



PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF HALLS FARM, ALTAR STONES
LANE -
DETAILS PURSUANT TO CONDITION 7 : LEMP
(PLANNING REF: 23/01000/FUL)

September 2024

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Felstone Consulting Limited has been instructed by rg+p, on behalf of Hillmoren, to provide a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan ('LEMP') pursuant to Condition 7 of planning permission reference 23/01000/FUL for the redevelopment of Halls Farm, Altar Stones Lane.

1.1.2 The planning permission is for the demolition of the existing buildings and erection of 2no. buildings and associated parking areas, landscaping, access, solar panels, EV charging stations and other works for the purposes of car sales.

1.1.3 This LEMP has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Felstone Consulting Limited and a Chartered Ecologist at Rachel Hacking Ecology and incorporates the findings and recommendations of the surveys, plans and appraisals submitted as part of the planning application. These documents are referenced as part of this LEMP:

- *Drawing BNG - Initial Landscape Framework Strategy / BNG Areas* (Felstone Consulting Limited, August 2023);
- *Landscape and Visual Appraisal* (Felstone Consulting Limited, Sept 2023);
- *Ecological Appraisal* (Rachel Hacking Ecology, Sept 2023); and
- *BS 5837:2012 Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Arboricultural Method Statement* (including Tree Protection Plan) (Outline Trees, Sept 2023); and
- *Tree Planting Plan* (Outline Trees, March 2024).

1.2 Condition 7 - LEMP

1.2.1 The scope of this report is defined by Condition 7 which states that "*No development shall take place (including ground works or vegetation clearance) until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The LEMP shall include the following details:*

A) description and evaluation of the features to be created/managed

B) aims and objectives of management

C) appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives

D) prescriptions for management actions

E) work schedule

F) species/seed mixes to be planted/sown

G) ongoing monitoring and remedial measures

The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.”

1.3 Character of the Landscape

1.3.1 The site is located within Charnwood National Character Area 73, which is described as *"a unique landscape, marked out by its geology and upland qualities, which contrast with the surrounding gentle lowlands. It is formed by a mosaic of heathland, farmland, parkland and woodland. The underlying Precambrian geology has given rise to the distinct area of land characterised by exposures of rugged, rocky outcrops. It is a relatively well wooded landscape, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands."*

1.3.2 The National Forest's Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2019 and is the most recent and relevant for use in this appraisal¹. This identified the site as located within "Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement" which referred *inter alia* to "A highly settled landscape with a high proportion of quarries, often fringed with woodland. Farmland consists of a mix of arable and pasture with a varied field pattern while areas of new planting around quarries contrast with areas of ancient woodland."

1.3.3 The key characteristics for "Area 6: Thringstone/Markfield Quarries and Settlement" include the following:

- *"Highly settled with Whitwick and Thringstone, Agar Nook, Stanton-under-Bardon and Markfield villages.*
- *Mix of landuses including arable, pasture and woodland as well as quarrying and associated spoil mounds.*

¹ This is also the character assessment referenced in the Markfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan

- *Fields enclosed by hedgerows with hedgerow trees as well as some walls and fences.*
- *Mix of woodland with pine plantations and mixed woodland as well as new plantations and grasslands associated with quarry restoration.*
- *Small scale regular fields on settlement edges and around peripheries of quarries, bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Also, some walls along roads.*
- *Linear villages of Thringstone, Whitwick and Stanton-under-Bardon, with small number of scattered farms. Markfield is a large, clustered village located on higher ground. Settlements link along roads with the A511/A50 corridor passing through.*
- *Large scale expansive views from higher levels often close to quarries. Background noise from industrial areas and settlements."*

2 LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (LEMP)

2.1 Description and Evaluation of the Features to be Created/Managed

- 2.1.1 This section of the report covers part A) of Condition 7 “*description and evaluation of the features to be created/managed*”.
- 2.1.2 The Initial Landscape Framework Strategy / BNG Areas was illustrated by the submitted Drawing BNG. The proposal would necessitate the demolition and clearance of the existing farmstead buildings, hardstanding and several trees and areas of grassland that are within the footprint of the new buildings and hardstanding, as follows:
- The two proposed replacement farmstead style buildings would extend over 1,950m², an increase in footprint of c1,500m² in comparison to existing; and
 - The proposed vehicle parking areas and hardstanding would extend over 2,948m², an increase in footprint of c2,448m², with modifications to the northern access (addition of bellmouth and 6m wide access road, with inward opening gates, set back from the adopted highway). The existing access to the south-east will be maintained in its current form (other than removal of vegetation and potential replacement of security gates, with inward opening / sliding gates).
- 2.1.3 The heights of the new buildings would also be taller than existing, with Building A being 4.7m to eaves and 9.4m to ridge and Building B being 4.3m to eaves and 9m to ridge, at the highest points. This is approximately 2.1m higher than the highest part of the existing farmhouse.
- 2.1.4 Some selective tree clearance, pruning and crown reduction work along the southern site boundary may also be beneficial to minimise shading of the proposed solar panels on the roofs of the new Buildings A and B.
- 2.1.5 The landscape strategy includes the retention and enhancement of 5,692m² of existing woodland, 302m² of introduced scrub, 764m² of improved grassland and 564m² of pond.
- 2.1.6 In addition, 1,471m² of mixed native scrub is proposed, along with 514m² of conservation grassland (woodland edge). The site boundary elements (stone walls, hedgerows, and fencing) and existing entrances would be retained.

- 2.1.7 Although the proposed built elements would be larger than existing, they would remain a relatively small part of the wider 14,205m² site boundary, which would retain its overall well-wooded character.
- 2.1.8 The development would introduce additional vehicle movements, with new cars driven onto site, as well as staff, deliveries (general post and packages) and waste collection. Visitors will be by appointment only and up to 2 at any one time. The vehicle movements would be low level and in the context of the existing road and nearby properties, parking at Altar Stones Lane Nature Reserve, Markfield Industrial Estate (and also that of the busy A50 and M1).
- 2.1.9 There would be no valued landscape elements or features lost as a result of the proposals. Any clearance and thinning of trees would accommodate the development and seek to improve the overall condition of the woodland habitat.
- 2.1.10 Table 1 below is taken from the Ecological Appraisal and provides a summary of the post-development biodiversity units. The baseline habitat value was 4.17 units and baseline hedgerow value were 0.1 units. The post-development habitat value is 6.26 units, which a gain of 0.95 units (17.79%). The post development hedgerow value is 0.13 units, which is a gain of 0.04 units (46.56%). The biodiversity net gains for habitats and hedgerows are compliant with national biodiversity policy.

Table 1 Site Habitats Post-Development

Habitat	Area (Ha)	Distinctiveness	Target Condition	Units
Hard standing / buildings (Developed land, sealed surface)	0.4898	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	0
Traditional orchard (TN6) retained	0.0105	High	Moderate	0.13
Introduced Shrub (TN6) retained	0.0302	Low	Not Applicable	0.06
Other woodland; mixed (TN5 perimeter woodland) enhanced	0.4327	Medium	Moderate	2.94
Other woodland; mixed (TN6 garden woodland) enhanced	0.126	Medium	Moderate	0.86
Other neutral grassland (TN3 and TN6) enhanced	0.0764	Medium	Moderate	0.52
Ponds (Non-priority) TN4	0.0182	Medium	Moderate	0.12
Mixed scrub (new)	0.1471	Medium	Moderate	0.98
Ponds (non-priority habitat) – reinstated (TN7)	0.0382	Medium	Moderate	0.27
Other neutral grassland (new)	0.0514	Medium	Moderate	0.38
Total	1.4205			6.26

2.2 Aims and Objectives of Management

- 2.2.1 This section of the report covers part B) of Condition 7 *“aims and objectives of management”*.
- 2.2.2 The overall aim of the landscape and ecological management plan is to integrate the proposed replacement buildings and vehicle parking areas into their existing landscape context, create a pleasant working environment and destination for customers, and improve biodiversity interest.
- 2.2.3 The overriding objective being to protect, maintain and enhance ecological features during the operational phase of development. Protection of ecological features (habitats and species) during the construction phase is as described in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), prepared separately.
- 2.2.4 The specific objectives are as follows:
- retain and enhance the wooded character of the site;
 - apply positive management of individual trees (including some clearance and thinning to accommodate the development and improve habitat condition);
 - form new areas of scrub edge and conservation grassland; and
 - reinstate ponds / water features on site.

2.3 Appropriate Management Options for Achieving Aims and Objectives

- 2.3.1 This section of the report covers part C) of Condition 7 *“appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives”*.
- 2.3.2 The appropriate management options have been determined following landscape, ecological and arboricultural surveys, as set out in the documents submitted with the planning application, for example:
- The Landscape and Visual Appraisal included desk-top study and fieldwork, including reviewing landscape elements and features, aesthetic and perceptual aspects, overall character, views and visual amenity;
 - The Ecological Appraisal included desk-top study and field survey, including an

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Bat Surveys (Daytime and Emergence) and Reptile Surveys; and

- The Tree Survey was carried out in accordance with BS 5837:2012 and recorded the details of 37 individual trees, 15 tree groups, 3 wooded areas (woodlands), 1 hedgerow and a shrub group. Tree Protection Measures (specifically, the use of protective fencing) have been recommended in order to minimise the potential for any foreseeable detrimental impact occurring to the retained trees.

2.4 Prescriptions for Management Actions

- 2.4.1 This section of the report covers part D) of Condition 7 “*prescriptions for management actions*”.
- 2.4.2 The proposed collection of new farmstead-style buildings and hardstanding would be small scale and remain enclosed by the well-wooded character of the retained trees and shrubs. The proposed buildings would comprise horizontal and vertical lines and forms, with textured and earthy shades of charred timber and dark grey cladding walls, with anthracite zinc roof. Solar panels are also proposed on the roofs of Buildings A and B. Mounted showroom signage and individual vehicles would add a wider range of colours and forms.
- 2.4.3 Views of the development from nearby visual receptors, such as local residents and road users would be limited, due to the retention of the perimeter vegetation and building design.

Habitat Management Actions

- 2.4.4 The habitat management actions will include the following (refer to the Ecology Appraisal for habitat references):
- Management of woodland (TN5 and TN6) will include selective thinning, increased provision of standing (ring-barking of non-native broadleaved trees) and fallen (retention of thinnings) deadwood, and introduction of woodland herbs (native bulb planting);
 - Care of individual trees and shrubs, particularly fruit trees, will reduce the risk of disease, improve structure, and increase the harvest of fruit, which will also benefit

invertebrates and birds;

- Relaxed mowing of retained grassland and the introduction of herbs (over-sowing) to increase diversity will have a benefit for a wide range of animals, particularly invertebrates and small mammals;
- Species-poor lawns in the former gardens will be replaced by stands of native shrubs;
- Native aquatic species will be planted in the restored and reinstated ponds and selective removal of trees and shrubs will reduce bankside shading;
- Hedgerow TN2 will be enhanced by removal of Cherry Laurel, pruning of overhanging Sycamore trees from adjacent offsite woodland and laying the hedgerow;
- The condition of retained, enhanced, and created habitats will be monitored on a routine basis by reference to the Biodiversity Metric habitat condition criteria². Management of habitats will be modified when required so that conservation objectives and target conditions are achieved.

Species Actions

2.4.5 The species management actions for bats will include the following:

- Install 12 bat roosting boxes³ onto trees selected by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist in the woodland areas in clusters of three, facing southeast, south, and southwest, at least 4m above ground.
- A detailed lighting plan will be prepared so that levels and type of artificial illumination are controlled and directed away from the woodland edge, shrubberies, ponds, and individual trees.

2.4.6 The species management actions for nesting birds will include the following:

- Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided in particular, by carrying out site clearance and similar operations outside of the bird breeding season (April-

² Monitoring will be carried out in years 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, and 30

³ <https://www.nestbox.co.uk/products/eco-kent-bat-box> (Or an equivalent product)

August). Activities that might directly impact upon breeding birds should hence be limited to the September-February period. If vegetation has to be cleared during the bird breeding season checks immediately before clearance by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required. If nesting activity is detected work in that area will need to stop until the ecologist considers that nesting activity is finished.

- Attach 20 cavity nest boxes⁴ to trees selected by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist within woodland TN5 at least 4m above ground. Nest boxes should have a variety of different sized entrance holes.

2.4.7 The species management actions for common amphibians will include the following:

- If individual common amphibians are encountered during the management works, then work in that area will stop to enable animals to escape to a place of safety. If more than one animal is encountered, the advice of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist will be obtained.

2.4.8 The species management actions for invertebrates will include the following:

- Install a bug hotel⁵ in a sunny, sheltered part of the garden.

Tree Planting

2.4.9 The Tree Planting Plan identified the locations for 48 new trees and 29 new shrubs and also the extents of a number of areas which will be planted with a mix of UK native woodland type trees and shrubs, to integrate with and enhance the retained woodland areas, will generally surround the site. Planting techniques are also described on the planting plan.

Seeding of Woodland Grasses and Wildflowers

2.4.10 The seeding of woodland grasses and wildflowers typically requires ground that is not highly fertile and does not have perennial weeds. All unwanted vegetation would need to be cleared prior to sowing. Cultivation close to established trees and shrubs can be damaging to their root systems so care will be taken not to dig too deep and keep disturbance to the minimum required to expose fresh soil.

⁴ <https://www.nhbs.com/1b-schwegler-nest-box> (or equivalent product)

⁵ For example: www.amazon.co.uk/Woodside-Wooden-Insect-Natural-Shelter

- 2.4.11 Established woodland that has been under-sown with a woodland mixture requires little management during establishment. In the long-term ground flora will benefit from good tree and coppice management. Open or young woodland with higher light levels will produce more growth and grasses will be more prominent. In these conditions an annual cut mid-summer may be worthwhile for a more managed appearance and to keep weeds of semi-shade such as nettles and brambles in check.

2.5 Work Schedule

- 2.5.1 This section of the report covers part E) of Condition 7 “*work schedule*”, with reference to Table 2 below.

Table 2 Work Schedule

Timings	Standard Operations, to be carried out as required
Winter	• Complete record of previous year's operations and programme for forthcoming year • Visual assessment of standing water / compaction and drainage requirements • Thinning / Copping and other Tree Works • New / Replacement tree planting
Spring	• Check drainage infrastructure and remove debris • Visual inspection of vegetation, all areas (requirements for secondary treatments) • Early hedgerow cutting (before birds nesting) • Weed monitoring / control all areas • Woodland wildflower seeding
Summer	• Visual assessment of all areas of vegetation (health, pest and diseases, any failures, etc) • Weed monitoring/ control all areas • Assess requirements for irrigation / watering • Monitoring of pond (for algae bloom / scum formation)
Autumn	• Check drainage infrastructure and remove debris • Visual assessment of all areas of vegetation (health, pest and diseases, any failures, etc) • Hedgerow cutting (after birds nesting) • Annual cut of woodland grassland areas • Adjustments, straightening and firming of new tree planting

2.6 Species/Seed Mixes to be Planted/Sown

2.6.1 This section of the report covers part F) of Condition 7 “*species/seed mixes to be planted/sown*”.

2.6.2 As shown on the Tree Planting Plan, the following individual trees and shrubs will be planted on site:

- *Sorbus aria* (Whitebeam);
- *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan);
- *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder Rose);
- *Frangula alnus* (Alder buckthorn);
- *Quercus robur* ‘Fastigiata’ (Fastigate Oak)
- *Amelanchier lamarckii* (Snowy mesppil)
- *Betula pendula* ‘Fastigiata’ (Fastigate Silver Birch)
- *Pyrus calleryana* (Callery pear)

2.6.3 Also as shown on the Tree Planting Plan, the following woodland-type mix will be planted on site:

- Shrub species of *Cornus sanguinea* (Dogwood), *Sambucus nigra* (Elder), *Rhamnus cathartica* (Purging buckthorn) and *Euonymus europaea* (Spindle) ; and
- Tree species of *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn), *Prunus padus* (Bird Cherry), *Acer campestre* (Field Maple), *Pyrus communis* (Common Pear).

2.6.4 Bulb planting⁶ in the retained woodland areas will include:

- *Anemone nemoralis* (Wood anemone)
- *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (Bluebell)
- *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* subsp. *pseudonarcissus* (Wild Daffodil)
- *Convallaria majalis* (Lily-of-the-valley).

2.6.5 Pond margins will be planted with a mix of emergent species. Plugs will be planted in spring at a density of eight to ten plants per metre in 50mm of water on the margin of the pond.

⁶ <https://www.naturescape.co.uk/product-category/wildflowers/wildflower-bulbs/>

- *Sparganium erectum* Branched Bur-reed (30%)
- *Iris pseudacorus* – Yellow Flag-iris (10%)
- *Schoenoplectus lacustris* – Common Club-rush (20%)
- *Lythrum salicaria* – Purple Loosestrife (10%)
- *Carex pseudocyperus* – Cyperus Sedge (10%)
- *Butomus umbellata* – Flowering Rush (10%)
- *Acorus calamus* – Sweet Flag (10%)

2.6.6 Enhancement of retained grasslands will be over-sown⁷ with a bespoke mix of grassland herbs in equal proportions, following mowing and scarification of the grassland.

- *Centaurea nigra* - Black Knapweed
- *Achillea millefolium* - Yarrow
- *Ranunculus acris* – Meadow Buttercup
- *Trifolium pratense* – Red Clover
- *Leucanthemum vulgare* – Ox-eye Daisy
- *Prunella vulgaris* – Self-heal
- *Primula veris* – Cowslip
- *Vicia sativa* – Common Vetch

2.6.7 The new areas of conservation grassland would be sown with a suitable mixture such as Emorsgate EW1 Woodland Mixture. EW1 is a complete mix composed of 20% native wild flowers and 80% slow growing grasses (by weight) and is suitable for sowing in moderately developed shade⁸:

- Wild Flowers 20%
- 1.00% *Allium ursinum* – Ramsons
- 2.00% *Alliaria petiolata* – Garlic Mustard
- 0.50% *Angelica sylvestris* – Wild Angelica
- 1.40% *Anthriscus sylvestris* – Cow Parsley
- 0.20% *Arum maculatum* – Lords-and-Ladies
- 4.00% *Digitalis purpurea* – Foxglove
- 0.10% *Eupatorium cannabinum* – Hemp-agrimony

⁷ Sowing can be achieved by direct drilling or hand-sowing after gaps have been created in the grass sward.

⁸ In deep established shade grasses do not thrive and only the wild flowers EW1F seed to be sown

- 0.90% *Filipendula ulmaria* – Meadowsweet
- 1.50% *Galium album* – Hedge Bedstraw
- 0.10% *Geum urbanum* – Wood Avens
- 1.60% *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* – Bluebell
- 0.10% *Primula vulgaris* – Primrose
- 1.00% *Prunella vulgaris* – Selfheal
- 0.40% *Ranunculus acris* – Meadow Buttercup
- 3.00% *Silene dioica* – Red Campion
- 0.20% *Teucrium scorodonia* – Wood Sage
- Grasses 80%
- 2.40% *Agrostis capillaris* – Common Bent (w)
- 1.60% *Anthoxanthum odoratum* – Sweet Vernal-grass (w)
- 0.80% *Brachypodium sylvaticum* – False Brome (w)
- 48.00% *Cynosurus cristatus* – Crested Dogstail
- 1.60% *Deschampsia cespitosa* – Tufted Hair-grass (w)
- 19.20% *Festuca rubra* – Red Fescue
- 6.40% *Poa nemoralis* – Wood Meadow-grass

2.7 Ongoing Monitoring and Remedial Measures

- 2.7.1 This section of the report covers part G) of Condition 7 “*ongoing monitoring and remedial measures*”.
- 2.7.2 The site areas will be closely monitored throughout the aftercare period so that the most suitable management regime can be defined on an area-by-area basis.
- 2.7.3 This will be principally managed by undertaking a visual inspection on at least an annual basis to check for an appropriate amount of growth and cover so that the most suitable management regime/operations can be defined.
- 2.7.4 Following the aftercare period ongoing monitoring will be continued to comply with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements. The ecological condition of retained, enhanced and new habitats will be assessed against the target condition that is

specified in the Biodiversity Net Gain spreadsheet⁹. Condition criteria relevant to the habitat type will be inspected by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist and results will be compiled into a monitoring report. There are two options for BNG monitoring;

- 1) a Local Planning Authority Ecologist carries out the work and charges the client for carrying out the work; or
- 2) an independent ecologist carries out the work and submits a report to the Local Planning Authority at the agreed intervals.

- 2.7.5 The occupier will keep records of all aftercare activity undertaken within the site area.
- 2.7.6 All existing retained trees will be inspected for obvious signs of ill health, damage, stress or other physiological aspects that might prevent achieving the aims and objectives of this LEMP.
- 2.7.7 Newly planted trees and shrubs will be monitored for any obvious signs of ill health, damage, stress or other physiological aspects that might be evident upon delivery of plants, or those which might have been caused during the planting process.
- 2.7.8 New plants will be watered immediately after planting and weekly in the first growing season, if the weather is dry. Weeds and grass will be prevented from growing within 500mm radius of the stem. Mulch will be maintained to a depth of approximately 50mm. Any tree ties will be inspected to ensure that they are not damaging stems and loosen if necessary. Ensure any stakes remain firm and remove when stem can support itself, usually after 1-3 years.
- 2.7.9 Any dead or crossing branches, suckers arising from the roots of weak shoots on the stems will be removed. Formative pruning should be carried out in accordance with BS 3998.
- 2.7.10 Monitoring of the ponds will be by visual inspection, to include erosion, odour, plant and animal deaths. Freshwater algae will also be monitored for excessive accumulations of foams, scums and discolouration of the water. If treatment with barley straw is not effective at controlling algal blooms The Environment Agency will be contacted for advice in response to the threat to wild and domestic animals, amphibians and humans.

⁹ RHE.3858_Halls Farm BNG

2.7.11 Weed control will be a normal part of the site management and will be carried out throughout the growing season. All injurious weeds (such as spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, creeping or field thistle *Cirsium arvense*, curled dock *Rumex crispus*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*) will be controlled, so that they do not spread. Any particularly invasive non-native plants found to be present will also need to be eradicated.

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