Providing Ecological Solutions



Hainsworth Road – DAVRIC Land

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan



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Declaration of Compliance

This report has been undertaken in accordance with British Standard 42020:2013 "Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development" (BSI 2013), the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct (2019) and Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM 2017).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (BEP) has been produced by PBA Applied Ecology Ltd. (PBA) to provide recommendations to conserve biodiversity during works, enhance biodiversity on completion of works and plan for long term management. This is in association with works at Hainsworth Road (SE 04519 45726). These works will include the construction of five new residential buildings with an access road.

Baseline Ecological Information

Habitats present include modified grassland (g4), native hedgerow with trees (h2), developed land sealed surface (u1b), individual urban trees and artificial unvegetated unsealed surface (u1b). The hedgerow is connected to a hedgerow that is part of a Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the area proposed for development.

There are nine non-statutory designated sites within 2 km of the area proposed for development, including one along the southern boundary of the site.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* was observed on site. No surrogate signs of other animals were recorded, however habitats on site have potential to support notable species.

Measures to be taken to protect wildlife and habitats during construction

- To minimise disturbance to nocturnal mammals, no artificial lighting is to be used at dusk, dawn or overnight, and works must not be undertaken within these times.
- The removal of vegetation, including scrub, hedgerows, trees and long grassland, to occur outside of the breeding bird season.
- To manage any INNS on site, no vegetation or ground substrate is to be removed from the site. If material is required to be removed from site this must be treated as controlled waste and transported by a licensed waste carrier to an authorised landfill site.
- Strict biosecurity measures should be adhered to including the washing of all equipment (boots, machinery etc) on arrival to and removal from site to avoid the spread of INNS.
- Protection of small terrestrial mammals through phased cutting.
- All excavations must be covered overnight or fitted with a means of escape.

Measures to enhance wildlife habitat post-construction

- Creation of native hedgerows.
- Creation of modified grassland.
- Creation of introduced shrub.
- Planting individual trees.
- Inclusion of native species within gardens and communal spaces.
- Compensation for loss of nesting bird habitat through integrated boxes within the fabric of new buildings.
- Creation of bat roosting habitat through integrated boxes within the fabric of new buildings.
- Sympathetic lighting is to be used across the site.
- Provision of log-pile hibernacula that will provide refuge for a range of wildlife.

Measures to manage habitats long-term

- Hedgerow management.
- Grassland management.
- Scrub management.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 TERMS OF REFERENCE

PBA Applied Ecology Ltd. (PBA) was commissioned by Skipton Properties to produce a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (BEP) in association with the proposed development at Hainsworth Road, Silsden.

This BEP details the actions required to protect the ecological features at the site during the development and the actions which will be implemented to enhance the ecological value of the site after the works have been completed. The long-term management required for the habitats created is outlined.

This plan is based on the results and recommendations of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and bat scoping of buildings undertaken by PBA on 31st of March 2023. Following completion of the surveys, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment was undertaken which outlined what habitats require to be enhanced or created to produce a net gain for biodiversity. The BNG Assessment also incorporated a qualitative assessment, providing recommendations on enhancing the site for individual ecological components. The principal documents consulted are: PEA Report, BNG assessment (PBA Ecology 2023) and Landscape Proposals GL1749 03B (Golby and Luck, 2023).

1.2 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The survey site is located along Hainsworth Road in Silsden (SE 04519 45726, Figure 1). The site comprised a combined industrial and office building surrounded by hardstanding, grassland, and scrub. **Update 27/10/2023:** The buildings have since been demolished and the site cleared.

The wider landscape consists of arable land and suburban mosaic with the Leeds and Liverpool Canal to the north of site (Figures 1).

1.3 SCOPE OF WORKS

The proposed development is expected to include the construction of five new residential buildings with an access road (Appendix B – Site Plan).



Figure 1: Site location (Bing Maps, 2023)

2 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

2.1 ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

A PEA was undertaken by PBA on 31st March 2023 (PBA Ecology 2023). Habitats identified within the site boundary and on its boundaries included:

2.1.1 Modified Grassland (G4)

The site contains several strips of modified grassland around the perimeter of the site. All 3 strips are in moderate condition and are dominated by perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, stinging nettle *Urtica dioica* and thistle *Cirsium* sp. Other occasional to rarely occurring species included ivy *Hedera helix*, rose *Rosa* sp. and cleavers *Galium aparine*.

2.1.2 Native Hedgerow with Trees (H2)

This hedgerow extends along the southern border of the site and consists of elder *Sambucus nigra*, holly *llex aquifolium*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *corylus avellana* and ivy in approximately equal proportions. A condition assessment found this habitat to be in moderate condition.

2.1.3 Developed Land, Sealed Surface (U1B)

In the centre of the site is a modern, mostly good condition building (B1) with two roofs, one of which consists of corrugated cement and the other of plastic rubber. **Update 27/10/2023: this building has now been demolished.**

2.1.4 Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface (U1C)

An area of hardstanding extends along the western, eastern, and northern edges of B1.

2.2 FURTHER SURVEYS

In addition to the habitats listed above the following habitats and species were considered as having potential to be present on site and required further survey:

2.2.1 Birds

The ecological appraisal identified suitable nesting habitat within the hedgerow and trees on site. Any vegetation clearance works should be timed to avoid the nesting bird season which runs from March to August.

2.2.2 Bats

The ecological appraisal of the building to be demolished was identified as having has a feature with moderate potential to support roosting bats (see PEA report, PBA 2023). The nearby canal and hedgerows were also considered suitable linear features to support foraging bats. Bat activity surveys must be conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist before any works can take place.

2.2.3 Invasive non-native species (INNS)

A study of nearby records identified several invasive species within 1 km of the site. As the ecological appraisal was conducted at a sub-optimal time of year, a further INNS survey is recommended in the summer months when invasive species are readily visible.

2.2.4 Reptiles

The ecological appraisal identified rubble piles which may offer potential refugia for reptiles. An inspection of the refugia by an experienced ecologist is recommended before the rubble piles are removed in order to make way for the works.

2.3 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

A BNG Assessment has been undertaken of the site (PBA Ecology 2023a), calculating the habitat units on site in its current state (Baseline – Section 2) and habitat units created during following the proposed development (Scenario 1 – using drawing 'GL1749 03B – Landscape Proposals by Golby and Luck, see Appendix B – Site Plans).

Habitats present in the proposed scenario include: modified grassland, built linear features, developed land sealed surface, introduced scrub and, vegetated garden. Several native hedgerows will also be created within the development. The BNG assessment found that the proposed scenario would achieve the 10% BNG target set by the local planning authority for both habitat and hedgerow units (see Table 1).

All habitats in the baseline assessment will be lost, except for the species-rich native hedgerow along the south of site which will be retained. In addition, a mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) tree suffering from bacterial fireblight just outside the red line boundary will be lost (see Tree Impact Report, Bowland Tree Consultancy Ltd, 2023).

	Baseline Habitat Unit Value	Scenario 1 Habitat unit value	Total Net Unit Change	Total Net % Change
Habitat units	0.57	0.97	+0.40	+71.41
Hedgerow units	0.35	0.43	+0.08	+23.49

Table 1. Headline BNG results

Sections 3, 4 & 5 outline how habitats will be retained, enhanced, created and managed to meet the requirements of the BNG Assessment both for habitats and species.

3 MEASURES TO PROTECT WILDLIFE AND HABITATS DURING CONSTRUCTION

The aims and objectives of environmental management during the works are to ensure that wildlife and retained habitats are protected during the initial works and development and no wildlife legislation is contravened. The following recommendations are required to be followed to achieve these aims and objectives:

- To minimise disturbance to nocturnal mammals, no artificial lighting is to be used at dusk, dawn or overnight, and works must not be undertaken within these times.
- The removal of vegetation, including scrub, hedgerows, trees and long grassland, to occur outside of the breeding bird season.
- To manage any INNS on site, no vegetation or ground substrate is to be removed from the site. If material is required to be removed from site this must be treated as controlled waste and transported by a licensed waste carrier to an authorised landfill site.
- Strict biosecurity measures should be adhered to including the washing of all equipment (boots, machinery etc) on arrival to and removal from site to avoid the spread of INNS.
- Protection of small terrestrial mammals through phased cutting.
- All excavations must be covered overnight or fitted with a means of escape.

3.1 NO ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING TO BE USED, OR WORK UNDERTAKEN, AT DUSK, DAWN OR OVERNIGHT

To minimise the impact on bats (and other crepuscular and nocturnal animals) works should not be undertaken overnight, during dusk, or dawn. No artificial lighting should illuminate site during these periods.

3.2 THE REMOVAL OF ANY VEGETATION, IS TO OCCUR OUTSIDE OF THE BREEDING BIRD SEASON.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), as such it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill or injure any wild bird, and intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any nest or egg of an actively nesting bird. In order to minimise the risk of contravention of this act the removal of all suitable nesting bird habitat should take place in autumn/winter and therefore outside of the breeding bird season (March - August inclusive). This includes the felling of any trees, removal of hedgerows or any scrub/shrubs and cutting of long grassland. If any suspected active birds' nest is seen on site during this clearance, the work should be suspended in the vicinity of the nest and advice sought from the appointed ECoW.

If the removal of any vegetation (long grassland, scrub, trees) with the potential to support nesting birds must take place during the breeding bird season then a search for active nests must be undertaken by a trained ecologist no more than 24 hours beforehand. Should any nests be found then their position should be marked, and all onsite personnel must be made aware of them. The vegetation surrounding the active nest should not be cleared until all chicks have fledged and are no longer using the nest.

3.3 MANAGEMENT OF INNS

If any INNS are identified on site, no vegetation or ground substrate is to be removed from site. If material is required to be removed from site this must be treated as controlled waste and transported by a licensed waste carrier to an authorised landfill site. Strict biosecurity measures should be adhered to including the washing of all equipment (boots, machinery etc) on arrival to and removal from site.

3.4 **PROTECTION OF SMALL TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS THROUGH PHASED CUTTING**

No evidence of protected mammals has been recorded during any site surveys.

Small terrestrial mammals are likely to utilise the habitats present onsite. In order to encourage small terrestrial mammals to disperse any grass/vegetation to be cut to 300 mm in length and left overnight. It should then be cut to no more than 50 mm the next day.

3.5 ALL EXCAVATIONS MUST BE COVERED OVERNIGHT OR FITTED WITH A MEANS OF ESCAPE

All excavations must be securely covered overnight or fitted with a means of escape for wildlife. This could be a secure ramp at an angle of less than 45°. If any terrestrial mammals (e.g. hare *Lepus europaeus*, rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*) are encountered during unsupervised works then work in the immediate area shall be suspended until the animal can be carefully moved off site or allowed to move off in its own time. If it is suspected to be a protected mammal (e.g. badger *Meles meles*, otter *Lutra lutra*) then a suitably experienced ecologist should be contacted for further advice.

4 MEASURES TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE WILDLIFE HABITAT POST-CONSTRUCTION

The proposed ecological measures are required to maintain and enhance habitat quality after the development is completed, and thus meet local planning authority requirements to conserve and enhance local biodiversity and deliver the BNG units described in the BNG Assessment (PBA Ecology, 2023).

The aims and objectives of environmental management on completion of the works are to ensure that wildlife and retained habitats are enhanced following the works and no wildlife legislation is contravened. Habitat creation is encouraged. The following recommendations are required to be followed to achieve these aims and objectives:

- Creation of native hedgerows.
- Creation of modified grassland.
- Creation of introduced shrub.
- Planting individual trees.
- Inclusion of native species within gardens and communal spaces.
- Compensation for loss of nesting bird habitat through integrated boxes within the fabric of new buildings.
- Creation of bat roosting habitat through integrated boxes within the fabric of new buildings.
- Sympathetic lighting is to be used across the site.
- Provision of log-pile hibernacula that will provide refuge for a range of wildlife.

Ongoing management recommendations for the landscape design are provided in Section 5.

4.1 CREATION OF NATIVE HEDGEROW

The hedgerows should be planted during the winter (November to February) to give the best survival rates for the hedgerow. The hedgerow should be planted in two lines, spaced 30 cm apart, and a minimum of six plants should be planted for every metre of hedgerow in a zig-zag pattern. The hedgerow may need protection from grazing using small spiral guards.

First year – During the summer the base around the hedgerow should be weeded to prevent competition from grasses. Some of the planted trees may have died and will require replacing.

Second year – In the second spring the hedge should be cut down to 45-60 cm, this will encourage horizontal growth and produce a thick hedge.

After several years of growth, the hedgerow will become will be over 2 m tall and require laying.

4.2 CREATION OF MODIFIED GRASSLAND

Sow the native grass seed mix from late July to early September, scatter the seeds evenly onto bare ground and roll after sowing to keep in the moisture. Cut the grass in the first autumn after sowing to reduce competition from other plant species. The grassland should be cut in early spring if the vegetation has grown over winter.

4.3 CREATION OF INTRODUCED SHRUB

Introduced shrub habitat is defined as non-native phanerophytes planted in a garden or park setting. The shrubs should be planted during the winter when the trees are dormant and are not producing leaves or buds. This will minimise damage during handling to give them the best chances of survival to maturity.

Ensure that this habitat remains as introduced shrub for thirty years and does not have a change of use, such as conversion to vehicle parking.

Condition assessments are not required for this habitat type.

4.4 PLANTING INDIVIDUAL TREES

Five individual trees will be planted, with an estimated canopy cover of 0.3 ha.

This scenario assumes the trees will be maintained in poor condition.

Tree planting season is between November to March. It is recommended to plant native broadleaf trees. It is important to keep a 1m diameter around the tree clear of weeds and grass species which may compete with the sapling within the first 2-3 years.

Within years 3 - 5 Pruning and coppicing can create a diverse canopy structure and encourage new growth.

4.5 INCLUSION OF NATIVE SPECIES WITHIN GARDENS AND COMMUNAL SPACES

In areas where habitat is being created it is important that only native species are used. Wildflower mixes (EM3) should be used on road verges to provide a nectar source for pollinators and habitat for nesting birds. The addition of the hemi-parasites yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* (0.5-2.5 kg per Ha) and eyebrights *Euphrasia spp.* seeds will help with wildflower growth by removing nutrients from the soil.

Any trees and shrubs incorporated into the public open spaces of the development should be native species and locally sourced where possible. Examples of native trees and shrubs which provide good aesthetics through blossom (which will provide nectar for pollinators) and fruit (which will provide food sources for birds) include: rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, whitebeam *Sorbus aria*, hawthorn, wild cherry *Prunus avium*, guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*, bird cherry *Prunus padus*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus*, dog wood *Cornus sanguinea*, yew *Taxus baccata*, holly, and small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*.

Where possible trees and shrubs within the private gardens of properties should be dominated by native species.

4.6 COMPENSATION FOR LOSS OF NESTING BIRD HABITAT THROUGH INTEGRATED BOXES

Buildings, grassland habitat, and some trees will be lost through the development works. To compensate for the loss in bird nesting habitat integrated bird boxes will need to be included into the design of the new build properties. These will provide immediate nesting opportunities while the created habitats mature, ultimately resulting in a net gain in bird nesting habitat. Suggested locations are provided in Appendix C – Map of Qualitative Recommendations.

Bird boxes which can be integrated into the fabric of the building are recommended. These should be located on the east, west, and north faces of properties (avoiding the south facing aspects which will experience the most intense midday sun). A range of different styles are available but, all should be placed towards the tops of walls and gables and should provide suitable nesting opportunities for a range of passerine bird species including swifts, house sparrows and starlings. Examples can be found at www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk and below in Figure 2.





Integrated swift nest box

Integrated standard nest box

Figure 2. Examples of integrated bird boxes

It is considered that the following numbers of bird boxes would be sufficient to compensate for the habitats lost and be suitable for the types of species likely to be present on site.

- 2 x Sparrow terrace box house sparrows, redstarts, wagtails
- 2 x 28 mm diameter hole range of small tit species;
- 2 x 32 mm diameter hole house sparrow and nuthatch;
- 2 x 75 mm crescent swift

The integrated bird boxes will be installed during construction and made available for use before the dwelling is occupied, and thereafter retained. Homeowners should be made aware of any nest boxes located within their property and advised to refrain from directly lighting the boxes.

4.7 CREATION OF BAT ROOSTING HABITAT THROUGH INTEGRATED BOXES

As it is likely that bats utilise this site for foraging there is potential to provide suitable roosting opportunities within the development. The inclusion of 2 pairs of boxes (4 in total) is intended to enhance the number of potential roost features across the site as moderate potential for roosting was identified during surveys.

Integrated bat boxes should be incorporated into the designs of the buildings. These should be positioned in pairs on east, south or west aspects, 3 - 6 m above ground and where they will not be directly illuminated by street or household lighting. Suggested locations are provided in Appendix B. Bat boxes can be purchased from sites such as <u>www.nhbs.com</u> and examples are shown in Figure 3. This style of box will support crevice dwelling species such as pipistrelles.



Figure 3. Examples of bat boxes

4.8 SYMPATHETIC LIGHTING IS TO BE USED ACROSS THE SITE

Artificial lighting can be a major deterrent to nocturnal animals, preventing foraging and disturbing roosting and could result in a loss of biodiversity. Sympathetic lighting should be used across the site, with an ecologist to review and comment on the lighting plan prior to its approval.

No artificial lighting should directly illuminate any artificial faunal box (especially bat roost boxes) therefore homeowners must be made aware of the habitat boxes within their properties.

4.9 PROVISION OF HIBERNACULUM THAT WILL PROVIDE REFUGE FOR A RANGE OF WILDLIFE

Any logs produced from felling on site should be retained and used to provide a hibernaculum within the landscaped area at the south of site (Appendix B). There is currently limited provision for invertebrates or small mammals on site so a log pile hibernaculum would provide a gain in provisions for these species. A hibernacula can be constructed as per Figure 4 with stacked log at ground level, with gaps between for small mammals such as hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* to enter and shelter, and smaller brash providing a layer for protection against the elements on top.



An artificial brash pile created from arisings from woodland management work. Figure 4. Log pile hibernacula example

5 WORK SCHEDULES

Table 2 sets out the ecological and landscape management work schedule pre-works and during works

Table 2. Ecological works schedule

	Pre- During		During Year 1											Following years												
Task	works	works works			М	Α	Μ	J	J	Α	S	0	Ν	D	J	F	М	Α	М	J	J	Α	s	ο	Ν	D
Install sympathetic lighting																										
Vegetation removal and building demolition	Sept- Apr inclusive																									
Management of INNS																										
Protection of small terrestrial mammals through phased cutting																										
Excavations covered overnight																										
Hedge creation		Nov-Feb																								
Hedgerow management																										
Sowing of modified grassland seed mix		Autumn																								
Mowing of modified grassland																										
Shrub habitat creation		Nov-Feb																								
Planting of Individual trees on site		Winter																								
Planting of native species in private gardens and communal green spaces																										
Installation of bat and bird bricks																										
Hibernaculum creation																										

APPENDIX A – POST DEVELOPMENT HABITATS



APPENDIX B – SITE PLANS

Specification Notes

All plants shall conform to 55 3936 and be in accordance with the National Rant Specification. Supplying nuneties shall be Registreed under the HR Interest Certification Schemic, all guiths that be packed and transported in accordance with the Code of Practice for Prant Handling as produced by CPER.

No species, voriety, site or posifion to be amended without the Londscope Architects prior approval.

If the formation level is compacted if should be ripped through before Logisoling, Topsoli depths to be 300mm for should be ripped through before topsoling. Topsoli depths to be 300mm for should beds and 150mm for grass areas.

All and cope proposalismust be referred to by the Structural Engineer during foundation design.

All planning has been indicated making every effort to avoid conflict with highway tand. Plot to utbreak in it the clients responsibility emains that all condicating is reviewed by the project manage/httg/way endprimer to emails have is not conflict with righway lated and lubus adoptions.

Before trees are planted, the Landscape Contractor shall ascertain the parties made the promate, the calmodope contraction that decentaries the leadate of decisis from the well learning over and shall if necessary makes minor adjustmenth to their positions to ensure that they are planted at least 1.5m from drains. They should however be planted no closer to thouse/granges than is therein on the drawing, and if shown tocated in thouse/granges. thub beds. The shape of the latter should be adjusted if necessary to accommodate the revised free position.

If planting conditions are particularly poor e.g. waterlogged/loasin ground or poor soils the Sile Manager must be notified. All wates will halt until conditions are considered acceptable.

All trees, omomental planting and identified native planting to be mulched to a depth of 75mm and in accordance with horibultural beil practice guidelines ensuing plants are not buried.

All bare root stock shall be root doped in an approved water-retaining polymer. If planting is required outside the October-March season, bare root trees will be replaced by a containerised equivalent to be approved by the project landscape architect.

Planting in pedeshtan visbility splays: Any planting shack specified in pedeshtan visbility replays and exceeding 0.40m in height is to be cut down to 0.45m in height of the time of planting. It shall be maintained at a tweight not esceeding 0.40m in height in perpetuity.

Takes: All two locations and species must be taken into consideration by the project Mitchard Engineer to ensure that foundation design controls with the superfluctations and on utake Charghet 4.2 of the MitChar-underspectra of the superfluctation and on utake Charghet 4.2 of the MitChar Vetergrand surveises have been isotated and laintified in ophenois of two pile according, he have peaked locations will be amended without prior opportuni from this project Landhcape Architect and/or the Clark. Not there according to the ophenoided on diversited by the project engine. All besite the supplied with a minimum 3.1 and calls from Clark.

Specimen Strubu All specimen strubs to be planted in accordance with horicultural beat practice guidalines. No feature strub or cirriban species, size of location struck be attended without prior opproval from the Landscape Architect. Planting beds to be mulched with 75mm layer of loans.

Hedgerows: All oncomental hedgerow structs to be planted in accordance with horticultural best practice guidatess. No hedgerow thus species, see or faccific introd be offered without plant approval form the Londaccepe Architect. Raniting beds to be mulcihed with Ziomi tayer of bale.

Inclui & harbocecce: Al encanential and anenity thrubs to be calorited in decontance with horticultud bate practice goldenine. No inclui species: use in baction whom the channel whom plan approved from the Londscope Architect, individual species to be planted in groups of 3-7 within mixed species beds. Planting beds to be mulched with Tommisper class.

Amenity Turf & Section Al full and secting to be completed in time with holicultural bain practice. Seed to be applied at the roles (g)/rd] advised by monutactive/suppler. New to seeding, ground teld be califieded to a firm tith incorporating (g)/orm of the planot to finished formation level. All areas shall be here of weed gowith prior to huffing/ seading.

Builty, Al builts to be planted in accordance with horticultural best





Key

Application The Boundary



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APPENDIX C – MAP OF QUALITATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS



Legend:

- Bird box -
- Bat box -
- Refugia Pile -

