

Land at Lindridge Lane
Desford
Leicestershire
LE9 9GN

Project Reference: BG24.138

Application Reference:

23/00445/OUT

17th May 2024

To: XL Designs (Midlands) Ltd,

Re: Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement strategy to discharge Condition 7 of the Approved Outline Planning Consent (23/00445/OUT) for the Erection of 4 dwelling houses with associated garages, parking & landscaping at the site known as Lyndale, Lindridge Lane, Desford, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE9 9GN.

This document outlines an Ecological Enhancement Strategy to clear Condition 7 of the Outline Planning Application (ref: 23/00445/OUT) which states:

"No development (including vegetation clearance) shall take place until further ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. Any mitigation, compensation or enhancement measures need to be clearly shown on all relevant submitted plans/elevations. All works are to proceed strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: In order to provide a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with Policy DM6 of the adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016), Policy ENV3 of the Desford Neighbourhood Plan (2021), and the requirements of the NPPF (2021)."

The following will be detailed within this strategy:

- a) How the scheme demonstrates the ability to support protected and priority species
- b) Details of the location, number and design of nesting bird boxes and bat boxes to be incorporated into the development.
- c) A timetable for their implementation
- d) Details of the means of future maintenance
- e) Persons responsible for implementing the works

The approved Ecological Management Plan shall then be fully implemented in accordance with the agreed timetable and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Background

The application site is positioned along the northern fringe of Desford village, approximately 11km west of Leicester City centre. The site comprises a former cattery building with an associated amenity grassland lawn.

Brindle & Green Ecological Consultants Ltd, Unit 3, Silverhill Court, Silverhill Farm, Radbourne, Derby, DE6 4LY

A mixed woodland lies along the western and southern boundary of the application site with recently planted sparse area of scattered trees within the centre of the site. The proposed works consists of clearance of the existing timber and wire cattery pens and felling of approximately 20 trees within the main body of the site for construction of up to four detached dwellings.

The proposed habitat management and prescriptions follow on from the complete Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Report and metric (Pioneer Environment, November 2022) and Habitat Scoping Survey (Pear Tree Ecology, April 2022). Design plans are provided within Appendix 1.

Sensitive working practices in relation to habitats, bats, breeding birds, amphibians, badgers and hedgehogs are considered.

Table 1: Ecological Receptors, the impact associated to the development, the proposed mitigation Enhancements and timings of proposed works

Receptor	Source of Impact	Unmitigated Impact	Proposed Working Method	Risk with Mitigation	Timing of proposed works
Habitats	Loss of low value habitats	Likely non-significant negative impact at the local level	Post construction seeding and monitoring of grassland areas. Post construction planting and management of created shrub areas.	Neutral (Not Significant)	Autumn 2024
	Impacts to root protection of boundary vegetation		Appropriate buffer and exclusion around retained woodland and trees to limit negative impacts to roots		
Breeding birds	Potential disturbance, loss, or harm to nesting birds, their nests, eggs and young	Likely non-significant negative impact at the local level	Vegetation clearance to be undertaken outside of nesting bird season or vegetation is to be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to removal.	Neutral (Not Significant)	Autumn 2024
	Loss of nesting habitat		Post construction habitat creation such as amenity shrub planting retention of trees and partial retention of woodland, as well as implementation of bird boxes (Appendix 2).		Autumn 2024
Amphibians	Potential disturbance, loss, or harm to individuals	Likely non-significant negative impact at the local level	Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) to be implemented during construction works: Construction materials to be stored on pallets or on hard standing. If any newt species found, then work should cease and a qualified ecologist contacted for advice.	Neutral (Not Significant)	Autumn 2024

Receptor	Source of Impact	Unmitigated Impact	Proposed Working Method	Risk Mitigation with	Timing of proposed works
Bats	Impacts during and post construction from artificial lighting.	Likely non-significant negative impact at the local level	Sensitive lighting scheme to be implemented during construction as well as habitat creation in the form of bat boxes (Appendix 2).	Neutral (Not Significant)	Autumn 2024
Badger	Individual trapping / injury	Likely non-significant negative impact at the local level	Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) to be implemented during construction. Ground works will include a means of escape for badgers which could become stuck overnight within trenches/holes/ditches. Should any fresh evidence of badger activity be encountered, then works must cease, and an ecologist sought.	Neutral (Not Significant)	Autumn 2024
Hedgehogs (MSPI)	Individual trapping / injury	Likely non-significant negative impact at site level	Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) to be implemented during construction: Artificial refugia including vegetation cuttings and brash piles etc. should first be dismantled by hand prior to removal from site. Construction materials to be stored on pallets or on hard standing. Ground works should include a means of escape for hedgehog which could become stuck overnight within trenches/holes/ditches.	Neutral (Not Significant)	Autumn 2024
	Loss of connective foraging habitat		Post construction habitat creation in the form of hedgehog highways and residential gardens to maintain connectivity (Appendix 2).	Neutral (Not Significant)	Autumn 2024

a) Measures to at least maintain the biodiversity of the site and demonstrate their ability to support protected and priority species;

Post construction habitat creation and enhancements have been proposed to ensure development is ecologically sensitive and secures biodiversity enhancements in accordance with Policy ENV3 of the Desford Neighbourhood Plan (2021) and the requirements of the NPPF (2023).

The Ecological Management Plan seeks to secure enhancement prescriptions and their long-term management to conserve and enhance the ecological and landscape value of the site and adjacent habitat through safeguarding and enhancing the ecological and physical integrity, through the following:

1) Maintain and protect existing conservation value of retained features

Reduced areas of the woodland along the south-western and western boundary are to be retained, along with the four trees along the eastern boundary, and will be suitably protected during construction via heras fencing and signage to ensure their long-term success for the perpetuity of the development. Trees will require a safety inspection on a 4-year rotation to assess condition and identify any potential defects or spread of pests and disease.

2) Creation of new habitats to enhance ecological connectivity across the site

Areas of amenity grassland within open space along the road and house frontages will be scarified and seeded with a species-rich seed mix such as EL1 Flowering Lawn Mixture (Emorsgate.co.uk) or similar approved. The grassland will be managed for public use and will be subject to a regular cutting regime.

Areas of created native scrub habitats are proposed along the frontages of houses within the open space and will be planted with a mix of native scrub species such as guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), and elder (*Sambucus nigra*). These will be managed to prevent encroachment onto neighbouring habitats and control of invasive species.

The floor of the retained woodland areas along the western/southwestern boundary is proposed to be enhanced to increase structural variation and biodiversity value of the woodland. The areas will be scarified and seeded with a species-rich woodland seed mixture such as EW1 Woodland Mixture (or similar). These areas will be fenced off whilst being established. Seed should be applied following the manufacturer's guidelines (Wildseed.co.uk) is best sown in the autumn or spring. Spread by hand with an even distribution and tread in. In addition, understorey planting will be implemented comprising of standard trees such as field maple (*Acer campestre*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), which are present at low levels within the woodland. The trees will be protected with guards and tree supports which will then be removed once the specimen is established. Regular weeding and pruning will take place to establish a strong central leader on the trees.

Native tree planting will be planted along the eastern boundary, along the proposed road and the house frontages and areas of open space throughout the proposed development comprising rowan (*Sorbus*

aucuparia), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), holly (*ilex aquifolium*) and pear (*pyrus communis*). The trees will provide additional foraging opportunities for wildlife and contribute to the connectivity to surrounding habitats. The trees will be protected with guards and tree supports which will then be removed once the specimen is established. Regular weeding and pruning will take place to establish a strong central leader on the trees.

Native hedgerow planting will be planted along the northeastern / eastern boundary comprising hawthorn, holly (*ilex aquifolium*), blackthorn (*prunus spinosa*) and dog-rose (*Rosa canina*). The hedgerow will provide foraging and refuge opportunities for wildlife and connectivity to the surrounding habitats. The new hedgerow will be inspected annually in late summer for the first 5 years of establishment. Specimens which have died or become diseased will be replaced within the following winter planting season.

Formative pruning of hedgerows during establishment to encourage a dense, bushy structure. Once established, hedgerows should be managed on a 2-year rotational basis to ensure foraging resources are available year-round for protected species. Management should avoid nesting bird season (March to September inclusive).

3) Implementation of precautionary measures during construction

Reason Avoidance Measures (RAMS) will be implemented in regard to bats, birds, amphibians, badgers and hedgehogs to ensure the protection of these protected species throughout the construction phase, as detailed within Table 1.

b) Details of the location, number and design of nesting bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog highways are to be incorporated into the development;

Artificial refugia for protected species

Bats: During construction x4 Integrated Habitat 001 brick boxes, *or similar approved* will be integrated to the on the south, south-east or south-western elevations of the proposed dwellings. The boxes should be placed as close to the eaves as possible.

Birds: During construction x4 Woodstone Seville Nest Box *or similar approved* will be installed on retained trees as per the enhancement plan (Appendix 2). The boxes will be placed between 3 to 4 meters from the ground.

Amphibians: x4 amphibian refugia will be created along the woodland edges to the west of the development footprint (Appendix 2). The refugia will comprise a base of large blocks/stone and topped with a stack of felled logs to provide suitable crevices for refuge seeking individuals. The logs will be topped with an earth bank and seeded with EM3 Grass seed mix or similar approved.

Hedgehogs: Where fences are proposed along the site boundary, hedgehog highways will be installed. These are gaps of approx. 20cm x 20cm in the bottom of the fence or gravel board to facilitate the movement of small mammals across the site post construction (Appendix 2). This will ensure site wide connectivity to areas of suitable habitat within the local area.

c) A timetable for their implementation;

The timetable for the implementation for the installation of the above enhancement is provided within Table 2 below.

Table 2. Timetable for the implementation of enhancement prescriptions.

Receptor	Enhancement prescription	Stage of Implementation	Timetable for Implementation
Habitat	Woodland enhancements, created amenity shrub planting and amenity grassland habitats	During construction	Autumn 2024
Bats	1 Integrated Habitat 001 box, or similar approved per dwelling	During construction	Autumn 2024
Birds	4 Woodstone Seville Nest Box or similar on retained trees	During construction	Autumn 2024
Amphibians	4 amphibian refugia along retained woodland edge	During construction	Autumn 2024
Hedgehogs (MSPI)	Hedgehog highways implemented within garden fencing	During construction	Autumn 2024

d) Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance.

An assessment to determine the success of the habitat creation areas will be undertaken at Year 5 from habitat establishment. The areas managed for ecological enhancement will be subjected to a low maintenance management regime following establishment as outlined within Table 3 below. An assessment to determine the success of the habitat creation areas will be undertaken at Year 5 from habitat establishment.

Table 3: Works Schedule

Management Prescriptions	Timing of works	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11-15
Woodland and Trees											
Check guards and tree supports until established	Unrestricted	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Remove stakes and tree guards once establishment is deemed complete.	Unrestricted					✓					
Weed by hand around plant base	Apr/May	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Formative prune where necessary to establish a strong central leader on trees. Trees will be assessed, removing and reducing side shoots. This work will be on going until the tree is considered to be established.	Prior to growing season		✓	✓	✓	✓					

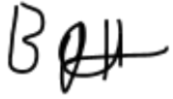
Management Prescriptions	Timing of works	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11-15
Safety checks and tree condition assessment undertaken on a 4-year rotation from establishment.	Unrestricted				✓				✓		✓
Control climbing plants such as ivy, and bramble. Cover will remain under 20%	Unrestricted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amenity Grassland and Woodland Floor											
Spot treat or remove by hand any noxious weeds within grassland areas (Applicable to EW1 & EL1)	Mar - Apr	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓
Check and repair eroded areas as required	May-Sept	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitoring. Walkover survey to determine species presence within grassland areas. If the seeding has not been successful (less than 50% of expected germination), reseeding with an appropriate mixture will be undertaken.	May – Aug	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Native Scrub Planting											
Control the spread of invasive species and fast-growing bramble. Cover will remain under 20%	Unrestricted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Weed by hand around shrub understorey	Unrestricted	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wildlife Boxes											
Management and replacement of bat/bird boxes if required.	Nov - Feb	✓			✓		✓		✓		✓

e) Persons responsible for implementing the works;

The Developer (XL Designs (Midlands) Ltd) will be responsible for implementing the management associated with this condition up to the point of site occupation. Any transference of responsibility of this plan should be undertaken with the appropriate appointment of a competent organisation capable of delivering the detailed measures within this document. The organisation implementing this plan will be undertaken by a party with the necessary certificates of competence to implement landscape management operation on site. The appointed organisation will ensure that management complies with best practice standards and all relevant health and safety procedures, protection of the environment, avoidance of pollution and protection of protected species and habitats.

I trust the proposed enhancement measures are to be sufficient in discharging the relevant condition attached to this planning consent.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BH'.

Byron Humphries, ACIEEM BSc (Hons)
Senior Ecologist

For and on behalf of Brindle & Green Limited

