



The Richards Partnership – Proposed Landscaping Plan

4.27 Landscaping

The existing Birdworld and garden centre site is visually well contained by surrounding ancient woodland. Public views to the site are only available locally, primarily from the A325, which adjoins the site's eastern boundary.

Several residential dwellings adjoin the southern boundary and are accessed off Gravel Hill Road. There is also an existing residential dwelling to the south of the existing Birdworld Visitor centre building.

The site falls gently from the south-western corner to the north-west corner by circa 6m. There is a more pronounced fall in level of circa 4m, down to the south-east corner, where the site adjoins the A325.

The site is currently accessed via two separate junctions off the A325. A new roundabout would provide access to both the proposed new Birdworld visitor centre and the proposed new garden centre, both of which would have a dedicated car park.

Birdworld Car Park

Planting design approaches would vary to provide different identities and characters for the Birdworld and Garden Centre sites. The Birdworld car park would take on an informal, naturalistic approach, with mounded landforms and quarried boulders to provide low level screening and containment of the parking bays. Proposed plant species have been selected to simulate a lowland heath habitat, comprising native grasses,

heathers and dwarf gorse. Native species hedging and shrubs such as dogwood and spindle would also be utilised in conjunction with native tree planting to provide additional structure.

Garden Centre Car Park and Approach Road

The garden centre car park and approach road would have a more manicured and formal character, with formal clipped hedges, ornamental shrubs, herbaceous plants and grasses, set within close mown grass verges interplanted with spring bulbs.

Tree Planting

The car park layouts have been developed to enable extensive tree planting which would contribute to ensuring the site achieves an overall gain in biodiversity and provide a treed character, consistent with the site’s surroundings.

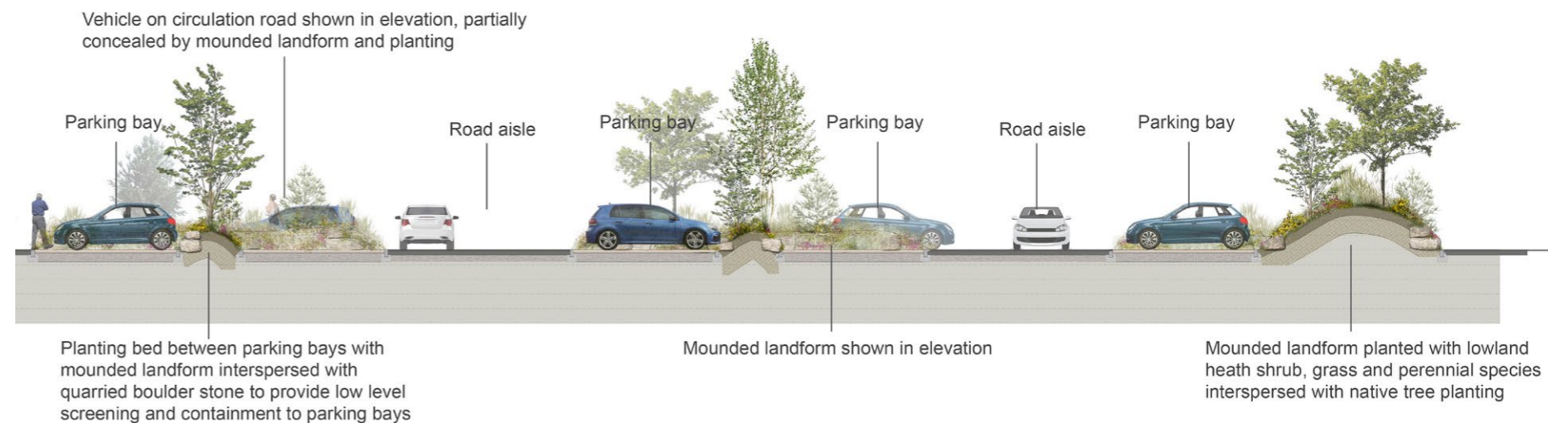
Buffer planting would be introduced along the site’s southern boundary to reinforce existing boundary planting which would provide additional screening of the site from adjoining residential properties.

Retaining Walls

In response to the falling ground levels, a retaining wall approximately 2m high along the southern extents of the car park and approximately 0.8m high along south-eastern extents of the car park would be required, to ensure car park levels are within acceptable gradients for trolley use. The walls facing the A325 would be clad with pre-grown ivy panels to provide an instant soft, greened frontage to the site.

SuDS

Permeable paving would be utilised within the parking bays to intercept surface water at source. A surface water attenuation basin would be formed in the location of an existing, poor quality, waterfowl pond in the lower south-eastern corner of the site. This would act to attenuate and cleanse surface water from the site before being released in a controlled manner. The basin would be seeded with a native meadow seed mix and managed to provide a species rich grassland. A proposed swale extending through the centre of the Birdworld car park



Typical Cross-section Birdworld Car Park

would intercept surface water from the road aisles. The swale would be seeded with a native seed mix for wetlands and marginal planting within localised boggy areas would provide additional species diversity.

A rain garden is proposed to intercept surface water from the hard standing at the Birdworld arrival area. This would be planted with a selection of ornamental plants and grasses. Quarried stone boulders and logs would be added to create opportunities for natural play and a board walk link would provide direct access to the adjoining amenity lawn.

Adventure Playground & Woodland Enhancement

The proposals also entail the introduction of a Play Barn building and adventure playground, associated with Birdworld. The building would be located adjacent to an existing small woodland and the adventure playground would be introduced within the woodland. The woodland comprises dense belts of coniferous trees around the southern and eastern edges, with predominately mixed deciduous trees in the centre.

The layout of the adventure playground will be developed in conjunction with the project arboriculturist’s and ecologist’s recommendations, to ensure that the

proposals are integrated within and around existing trees of value, whilst also taking the opportunity to implement a management and re-planting regime to arrive at an overall improvement to the existing woodland. Existing close grown groups of cypress trees would be removed and replanted with mixed native deciduous trees to enhance the current condition of the woodland.

Species Rich Grassland

An existing area of grassland to the north of the site would be enhanced to create species rich grassland, through overseeding and a change to the management regime, further contributing to the overall improvement of biodiversity on the site.



Grasslands



Adventure Play



Adventure Play

4.28 Ecology

Introduction

The following is a summary of the ecological survey information, mitigation proposals and Biodiversity Net Gain position.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act 2021 sets out a compulsory increase of 10% biodiversity net gain on all new developments and will become mandatory as of February 2024. The proposed development will deliver a net gain for habitats of 12.36%, as well as a net gain in hedgerows of 27.41% and 74.65% for watercourses.

Ecology Summary

The site has been subject to an ecological assessment including habitat and protected species surveys, the latter with a particular focus on bats. The site is directly adjacent to an area of ancient woodland, the majority of which is Plantation on an Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS), but that immediately adjacent is designated ancient and semi-natural. The woodland is also designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). A 15-metre buffer zone, including areas of semi-natural habitat, will be provided from areas of new built

development. The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone for Bentley Station Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), but it is not one of the categories of development that requires consultation.

The site comprises buildings, woodland, trees, scrub, hedgerows, ponds, modified and neutral grassland, bare ground, ground level planters, introduced shrubs and hardstanding. Mature trees and habitats of relatively greater ecological interest with the site are retained, wherever feasible, as part of the proposed development. Significant new tree planting, along with the establishment of new and replacement habitats, is also proposed.

Survey work has identified the evidence of roosting bats in some of the buildings. These roosts are all of common species and, for the most part, small in nature. Habitats on site also offer suitability to foraging and commuting bats. The proposed demolition of some of these buildings ; which will affect only small roosts of common species, will require a Natural England licence in due course.

Replacement roosting opportunities are included within the proposed development, including a dedicated bat loft in the new play barn. Consideration will be had to lighting design, as well as the provision of bat boxes

onto retained trees or new buildings.

No Badger setts or activity were recorded during surveys, although the site does provide foraging, dispersal and sett building opportunities. Therefore, prior to commencement of groundworks, the site will be checked to ensure no new setts have been excavated. Standard measures will be implemented to during construction to guard against adverse effects on Badgers.

Pre-development habitats offer good opportunities for Hedgehogs. Woody / shrub habitats will be cleared outside the winter hibernation period. New planting will include a range of native species which contain features beneficial to hedgehogs. Installation of Hedgehog gateways and hibernation aids will provide further opportunities post-development.

The site offers suitable nesting and foraging opportunities for birds throughout, with the woodland and mature trees providing the greatest interest, these will be retained as part of the proposal. Suitable nesting habitats will be removed outside of the nesting period or checked by an ecologist prior to removal. Additional nesting opportunities will be provided through the installation of bird boxes. In addition, a planting regime of fruit-bearing species will be implemented to continue to provide foraging opportunities.

A good assemblage of common invertebrate species is expected. The retention of hedgerows and wooded belts, and the establishment of further hedgerows, trees, scrub, shrubs and meadow grassland will continue to provide opportunities for invertebrates.

Overall, the survey work completed has identified some habitats of ecological interest and use by protected species. The proposals incorporate the majority of habitats of value as part of the green infrastructure for the new development, while delivering new habitats of ecological interest that will deliver a significant Biodiversity Net Gain, as well as specific new features for wildlife.



Bat & Bird Boxes



Bat Box



Hedgehog Gateway

4.29 Highways

Access

Access is proposed via a new 3-arm roundabout from the A325, with dedicated access arms for Birdworld and Forest Lodge. It has been designed in line with the recorded speeds on the A325 and in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) CD116. It has also been subject to an independent Road Safety Audit and been subject to consultation with Hampshire County Council. Capacity testing has been undertaken which demonstrates that it can accommodate the traffic demands of the proposals.

The existing Forest Lodge access will be removed and the existing Birdworld access will be closed to general traffic. Both existing junctions are sub-standard, and the proposed roundabout will provide a material highway safety benefit by:

- Providing a junction with adequate visibility;
- Being designed to standard;
- Reducing the number of operational junctions on the A325;
- Reducing vehicle speeds; and
- Providing improved pedestrian and cycle crossings on all arms

Whilst the proposed roundabout will reduce speeds on the A325, a financial contribution will be made to Hampshire County Council to fund a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to reduce the speed limit on the A325 from 50mph to 40mph.

Sustainable Transport Improvements

Footways and pedestrian/cycle crossings will be provided on all arms of the roundabout to enable direct pedestrian access to both Forest Lodge and Birdworld, as well as a new footway on the eastern side of the A325 to provide a direct connection to Footpath 50 and an onward walking connection to Alice Holt.

The new footways will provide a direct connection to Gravel Hill Road (signed as the local Forest Research Adaptation Trail walking route) which provides onward pedestrian/cycle connections to Bentley Railway Station.

Improvements will also be made to the Gravel Hill Road bus stops on the A325, including direct footway connections to Forest Lodge and Birdworld and new bus shelters. Real time travel information will be provided at the bus shelters to be secured via a financial contribution.

Traffic Impact

A comprehensive trip generation and traffic assessment has been undertaken using robust parameters agreed with Hampshire County Council. This has been based on empirical traffic data collected at Forest Lodge / Birdworld and has included testing numerous assessment scenarios to fully account for the seasonality of both businesses.

The traffic impact assessment demonstrates that the local highway network is expected to continue to operate well within capacity with the addition of the proposed development. Officers at Hampshire County Council have confirmed this position.

Site Layout, Car and Cycle Parking

The site layout has been designed to provide adequate access for all users, including direct and convenient walking and cycling routes to building entrances. All delivery, servicing and emergency vehicles can be accommodated with ease. A total of 840 car parking spaces are to be provided across the site as follows:

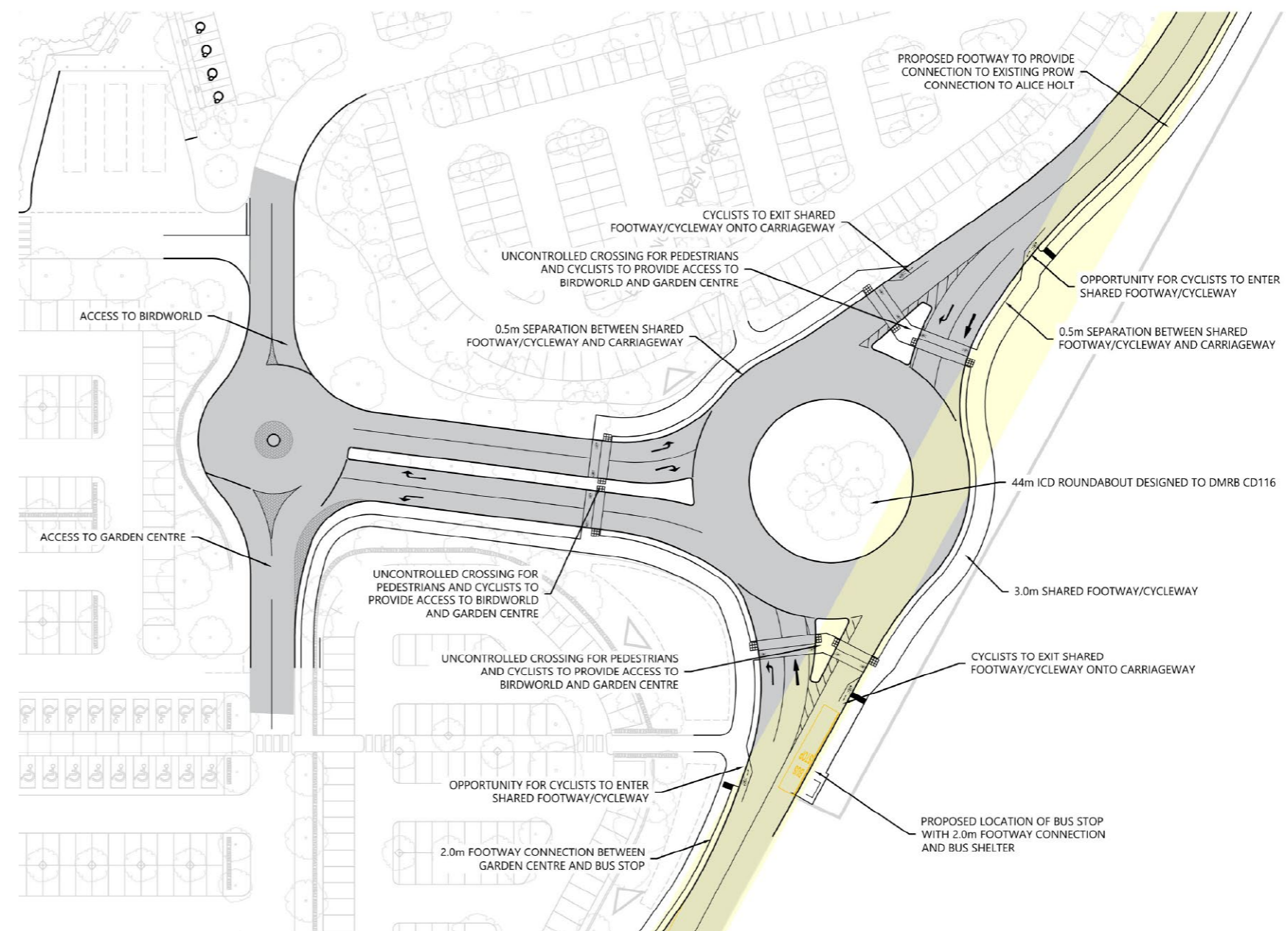
- 418 spaces for Birdworld; and
- 422 spaces for Forest Lodge.

A parking assessment based on empirical data has been undertaken which demonstrates that the proposed parking provision is sufficient to accommodate the parking demands of both Birdworld and Forest Lodge. Dedicated spaces for mobility impaired users, families and car sharers will also be provided, as well as electric vehicle charging points.

Covered and secure cycle parking will be provided in line with the local standards. Shower and changing facilities will be provided for staff within the buildings.

Travel Plans

Travel Plans for both Birdworld and Forest Lodge have been prepared and will be implemented at both sites. The Travel Plans will set out a range of measures to promote and facilitate the use of sustainable transport modes and to reduce reliance on the private car. The Travel Plans have been prepared in line with local/national guidance and will be monitored on a regular basis.



Proposed Three Arm Roundabout

4.30 Building Services Inc. BREEAM and Drainage

Ion have produced the following information in support of the planning application:

- Low/Zero Carbon Report
- Passive Design Report
- Thermal Comfort Report
- BREEAM Evidence Letter

The below energy statement sets out the principles of the M&E design:

The proposed development will achieve full compliance with Building Regulations, and achieve a BREEAM 'Excellent' Rating and an EPC Rating of A.

This will be achieved by adopting a fabric first approach, with the building fabric thermal properties, glazing properties and air permeability exceeding the requirements of the Building Regulations minimum standards by some margin.

The building will utilise high efficiency air source heat pump technology to provide internal comfort to the staff and public within the building.

Localised cooling will be provided to areas of the building subject to overheating using a high efficiency

air conditioning heating and cooling system to provide internal comfort to the occupants.

Hot water will be provided by means of an electric boiler and cylinder arrangement, utilising the energy generated by the roof mounted photovoltaic array providing a high efficiency means of hot water generation.

The building will capture rainwater from the site utilising a below ground rainwater harvesting tank, the captured rainwater will be used for irrigation purposes across the site to reduce strain on the local infrastructure.

High efficiency LED lighting will be provided throughout the development.

Intelligent controls will be utilised to ensure the building services only operate when necessary, including CO2 sensors, temperature sensors, presence and absence detection and daylight dimming etc.

All buildings will also be provided with a large roof mounted PV array which will offset the energy consumption of the building during daylight hours, with any surplus energy exported back to the electricity grid.

The car park areas for each site will be provided with

electric vehicle charging points as follows;

- Garden Centre - 8No Electric Vehicle Charging Points.
- Birdworld - 8No Electric Vehicle Charging Points.



Photovoltaic Array

Sustainable Drainage

Managing flood risk is an important part of achieving sustainable development. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) have a key role to play in flood management for new (and existing) developments. The site will benefit from an improved overall drainage system, designed to current standards and guidance.

Surface Water

- The existing surface water system currently discharges off the site with no flow control. New surface water systems will be provided in accordance with current Sustainable Drainage Guidance.
- The new System will attenuate (Store on site and release slowly) into the existing site discharge connections. The attenuation provided will significantly reduce the peak flows from the site and reduce flooding risk to the surrounding areas.
- It will incorporate biodiversity aspects in combination with the landscaping and ecology plans for the site.
- The new drainage system will have an agreed maintenance regime to ensure its ongoing reliability.

Foul Water

- Foul drainage will be renewed/replaced in accordance with the current Building Regulations.
- The foul system will continue to connect into the Thames Water network.



Sustainable Drainage



Sustainable Drainage

05 Public Consultation

5.1 Engagement

As part of the design process, Birdworld and Haskins engaged in a public consultation to offer interested parties the opportunity to review the proposals and offer their feedback.

This was an important exercise during the pre-planning design process to engage with local residents; allowing participation, which has been a positive contribution.



5.2 Public Consultation Boards

The following images show thumbnails of the consultation boards as presented:



Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge

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 robertslimbrick.com



Pre-application Design
 November 2023

Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge



The need for change

There are a number of fundamental constraints and challenges for both parts of the business.

- A Site access**
There are two entrances from the A25 for both businesses, neither with dedicated right turn entries.
- B Internal layout**
Garden Centre deliveries access the service yard through the main car park creating conflict with pedestrians and customer vehicles. Long banks of car parking encourage increased speed and impact on customer safety.
- C Building condition**
Across both sites, the arrangement, layout and overall building conditions are poor. The existing buildings are outdated and don't meet today's modern standard of insulation, energy performance and sustainability.
- D Circulation**
The existing shape and narrowness of the Birdworld site result in an 'out and back' path structure. This results in a poor customer journey and overall experience.



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Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge



Introduction

In February 2020 Haskins took over Forest Lodge Garden Centre & Birdworld.

Birdworld is one of the largest independent tourist attractions in the south east and has been a popular local destination for the past 50 years.

Birdworld is a unique experience - it is the largest birdpark in the U.K. It currently attracts over 100,000 visitors a year and has an extensive conservation and breeding program.

Haskins is a family-run Garden Centre Business founded in 1882 by Harry Haskins on the south coast. Today Harry Haskins' great grandson Warren Haskins is the Chairman and is very much involved in developing the business.

The company is well respected nationally and internationally for its innovative and inventive approach to garden retailing.

Going Forward

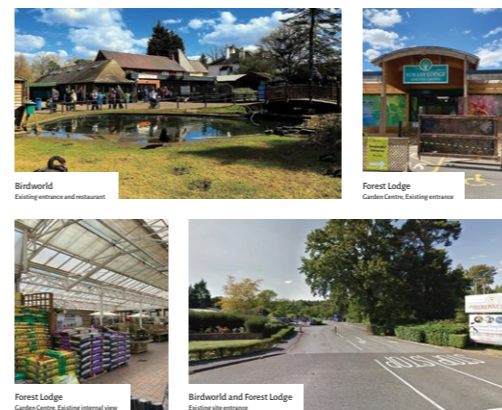
The past few years have allowed Haskins to review the re-development proposals put in place by the previous owners and, from this hands on operation of Birdworld and Forest Lodge Garden Centre, to assess how best to improve both facilities so that they can deliver the very best customer and visitor experience.

The purpose of this consultation is to introduce the re-development proposals and get your views. The intention is to work with the Council and the local community to create a viable and sustainable development for the future.

Drop-in session

We have prepared a series of display boards to tell you about our vision for Birdworld, so please help yourself to refreshments and take your time to look at the information on display.

Feel free to ask us any questions and please don't forget to fill out one of the feedback forms provided - we want to hear your views.



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Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge



Site Plan - Birdworld

Haskins employed the services of Dan Pearman, an experienced firm of architects and designers in the world of leisure and activity parks. Their work includes advising & design for Chester & Hanover Zoo's.

Their challenge was to analyse the Birdworld operation and build on the brand DNA to create a profitable, sustainable, future proof and credible zoological destination that has unique and repeatable all year round offers and experiences for all ages.

- A Clear and well defined entrance to Birdworld**
- B Entrance Plaza becomes a vibrant space with displays and exhibitions**
- C Reshaping of the site allows for a better visitor journey**
- D New adventure play area**
- E Play Barn - This will widen the appeal of the business throughout the year**
- F The Conservation and Breeding programme remains a key part of Birdworld**
- G Dedicated coach parking and drop-off area**



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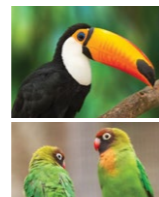
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Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge



Improvements to Birdworld

- The Play Barn**
This indoor play area will appeal to visitors throughout the year and offer more opportunities for the local community.
- Outdoor Adventure Play**
An exciting new attraction to help add another dimension to the park.
- The Conservation and Breeding Programme**
A new 'back of house' facility for this important aspect of Birdworld.
- Safeguarding the future for the existing exhibits and displays**
New and different attractions will help generate more footfall and income for the Bird Park.



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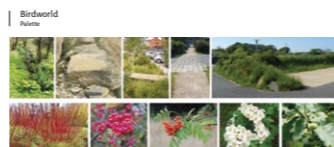
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Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge



Site Plan - Landscape & Ecology

- The existing Birdworld and garden centre site is visually well contained by surrounding ancient woodland and on-site landscaping. Public views to the site are only available locally, primarily from the A325, which adjoins the site's eastern boundary.
- The planting design approach varies to provide different identities for the Birdworld and Garden Centre sites.
- The Birdworld car park will have an informal, naturalistic approach, whereas the Garden Centre will be more manicured and formal in character. The car park layout has been developed to allow new tree planting which will contribute to the site's biodiversity gain.
- Where it has been necessary to remove trees, replacement trees and shrubs have been incorporated into the landscape scheme.
- Buffer planting will be introduced to reinforce existing boundary planting and provide screening from adjoining residential properties. This buffer will be further enhanced by the use of acoustic screening.
- An adventure playground will be created within the woodland in line with the recommendations of the project arboriculturist and ecologist.
- This will ensure that the proposals are integrated within and around existing trees of value, whilst also taking the opportunity to implement a management and re-planting regime to arrive at an overall improvement to the existing woodland.
- There are further opportunities to replace poor quality landscape with species rich grassland.
- Such as on the former Birdworld car park and the existing overhead pond which will be formed into a surface water attenuation basin seeded with native meadow seed mix and grasses managed thus further contributing to the overall improvement of biodiversity on the site.



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Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge



Site plan - Overall masterplan

Thank you for visiting our drop-in session.
We would welcome your thoughts on our proposals using the feedback form provided. Please put your form in one the comments boxes or post your form to us using one of the freepost envelopes provided.
Your feedback will allow us to refine and finalise our plans, before submitting a planning application in zone.



Should you have any further queries or comments after the drop in session, please contact us by email : farnham.development@birdworld.co.uk

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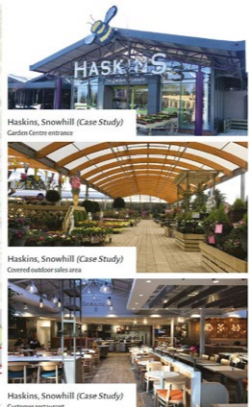
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Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge



Site Plan - Forest Lodge

- New single, all movements, point of entry from the A325. Long & clear entrance road up to the site roundabout allows for sufficient queuing at peak times.
- Pedestrian link from existing bus stop to encourage sustainable transport.
- Excellent landscaping at the entrance to the site - and along the main entrance road is appropriate for this important local destination.
- The site roundabout allows for clear access and circulation around the site.
- The proposed service areas for the Garden Centre and Birdworld are centrally situated but carefully considered/screened to reduce the overall visual impact. Direct HGV access is achieved without conflict to the customer parking areas.
- The new garden centre will provide a significantly improved customer experience in a new, sustainable and modern building.



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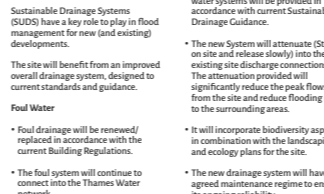
Birdworld and Haskins, Forest Lodge



Sustainability and Drainage

- The new buildings will achieve a BREEM 4+ rating. This will be achieved through passive design measures, including highly thermal efficient building fabric, natural shading where possible, and improved air tightness.
- The principle behind the design of the buildings follows the London Plan Energy Hierarchy:
- Be Lean - Use Less Energy** (passive and active measures)
- Be Clean - Supply Energy Efficiently** (select the most energy efficient systems)
- Be Green - Use Renewable Energy** (use renewable energy intelligently)

- Low Carbon Technologies**
The buildings will utilise the following low or zero carbon technologies to achieve BREEM Excellent Status:
 - No natural gas supply will be provided to the new buildings in-line with the UK Governments phase out of natural gas boilers.
 - Energy efficient heat pump technology with efficiencies in excess of 300%.
 - Roof mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to allow on-site energy generation with the ability to export electricity to the grid.
 - Energy efficient LED light fittings.
 - Smart heating, ventilation, air conditioning & lighting controls will be implemented throughout.
 - Electric Vehicle charging points provided for both sites, in excess of the Building Regulation requirements.
- Sustainable Drainage**
Managing flood risk is an important part of achieving sustainable development. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) have a key role to play in flood management for new (and existing) developments. The site will benefit from an improved overall drainage system, designed to current standards and guidance.
- Foul Water**
 - Foul drainage will be renewed/replaced in accordance with the current Building Regulations.
 - The foul system will continue to connect into the Thames Water network.



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