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138-140 Highgate Road

Landscape and Ecology Mitigation and Management Plan

Prepared by LUC
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1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Planning consent was granted in April 2018 for the development of residential units at 138-140 Highgate Road (Planning Ref. 2018/1528/P). This Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Management Plan has been prepared specifically to address the requirements of pre-commencement conditions 22 – 25, as detailed below.

1.2 This document has been prepared for the exclusive use by Design Ventures Highgate Ltd. No part of this report should be considered legal advice.

Development Scope

1.1 The new development comprises six three storey residential homes and areas of both public and private landscape at the development frontage. Planning consent was granted in April 2018 (Planning Ref. 2018/1528/P) for the following works:

"Demolition of petrol station and MOT centre at 138-140 Highgate Road and erection of a three storey terrace building to provide 6 x 4 bedroomed dwelling houses with gardens at lower ground, ground and upper ground levels together with associated landscaping."

Pre-commencement Conditions

1.2 The details of pre-commencement conditions 22 – 25 are detailed below:

Condition 22:

- *"Prior to commencement of development, full details of a lighting strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy should demonstrate how it will minimise impact on wildlife in line with best practice outline in the Institute of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 8/18 Bats & Artificial Lighting in the UK, and with the recommendations in 3.9 of the Ecological Appraisal.*
- ***Reason:** To limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on intrinsically dark landscapes, nature conservation and anti-social behaviour, in line with paragraph 125 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and in compliance with the Habitats Regulations and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and policies C5 and CC2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017."*

Condition 23:

- *"Details of bird and bat nesting features (boxes or bricks) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to works commencing on site. Features should be integrated into the fabric of the building, unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include the exact location, height, aspect, specification and indication of species to be accommodated. Boxes shall be installed in accordance with the approved plans prior to the first occupation of the development and thereafter maintained. Guidance on biodiversity enhancements including artificial nesting and roosting sites is available in the Camden Biodiversity Action Plan: Advice Note on Landscaping Schemes and Species Features.*
- ***Reason:** To ensure the development provides the appropriate provision towards creation of habitats and valuable areas for biodiversity in accordance with policy 7.19 of the London Plan 2011 and Policy A3 of the Camden Local Plan 2017."*

Condition 24:

- *"Prior to commencement of works buildings shall be inspected to confirm if any active birds nests are present and any areas not is use by birds should be blocked or covered with netting to prevent birds returning to use them. Wherever possible, works shall be undertaken between September and February inclusive to avoid the main bird breeding season. If this is not possible then a suitably qualified ecologist shall check the areas concerned immediately prior to the clearance works to ensure that no nesting or nest-building birds are present. If any nesting birds are present then the works shall not commence until the fledglings have left the nest.*
- ***Reason:** All wild birds, their nests and young are protected during the nesting period under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)."*

Condition 25:

- *"No development shall take place until full details of landscaping for biodiversity have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Such details shall include planting and habitat features for biodiversity, and a maintenance plan, to enhance the strategic wildlife corridor associated with the railway to the south of the site, and the corridor of mature trees and green spaces along Highgate Road. Guidance on landscape enhancements for biodiversity is available in the Camden Biodiversity Action Plan: Advice Note on Landscaping Schemes and Species Features. The relevant part of the works shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the details thus approved.*
- ***Reason:** To ensure that the development achieves a high quality of landscaping which contributes to the visual amenity and character of the area, and helps to enhance missing links in the strategic wildlife corridor, in accordance with the requirements of policy A3 of the Camden Local Plan 2017."*

Policy and Legal Considerations

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 (as amended);
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW Act), 2000 (as amended);
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act), 2006;
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2018);
- London Borough of Camden Local Plan (2017); and
- Camden Planning Guidance, Biodiversity (Draft, 2017).

2 Ecological Baseline

2.1 LUC has previously conducted ecological work on Site and a brief overview of the current ecological value of this Site is outlined below. This should be read with reference to the 2018 Ecological Appraisal[1] which provides further detail on the current ecological baseline of the Site.

Habitats

2.2 Hardstanding, a single building and amenity grassland comprised the majority of the Site.

2.3 A small area of ornamental plating was recorded on the eastern boundary of the Site adjacent to Highgate Road. This area was planted with three small and well maintained shrubs, these were bay laurel *Laurus nobilis* and conifer species. Two young ornamental chestnut trees were recorded on the northern boundary of the Site.

2.4 Amenity grassland was present to the north and south of the Site. To the south one mature London plane *Platanus x hispanica* tree was present. To the north several mature London plane trees were present, as well as ornamental planting including bay laurel.

2.5 These habitats are common and widespread and were considered to provide negligible ecological value.

Protected Species

2.6 The majority of the Site was of negligible ecological value, providing limited opportunities for protected species.

2.7 Hampstead Heath to the west supports woodland, waterbodies, grassland and structures which provide optimal foraging, commuting and roosting habitat for a variety of bat species. Both the tree lined main road and railway line to the south provide potential commuting habitat for bats and connectivity with the high value habitats found at Hampstead Heath. However, it was noted the artificial habitats of the Site forms a break along the continuously vegetated Highgate Road, fragmenting the habitat corridor and reducing potential connectivity for commuting bats.

2.8 Young ornamental trees on Site provide habitat for nesting birds. It is unlikely the shrubs within the Site would support nesting birds given their small size, lack of shelter and high disturbance located on a main road. No nesting birds were recorded at the time of survey.

[1] 138-140 Highgate Road *Ecological Appraisal* 2018 (LUC)

3 Habitat Creation and Landscaping for Biodiversity

3.1 To address the requirements of Pre-commencement **Conditions 23** and **25**, details of bird and bat nesting features and landscape proposals for biodiversity are provided below. These have been developed in line with guidance on biodiversity enhancements, outlined in the Camden Biodiversity Action Plan: Advice Note on Landscaping Schemes and Species Features.

3.2 Landscape proposals are detailed in Landscape Plan provided in **Appendix 1.** Location and details of bird and bat boxes are provided in **Appendix 2.**

3.1 Table Detailing Newly Created Habitats on Site

Habitat	Details	Ecological Value
Associated Ornamental Planting	It is recommended that planting within private areas comprises species of known value to wildlife. Suitable plant species listed on the RHS Perfect for Pollinators Wildflowers list[2].	Of some value to a wide range of common and widespread birds and invertebrates.
Amenity Grassland	Amenity grassland forming publicly accessible open space at the frontage of Highgate Road. This should be a species diverse mix of grass species, suitable for amenity use.	Of some value to a wide range of common and widespread birds and invertebrates. Value can be increased through introduction of relaxed management.
Tree planting	Three newly planted London Plane trees along the frontage of Highgate Road. Positions of these are provided in **Appendix 1, Figure 1.**	Once semi-mature the additional canopy will strengthen north – south connectivity for commuting bats. Once semi-mature trees will provide additional opportunities for nesting birds. Trees on Site have future potential to develop natural features suitable for roosting bats.
Native species-rich hedge planting along frontage	Native species-rich hedge planting comprising a minimum of 5 distinct native species planted along the boundary fence between the development and public open space. Some species recommendations suitable for the Site include hazel *Corylus avellana*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, English oak *Quercus robur*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, elm *Ulmus sp.*, hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare* and spindle *Euonymus europaeus*.	Hedging will provide opportunities for a variety of common bird species to nest and forage. A species-rich hedge mix will provide ecological niche for a wide range of invertebrates. Hedge planting will provide additional north – south connectivity for wildlife, increasing the viability of the wildlife corridor along Highgate road.

[2] https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden/plants-for-pollinators

Habitat	Details	Ecological Value
Species Diverse Green roof	Proposals include up to 150.6m^3 of species diverse green roof. Species composition is provided in **Appendix 1, Figure 2**.	A diverse range of species which provide value over an extended period of time, in comparison to species poor sedum rich roofs.
Bird Boxes	Proposals include 5 integrated bird boxes targeting swift, a priority species. Boxes will be positioned along the east elevation. Placement and details of swift boxes are provided in **Appendix 2.**	Providing potential nesting sites for a priority species. It should be noted that swift boxes are also of benefit to other priority species such as house sparrow.
Bat Boxes	Proposals include 2 integrated bat bricks on the south elevation, facing areas identified for their foraging and commuting value. Placement and details of bat brick are shown in **Appendix 2.**	Inclusion of bat boxes will be of benefit to a number of common and widespread bat species, through the provision of additional roosts.

4 Mitigation and Management

Ecological Management Plan

4.1 To address the requirements of Pre-commencement **Condition 25**, management considerations for ecology for created habitats are outlined below. These have been developed alongside the Open Space Management Plan.

4.2 Management considerations for ecology for created habitats are outlined below. These have been developed alongside the Open Space Management Plan.

4.1 Table Detailing Recommended Ecological Management of Created Habitats on Site

Habitat	Management Recommendations	Frequency
Ornamental Planting	Proposals will include private gardens along the building. However, it is recommended planting comprises species of value to wildlife. Suitable plant species to incorporate are listed on the RHS Perfect for Pollinators Wildflowers list[3].	N/A
Amenity Grassland	It is recognised that the small size of the grassland will be of limited ecological value. The mowing regime as part of the Open Space Management Plan suggests mowing to match that of adjacent grassland habitats. If the grassland on adjacent council owned land is subject to a relaxed mowing schedule in the future, then it is recommended that the Site also adopts this for the benefit biodiversity.	As required, and if future management of adjacent habitat is relaxed, (see Open Space Management Plan)
Tree planting	Planted trees should be watered frequently to ensure healthy establishment, securing their potential ecological gain to the Site.	As required (approx. 1 to 2 times per year)
Native species-rich hedge planting along frontage	Regular hedge cutting will ensure features suitable for nesting birds are limited to the hedge interior. Precautionary check for nesting birds, by suitably trained operatives prior to hedge cutting activities. It is recognised that the hedging will form a formal frontage to the development. However, the hedge cutting schedule should allow flowering species (e.g. hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple) to flower before cutting. The first cut of the year should be delayed until after flowering has finished in June.	As required (approx. 1 to 2 times per year). First cut after flowering has finished in June.
Species Diverse Green roof	Green roof should be thoroughly watered after installation to ensure successful establishment of this habitat.	As required.

[3] https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden/plants-for-pollinators

Habitat	Management Recommendations	Frequency
	Green roof should be inspected regularly and unwanted colonising plants (e.g. Buddleia) should be removed.	Visual inspection during routine maintenance visits.
	In times of drought additional seeding and watering may be required to successfully establish this habitat.	As required.
Bird Boxes	Entrances to bird boxes should be kept clear from obstruction.	Visual inspection during routine maintenance visits.
Bat Boxes	Entrances to bat boxes should be kept clear from obstruction.	Visual inspection during routine maintenance visits.

Nesting Birds Check

4.3 To address the requirements of Pre-commencement **Condition 24** a Site visit was conducted 19th September 2019. Buildings were inspected for evidence of active bird nests to inform the work programme and potential exclusion measures.

4.4 The Site visit found no evidence of nesting birds.

4.5 No bird nesting features on Site were deemed suitable for exclusion netting.

4.6 Demolition works lie outside of the main bird breeding season (March – August inclusive), therefore no additional Site visit is required to identify breeding birds. However, if the programme of works is delayed such the demolition phase falls within the main breeding season, an additional check of the building will be required to ensure that no nesting birds are present.

Ecological Lighting Strategy

4.7 To address the requirements of Pre-commencement **Condition 22** an Ecological Lighting Strategy (ELS) has been developed to ensure that the lighting specification considers impacts to wildlife. The ELS has been produced in accordance with best practice guidance from The Institute of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 8/18 Bats & Artificial Lighting in the UK, and the recommendations within Section 3.9 of the Ecological Appraisal[4].

4.8 The ELS seeks to avoid exterior and interior lighting impacting key bat habitats and features created as part of proposals. Key bat habitats and features are outlined below:

- Tree and hedgerow planting along the western edge of the development, planted to increase north to south connectivity for commuting bats; and
- Newly installed bat boxes on the proposed building, installed to provide bat roosting potential.

4.9 Additionally the ELS seeks to avoid impacting habitats and features adjacent to the Site, comprising the established tree canopy which has been identified as important for commuting bats.

4.10 Detailed lighting plans are provided in **Appendix 3.** External lighting comprises the following installations, which have considered potential impacts to wildlife:

[4] 138-140 Highgate Road *Ecological Appraisal* 2018 (LUC)

- West facing Li.ET.02[5] fixtures, recessed into the floor finish. These have a 12 degree beam, and have been angled towards the building to reduce impact to canopy features.
- East Li.EX.LED[6] fixtures along the upper balcony, positioned below the parapet levels. The extrusion would sit within an aluminium channel[7] and directly light downwards towards the basement level and away from the tree canopy.
- There are additional wall lights along College lane. These are likely to be up / down lighting[8], and will be angled towards the building to reduce impact to canopy features.

4.11 Interior lighting with the potential to spill and impact onto the green corridor is limited to Li.SP.01 downlights on the upper ground level of the western elevation. To minimise light spill fixtures have been recessed in plaster.

[5] https://www.mr-resistor.co.uk/item.aspx?i=18556
[6] https://www.mr-resistor.co.uk/item.aspx?i=16834
[7] https://www.mr-resistor.co.uk/item.aspx?i=19708
[8] https://www.mr-resistor.co.uk/item.aspx?i=7105

Appendix 1

Figure 1. Landscape Proposals
Figure 2. Green Roof Planting Plan