

LANDLINK ESTATES LIMITED

Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex

- Ecological Design Strategy
- Habitat and Ecology Enhancement Management Plan

Planning Issue

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FIGURES

Figure No. 1 – Ecological Enhancement Plan



The Old Bank, 34 South Street, Tarring, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7LH
W. lizardlandscapeecology.com

SUMMARY

Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Landlink Estates Ltd to provide an Ecological Design Strategy including a Habitat and Ecological Enhancement Management Plan for land at Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex (*Grid Reference: SU 974 031 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*). A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey and Detailed Reptile Survey have previously been carried out in September 2016 and October 2016 respectively. The Ecological Design Strategy has been based on data from these protected species surveys and previous reports, which established the baseline ecological conditions.

The site is comprised of a large continuous arable field and a small pastoral field separated by a footpath and native hedgerow. The majority of the site comprises an arable field with thin field margins and was assessed as being of 'low' ecological value.

Ecological constraints within the site that were identified during the PEA concerned reptiles, breeding birds and bat flight paths. Mitigation measures for these protected species involved the retention and enhancement of the field margins, retention of the hedgerows and scattered trees along the north east and south east boundaries and the use of a sympathetic lighting system including recommendations for additional habitat creation and enhancement.

Ecological enhancements that are considered to be achievable within the proposed scheme; include the integration of bat and bird boxes into the new dwellings; native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting; creation of wildflower meadows; log piles and compost heaps; and maintaining connectivity through the housing area with the use of hedgehog tunnels.

In order to ensure the long-term viability of these measures, a habitat and ecology enhancement management plan has been detailed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has been commissioned by Landlink Estates Ltd to provide an Ecological Design Strategy including a Habitat and Ecological Enhancement Management Plan for land at Drove Lane, Yapton, West Sussex (*Grid Reference: SU 974 031 – hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).
- 1.2 Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology has previously carried out and produced the following reports on this site.
- *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey (PEA) – undertaken on 13th September 2016;*
 - *Detailed Reptile Survey Report – undertaken during October 2016.*
- 1.3 This report has been based on data from these previous protected species surveys and reports. The report was undertaken and prepared by Catherine O'Reilly (*MCIEEM, Senior Ecologist; Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology*). The report has been reviewed by Joe Jackson; (*Principal; Landscape Architect BA (Hons) LA DipLA CMLi; Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology*).

Site Description

- 1.4 The site is comprised of a large, continuous arable field measuring approximately 11.5 hectares (*ha*) and a small pastoral field measuring approximately 0.83 *ha*. These fields are separated by a footpath, native hedgerow and bramble. The site is fairly level and approximately 5.0 metres (*m*) above sea level.
- 1.5 Habitats within the site include an arable field, improved grassland, tall ruderal vegetation, native and mixed hedgerows, scattered trees and bracken.

Surrounding Landscape

- 1.6 The landscape surrounding the site, to the west, south, east and north-east, is dominated by arable land. The village of Yapton is located adjacent to the east of the site. There are numerous drainage ditches within the wider landscape.

Development Proposals

- 1.7 The development proposals include the construction of approximately 250 no. dwellings with associated gardens and hard landscape areas and public open spaces.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

- 2.1 The aim of the Ecological Design Strategy has been to;
- *To describe baseline ecological conditions including site potential and ecological constraints;*
 - *To describe mitigation, compensation, enhancement and restoration measures;*
 - *To provide a Habitat and Ecology Enhancement Management Plan;*
 - *To provide an Ecological Enhancements Plan.*

3.0 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

- 3.1 An updated walkover of the site was undertaken on 18th July 2018 which found baseline conditions unchanged from the 2016 survey period. The majority of the site comprises an arable field with thin field margins. This was assessed as having a 'low' ecological value, and therefore, there are few ecological constraints associated with it and there are opportunities for ecological enhancement.
- 3.2 The ecological constraints regarding protected species that were identified during the PEA concerned protected species of reptiles, breeding birds and bat flight paths.

Reptiles

- 3.3 The PEA assessed the rough grassland and herbaceous vegetation around the margins of the field to be likely to support species of reptile. Phase 2 Reptile Surveys were recommended to ascertain the presence or absence of reptiles. A detailed reptile survey carried out during October 2016, found a 'low' population (max 2 adults) of slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*) along the northern boundary of the site where the rough grassland abuts the hedgerow.

Breeding Birds

- 3.4 The north east and south east boundaries of the site comprised mixed native hedgerows, scrub and scattered trees. These were assessed as being suitable for supporting common and widespread species of nesting birds.

Bat – Flight Paths

- 3.5 The native hedgerow along the north eastern boundary of the site appeared to be long-established. In addition to hedgerow species, this hedge line contained scattered trees including mature pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) trees. These trees were assessed for potential roost features for bats. Two pedunculate oak trees were assessed as having a 'moderate' potential for roosting bats and one mature hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) was assessed as having a 'low' potential for roosting bats. The linear and long-established nature of this hedgerow indicates that it is likely to be used by bats for commuting and foraging.

4.0 ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES**4.1 Ecological Mitigation and Compensation**

- 4.1.1 The boundary / field margin habitat along the north east and south east of the site was identified in the PEA as having the potential to support reptiles, breeding birds and commuting / foraging bats. The majority of this habitat including the hedgerows and field margins to the north-eastern boundary will be retained during and post construction, however c. 80 linear meters of the south-eastern hedgerow will be removed to create new public open space. Measures to mitigate the impact of the development are detailed below, while further ecological enhancements that will result in biodiversity gains are also detailed.

Reptiles - Mitigation

- 4.1.2 Reptiles were recorded along the north-eastern boundary adjacent to the hedgerow. The majority of all field margins are to be retained as part of the development proposals, however a small section to the northern corner of the site will require removal to facilitate the access proposals.
- 4.1.3 To avoid any contravention of *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended)* an avoidance strategy will be implemented in order to prevent any potential harm to reptiles. This is as follows:
- Undertake all vegetation clearance works during the reptile active season (March – October)
 - Vegetation is to be cleared in a phased approach with an initial cut reducing vegetation to 15cm followed by a further strim to less than 5.0 cm once the area has been inspected for the presence of reptiles.
 - All clearance works to be supervised by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist.
 - The removal of all logs, tree limbs, rubble or stone piles will be done by hand.
 - All arisings will be removed from the area.
 - All areas of cleared vegetation will be maintained at a height of less than 5.0 cm before and during any construction activities to prevent re-colonisation by reptile species.

Reptiles - Compensation

- 4.1.4 Ecological enhancements implemented within the scheme which will be of benefit to reptiles and compensate for the loss of a small area of reptile habitat to the north, include the creation of wildflower meadows, log piles, compost heaps and seasonally damp areas. These measures are detailed below.

Breeding Birds - Mitigation

- 4.1.5 The hedgerows and scattered trees along the north-eastern and south-eastern boundaries provide suitable habitat for nesting birds. Where hedgerows / tree lines or scrub are proposed to be removed this will be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (*nesting season March – August inclusive*) or following inspection to ensure no active bird nests are present.

Breeding Birds - Compensation

- 4.1.6 To compensate for the removal of c. 80 linear metres of hedgerow, a range of bird boxes will be installed to the northern aspect of new dwellings and within existing trees. These will be suitable for a range of bird species including Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species such as the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), dunnoek (*Prunella modularis*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*).

Bats - Mitigation

- 4.1.7 The long-established hedgerow and scattered trees along the south eastern boundary of the site have been assessed as having potential for roosting / foraging / commuting bats. It is recommended that 'Dark Corridors' are created along all existing boundary vegetation to maintain bat flight paths.
- 4.1.8 This would be achieved by utilising a sympathetic lighting strategy both during and post construction. The following details are based upon guidelines provided by The Bat Conservation Trust:
- Lighting will be kept to a minimum, with only essential areas lit.
 - Lighting columns will be the minimum height necessary to minimise light spill.
 - Lights will be fitted with cowls to prevent backwards light spill into any hedgerows / ecological enhancement strategies.
 - Low level bollard lighting will be used where possible.
 - Lighting will be timed to ensure periods of total darkness.
 - Light sources will peak higher than 550nm and be of a warm / neutral colour <4200 kelvin.

Bats – Compensation

- 4.1.9 To mitigate and compensate for the loss of c. 80 linear meters of hedgerow along the south-eastern boundary, the central park area will be planted with scattered semi-mature Oak trees to soften the break in vegetation and provide a suitable alternative foraging resource.

4.2 Ecological Enhancement

- 4.2.1 Due to the 'low' ecological value of the site prior to development, opportunities for ecological enhancement within the site are outlined below. These are considered to be achievable within the proposed development scheme.

Creation of Wildflower Meadows

- 4.2.2 The rural edge of the site will be formed of areas of wildflower grassland of local provenance (*where possible*). Each area will be seeded with a mix most suited to its growing environment, to include Emorsgate EM2 – General Purpose Meadow Mixture to less shaded areas, EH1 – Hedgerow Mixture beneath hedges and existing vegetation and EL1 – Flowering Lawn Mixture to areas of the site which will be regularly mown (for example along public footpaths or entrances to the site).

- 4.2.3 A tussock mixture (such as EM10 – Tussock Mixture) is proposed along the north-eastern boundary and to habitat creation areas to the south-western section of the site. This mixture is ideal to create areas of tussocky grassland that, once established, require little or no maintenance. This grassland type forms a good habitat for insects, small mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles, providing nesting sites during spring, food during summer and autumn, and shelter during winter.

Creation of Seasonally Wet Grassland Habitat – Attenuation Basins

- 4.2.4 Attenuation basins on site will be used for storm water attenuation during extreme events only and will be dry for the majority of the year. A seed mixture for seasonally damp soils such as *Emorsgate EM8 Meadow Mixture for Wetlands* would be an appropriate for the base of these basins.

Native Planting

- 4.2.5 Native trees, shrubs and hedgerows will be used to enhance boundary features, to the rural edge and within areas of public open space including along green corridors providing connectivity through the site. The species used will increase foraging and resting habitat for wildlife both in terms of variety and seasonality. Suitable varieties include:

Native Trees:

- *Holly (Ilex aquifolium)*;
- *Oak (Quercus robur)*;
- *Hornbeam (Carpinus betulus)*;
- *Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia)*;
- *Silver Birch (Betula pendula)*;
- *Willow sp. (Salix sp.)*.

Native Understorey Shrubs:

- *Gelder Rose (Viburnum opulus)*;
- *Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa)*;
- *Spindle (Euonymus europaeus)*;
- *Crab Apple (Malus sylvestris)*.

Species-rich Hedgerow Planting

- 4.2.6 Boundaries of the site are to be strengthened with the planting of new native species-rich hedgerows interspersed with standard trees. The hedge will be planted as a double row with at least 5 woody species per 30-meter length.

Native Hedging:

- *Field Maple (Acer campestre)*;
- *Dogwood (Cornus sanguinea)*;
- *Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna)*;
- *Hazel (Corylus avellana)*;
- *Dog-Rose (Rosa canina)*;
- *Weyfaring Tree (Viburnum lantana)*;
- *Buckthorn (Rhamnus cathartica)*;
- *Holly (Ilex aquifolium)*.

Creation of Log Piles and Compost Heaps

- 4.2.7 The creation of log piles and compost heaps will provide a food source for invertebrates and resting and hibernation habitat for amphibians, reptiles and mammals within grassland / under storey shrub planting areas.

Hedgehog Tunnels

- 4.2.8 13 x 13 centimetre (*cm*) holes will be cut into the bottom of fences (or hedgehog friendly gravel board used) to allow free movement of hedgehogs through the housing area. 'Hedgehog Highway' labels should be installed to ensure residents are aware of their use and do not block these important features.

Bird and Bat Boxes

- 4.2.9 A number of bird and bat boxes will be incorporated into the design. These will include:

Bird Boxes:

- House Sparrow terrace to northern aspect of new building;
- 2 x Double House Martin Nests to north-western aspect of new building;
- Open Fronted nest box located within north-eastern hedgerow;
- Swift box to the northern gable of new building;
- 2 x general purpose Schwegler nest box with 32mm entrance hole to mature trees within the south-eastern boundary.

Bat Boxes:

- 2 x Crevice bat boxes installed within south-eastern treeline;
- 2FN Schwegler Bat Box to south-eastern treeline;
- 2 x Integrated bat boxes to the southern aspect of new buildings;

5.0 HABITAT AND ECOLOGY ENHANCEMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 5.1 In order to ensure the long term viability of the ecological mitigation and enhancement measures outlined above, detailed prescriptions for initial maintenance requirements and long term management are provided within this section.

5.2 Wildflower Meadows

Proposal

- 5.2.1 Areas of wildflower meadow to increase the amount of reptile habitat within the site to be used along the north-western and south-eastern boundaries to a width of 3.0 m. Further unused areas within the site can be planted with a wildflower mix to further increase biodiversity. It is recommended that mixtures suitable for the conditions within each area are used. *Emorsgate EM2 Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture* is recommended along the north east boundary and other general areas; *Emorsgate EW1 Woodland Mixture* or *EH1 Hedgerow Mixture* along the south east boundary; and *Emorsgate EM8 Meadow Mixture for Wetlands* is recommended within the attenuation basins where appropriate. Tussocky areas of grassland should be created along the north-eastern boundary and south-western corner of the site.

- 5.2.2 For the best and most successful results, careful implementation will be required (*as described in the following sections*). The first and second year's management is critical to the success of these meadows. Once the native meadow is established, traditional meadow management could be adopted. Where appropriate, the use of conservation grazing can be used to maintain wildflower meadows as an alternative to mowing / cutting.

Sowing

- 5.2.3 The seed should be sown on nutrient depleted soil; top soil should not be used within areas which are to be sown with wildflower seed. To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation or a herbicide. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll, or tread, to produce a firm surface. Care must be taken along the north east boundary not to disturb the existing vegetation which exists as suitable reptile habitat. In this location, the seedbed shall be created outside of the existing field margin.
- 5.2.4 Seeds require warmth and moisture in order to germinate and therefore August – September and March – April are generally the best times to sow. The seed shall be sown at a rate of 2 – 4 grams / m².

Cutting– Year 1

- 5.2.5 Sown meadow wild flower and grass species are perennial; they will be slow to germinate and grow and will not usually flower in their first growing season. There will often be a flush of annual weeds from the soil in the first growing season which may grow up and obscure the meadow seedlings beneath. This annual weed growth is easily controlled by topping or mowing.
- 5.2.6 Mow newly sown meadows regularly throughout the first year of establishment to a height of 40-60mm, removing cuttings if dense. This will control annual weeds and help maintain balance between faster growing grasses and slower developing wild flowers. Spot treat weeds such as dock with herbicide application.

Cutting – Year 2 Onwards

- 5.2.7 Meadow grassland is not to be cut or grazed from spring through to late July/August to give the sown species an opportunity to flower. After flowering in July or August take a 'hay cut': cut back with a scythe, petrol strimmer or tractor mower to c 50mm. Leave the 'hay' to dry and shed seed for 1-7 days then remove from site.
- 5.2.8 Mow or graze the re-growth through to late autumn/winter to c 50mm and again in spring if needed.

Maintenance of Established Tussocky Grassland

- 5.2.9 Once established tussocky grassland requires minimal maintenance. Unwanted perennial weeds (docks, thistles) may need control by occasional spot treatment with a herbicide. To control scrub and bramble development, tussocky areas may need cutting every 2-3 years between October and February. For wildlife this cutting is best done on a rotational basis so that no more than half the area is cut in any one year leaving part as an undisturbed refuge.

Additional Yellow Rattle

- 5.2.10 Yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) is a root hemiparasite which parasitises the roots of meadows plants such as grasses and legumes, thereby impeding their growth. The additional sowing of yellow rattle can be used after the final cut to suppress any vigorous grass growth.

5.3 Native Trees, Hedges and Shrubs

Proposal

- 5.3.1 The majority of hedgerows and scattered trees along the north east and south east boundaries are retained. Additional planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows shall be carried out where possible to the site boundaries; through the site area; and within areas of public open space within the proposed scheme. Where required, these shall be maintained in a way that benefits wildlife.

Planting

- 5.3.2 Planting pits shall be excavated to a depth and size that contains the plant's root system and allows the collar of the plant (*the mark on the tree where it has been growing above ground*) to be level with the top of the soil. The soil shall be carefully backfilled in layers, ensuring the plant is held upright, and each layer should be carefully firmed down.

Watering – Years 1 - 3

- 5.3.3 The plants should be watered weekly from May to September for a minimum of three years to ensure they establish.

Pruning / Trimming - Ongoing

- 5.3.4 Pruning and trimming of trees, shrubs and hedgerows should be carried out outside of the bird breeding season (*March – August inclusive*). Trees and shrubs should be checked bi-annually for shape, form and size, and pruned accordingly whilst they are still in leaf. Hedges should be cut in alternate years if possible to allow species such as guelder rose and hawthorn to flower and fruit on the previous year's growth. Pruning of hedgerows should be carried out in such a way to achieve a dense hedgerow.

Weeding - Ongoing

- 5.3.5 Areas around the new plants should be kept clear of weeds to allow the plants to establish by weeding twice a year in the Spring and Autumn.

5.4 Bird and Bat Boxes*Proposal*

- 5.4.1 Bird and bat boxes shall be installed on the new dwellings to provide additional nesting and roosting sites within the proposed scheme. It is recommended that a variety of bird boxes are provided to appeal to a range of species.

Specification

- 5.4.2 Bird boxes that are integrated within the building are available. The *1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace* provides three adjacent nesting boxes suitable for house sparrows; the *Vivaro Pro Woodstone Starling Box* is suitable for starlings; The *Schwegler Brick Nest Boxes* are suitable for dunnocks (*Type 24*) and spotted flycatcher (*Type 26*). These boxes are also suitable for a variety of other bird species and do not require maintenance or cleaning.

- 5.4.3 The *2FR Schwegler bat tube* is designed to be integrated into a building. These have transverse connecting holes allowing several tubes to be placed adjacent to each other. These bat tubes do not require maintenance or cleaning.

Siting

- 5.4.4 Bird boxes should be installed at a minimum height of 2.5 m on either the north, east or west aspects of the dwellings.
- 5.4.5 Bat boxes should be installed on the buildings at a height of between 3 – 6 m. They should be installed on the south east and south west elevations, which face the vegetated boundaries of the site.

Maintenance – Long Term

- 5.4.6 The bat and bird boxes specified above do not require any cleaning. A visual inspection should be carried out annually to ensure the boxes are secure.

5.5 Compost Heaps and Log Piles

Proposals

- 5.5.1 The creation of log piles and compost heaps within areas of grassland or understorey shrub planting would provide a food source for invertebrates and resting and hibernation habitat for amphibians, reptiles and mammals.

Creation and Maintenance

- 5.5.2 A log pile can be of any size and constructed from piling logs up horizontally. Log piles can be created using any type of wood, although it would be advantageous to utilise any pruning matter on an ongoing basis. Compost heaps can also be of any size and constructed from organic matter including grass cuttings. Once established, these can be maintained using cuttings from wildflower areas.

5.6 Hedgehog Tunnels

Proposal

- 5.6.1 It is recommended that Hedgehog tunnels are used to maintain connectivity between residential gardens within the proposed scheme throughout the housing areas.

Creation and Maintenance

- 5.6.2 Holes are to be cut at the base of fences to provide connectivity throughout the site. These should be 13 x 13 cm and can be marked using a 'Hedgehog Highway' sign (available from www.hedgehog street.org) to ensure residents are aware of them. These hedgehog tunnels should be kept open and free from vegetation.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report has specified an Ecological Design Strategy that takes into account mitigation measures for protected species as well as ecological enhancements for wildlife within the proposed scheme. Mitigation measures were required for reptiles, breeding birds and bat flight paths. These measures included the retention and strengthening of field / site margin and the retention and enhancement of hedgerows and scattered trees along the boundaries.
- 6.2 The site is predominately an arable field of 'low' ecological value and therefore further biodiversity gains would be easily achieved. Ecological enhancements that could be incorporated into the proposed housing scheme have been detailed within this report and include the use of native planting, creation of wildflower meadows, compost heaps, log piles and hedgehog tunnels and the installation of bird and bat boxes.

7.0 REFERENCES

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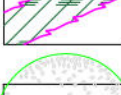
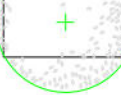
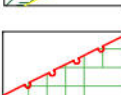
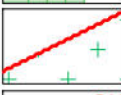
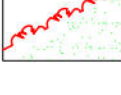
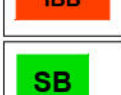
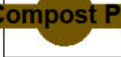
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Legend	
	Site Boundary.
	Existing Buildings.
	Existing Vegetation.
	Proposed - Native Trees 10 - 12 cm Girth Size; 3.0 - 3.5 m height; Standard (Selected).
	Proposed - Native Trees 6 - 8 cm girth; 2 - 2.5m height; Standard (Light).
	Proposed - New Species-rich Native Hedge.
	Proposed - Native Mixed Understorey Shrub Planting.
	Proposed - Native Wildflower Grassland.
	Proposed - "Green Corridors" - Retained vegetation, new tree planting, grassland/ open seeded with suitable wildflower mix.
	Adjoining Land - Subject to separate planning application.
	Bat Box - 2FN; Manufacturer: Schwegler.
	Sparrow Terrace (ST)
	Bird Box - General Purpose Bird Box (GP)
	Bat Box - Integrated Bat Box (IBB)
	Swift Boxes (SB)
	Bird Box - Open Fronted Bird Box (OF)
	House Martin Nest Boxes MN
	Log Pile
	Compost Pile

Compost Pile

Proposed Installation of Bat Boxes

Bat boxes shall be installed between 3.0-6.0 m height, in open, sunny positions on existing mature trees. Bat boxes shall be sited to the southern aspect of existing trees, in situations so as to receive greatest solar gain and least disturbance. Vegetation shall be kept clear from bat box entrances.

Proposed Installation of Bird Boxes

The open-fronted nestbox shall be installed between 1.0-2.0 m from the ground. All other nestboxes shall be installed between 2.0-4.0 m from the ground. Nestboxes shall be installed in sheltered locations but with clear flight lines into the box, preferably between north and east. Installation shall follow manufacturers' guidelines and shall ensure nestboxes are securely fixed. Fixings shall not cause harm to trees utilised.

Planning Issue			
Rev	Description	Date	Initials
00	Planning Issue	18.07.18	LB



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<i>Project Title and Location</i> Drove Lane, Yapton			
<i>Drawing Title</i> Ecological Enhancement Plan			
<i>Scale</i> 1:500@A1	<i>Drawn</i> LB	<i>Approved</i> CO	<i>Date</i> 18.07.18
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