect tower provides a variety of habitats to provide essential shelter, nesting, and hibernation spots for beneficial insects, increasing biodiversity. By attracting pollinators like bees and pest-controllers like ladybirds, these structures encourage a healthy, natural ecosystem in gardens, reducing the need for chemical pesticides.

- i) Must be Installed to manufacturers specification.
- ii) To be root fixed, well anchored with no swing or sway.
- iii) The entry holes should be orientated to a sunny south facing direction.
- iv) There should be a clear unobstructed path with no vegetation in front of the entry holes.

