Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

for

Land at Queen Court Farm,
Water Lane,
Ospringe Kent

for

Shepherd Neame Limited

April 2024

Status: Issue

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	Report Author:	Reviewed by:
Landscape Architect:	Elizabeth Foot	Graham Farrier
Job title:	Assistant Landscape Architect	Associate Director
Ecologist:	Luke England	Peter Hadfield
Job Title:	Ecologist	Director at Ecology Solutions

Client Details	
Client:	Shepherd Neame Limited

Contact Details

The Landscape Partnership Ltd

Greenwood House | 15a St Cuthberts Street | Bedford | MK40 3JG

Tel: 01234 261315

The Landscape Partnership Ltd is a practice of Chartered Landscape Architects, Chartered Ecologists and Chartered Environmentalists, registered with the Landscape Institute and a member of the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment & the Arboricultural Association.

Registered Office:
Greenwood House
15a St Cuthberts Street
Bedford
MK40 3JG

Registered in England No 2709001

Quality standards

This report is certified BS 42020:2013 'Biodiversity – code of practice for planning and development' compliant and has been prepared in accordance with The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Technical Guidance Series '*Ecological Report Writing*' and Code of Professional Conduct.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Commission

1.1.1 The Landscape Partnership was commissioned by Shepherd Neame Limited in January 2024 to provide a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP). The LEMP is to be submitted to Swale Borough Council in support of a related planning application 22/504036/FUL for the erection of 6 dwellings, parking barns and new vehicular and pedestrian access.

1.1.2 The land subject to this LEMP (and hereafter referred to as the 'Site') is shown on the accompanying Drawing B2005.701 Landscape Proposals with LEMP Area Management (Appendix 2). This drawing is based on the Landscape Proposals drawing forming part of a set of figures supporting the Landscape and Visual Appraisal by TLP (B2005.FIGURE_05 Landscape Proposals, shown in Appendix 3). The Site largely falls outside of the planning application boundary for 6 units under application 22/504036/FUL.

1.1.3 The aim of the LEMP is to indicate how the existing and proposed landscape areas to the north and west of the proposed residential application boundary are to be managed for the benefit of historic landscape restoration, the preservation and enhancement of the Ospringe Character Area, and the improvement of the Site for vegetation, wildlife and recreational access.

1.1.4 The LEMP aims to respond to comments from Swale Borough Council's (SBC) 'Conservation & Design Team: Response to Consultation Request' (25th October 2023) in regard to Application 22/504036/FULL. Additionally, the proposed access from Water Lane has been developed and agreed with Kent County Council (KCC) Highways and responds to the SBC Conservation and Design Team comments. KCC Highways have agreed to support a crossover instead of a bell mouth which will maintain rural access into the Site.

1.1.5 The LEMP will form one of the documents referred to within the Section 106 Agreement which also makes reference to the open space historic landscape restoration and new footpath connection. Furthermore the extent of the Historic Landscape Restoration scheme and the LEMP Land are the same and as shown on Drawing B20005.701.

1.1.6 The Site falls within the ownership of Shepherd Neame and within the blue line for application 22/504036/FUL. It is the intention that the land subject to this LEMP will be in part transferred from Shepherd Neame to Faversham Town Council for its continued use for informal open space and biodiversity.

1.1.7 The report has been jointly authored by The Landscape Partnership (TLP) who have focused on the landscape management and Ecology Solutions who have focused on the ecological management.

1.2 Legislation and policy background

1.2.1 There is a range of protection given to Sites and species. Sites may be designated for local, national, European or global importance for nature conservation. Species may be protected by European-scale legislation or varying levels of national regulation.

1.2.2 The Local Planning Authority has a policy (CP7: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – providing for green infrastructure) to protect and enhance natural assets and green infrastructure network within the Local Plan (Swale Borough Council Local Plan 2031). Policy CP8: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment of the Local Plan seeks to ensure the historic environment is central within decision-making. Other regulators have policies relating to the consents issued by them.

1.2.3 Further information on relevant legislation and national planning policy is given in Appendix 1.

1.3 Site location and existing Site description

1.3.1 The Site is located to the south of Ospringe and forms part of Queen Court Farm, which ceased operating as an agricultural unit for grazing land in the late 1990's. The Site sits within the Ospringe Conservation Area and in the vicinity of several listed and historic buildings.

1.3.2 The Site comprises areas of grassland, hedgerow, scrub, woodland, tall ruderals, recolonising ground, treelines, amenity planting, hardstanding and agricultural structures as follows:

- The western boundary of the Site is marked by Water Lane and along the boundary there is a length of over mature hedgerow and chestnut pale fencing to the remainder including opposite properties fronting Water Lane.

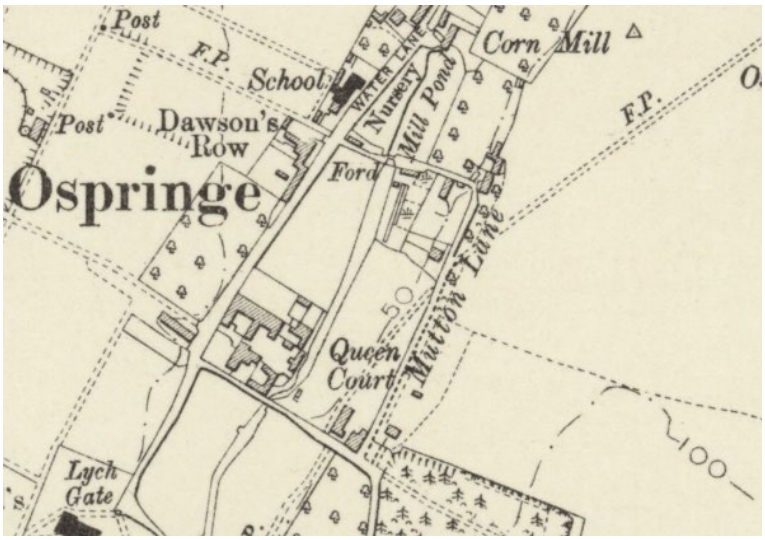
- The northern boundary of the Site follows Mutton Lane for approximately 50m, with the boundary marked by continuation of the chestnut pale fencing and then follows to the side and rear boundary of a pallet packing store business and continues along the side garden boundary of the listed Laurel Cottage (a detached residential property) before connecting again with Mutton Lane to the east.

- The south-east boundary of the Site runs perpendicular from Mutton Lane along the side garden boundary of The Old Barn (former brick built oast house minus roundels), which is located on the junction of Mutton Lane and Vicarage Lane, up to the edge of the structures at Queen Court Farm.

- The central and southern part of the Site comprises a number of more recent agricultural, including open sided structures and some concrete block and brick structures. These buildings are in a poor state of repair. The buildings sit within areas of hardstanding that are in the process of being colonised by opportunistic plant species. The southern and easternmost buildings are flanked by tall ruderal vegetation.

- The north-west of the Site comprises an area of semi-improved grassland that includes large stands of common nettle and creeping thistle. The eastern part of the Site, from the existing farm buildings up to Mutton Lane, comprises areas of further rank vegetation and some areas of exposed chalk.

- Queen Court Farm sits within the Nailbourne Valley. The historic alignment of the dry river valley, the Nailbourne, ran from south to north across the Site and to the east of the main grouping of farm buildings. The landform to the west of the former watercourse is relatively flat in character, while to the east of the former watercourse the topography rises up more steeply towards towards Mount View.



- Several further ecological features are present within the Site. To the western boundary with Water Lane there is length of over mature elm hedgerow, much of which is dead or dying. Following the approximate alignment of the former Nailbourne stream there

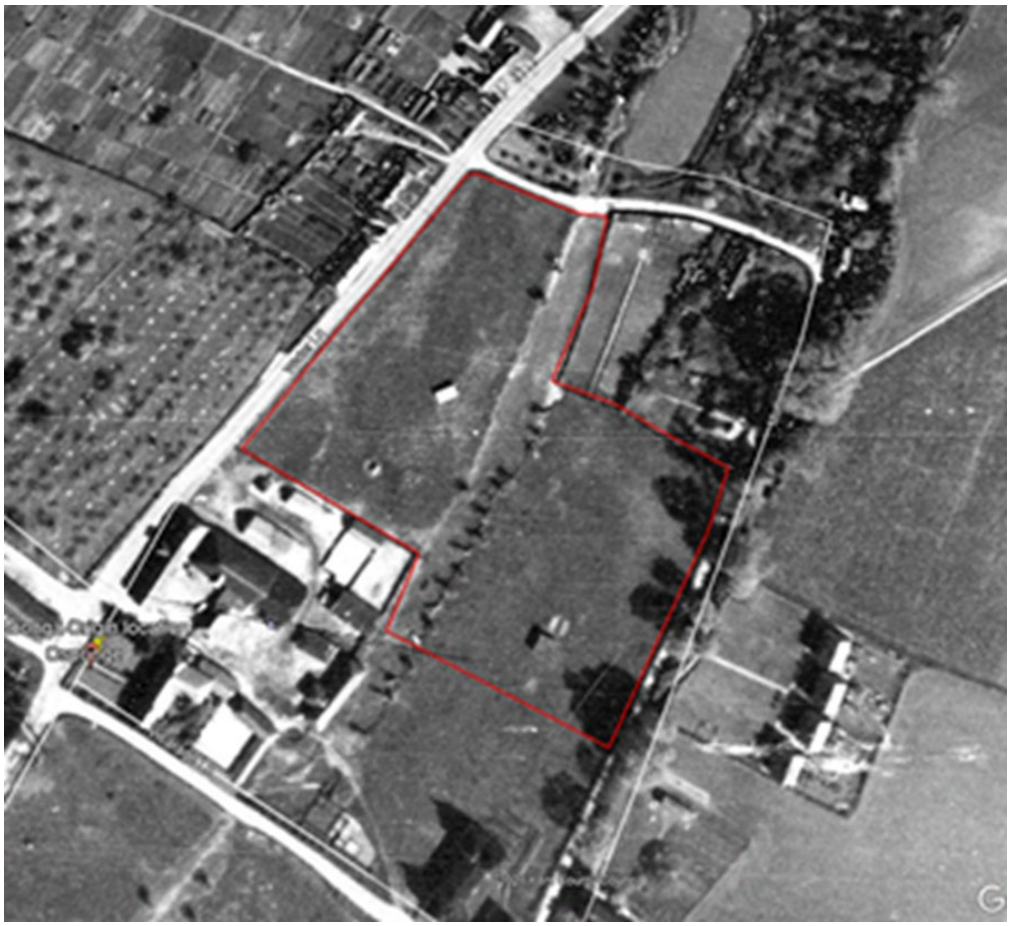
are five poplar trees amongst areas of scrub to the north-east boundary. Four of these trees contain potential bat roost features via splits and cracks in branches and trunks. A small area of woodland is present to the rear of the two properties on Mutton Lane and following the boundary of a section of Mutton Lane. The east of the Site is largely tall ruderal vegetation, with a small area of bare ground present.

- Japanese knotweed specimens were observed towards the eastern Site boundary in an area of tall ruderal that has previously been treated to remove this species. The programme of treatment is ongoing.

1.4 Historic Landscape Setting

1.4.1 The Site falls within Ospringe Conservation Area (designated 1982) which includes areas of settlement, focused to the north along the A2 and Water Lane, and areas of more rural character along the Nailbourne Valley which extends towards the M2. There are a number of key features of the landscape character described within the 'Ospringe Conservation Area Character Appraisal' (2004) along with descriptions of how historic buildings form key features and landmarks within it. The text also lists a few detracting features, a number of which relate to the Site.

1.4.2 The landscape change within the character area and local to the Site can be identified from aerial photographs taken from Google Earth, at 1940, 1960, 1990, 2003 and 2008. These images illustrate changes in the location and presence of hedges and orchards along the Nailbourne. At Queen Court Farm the grouping of agricultural buildings was more compact in 1940 (see aerial photograph below) with grazing land to the north and east of the farm buildings. Agricultural structures progressively expanded to the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st-century on parts of the Site, with loss of boundary features and reduced influence of planting along the Nailbourne. The image below from 1940 is the last aerial record of pollard willows along the route of the Nailbourne.



1.4.3 The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies that the eastern side of the Water Lane valley has '*with smaller parts of land sometimes interspersed with the remnants of an older pattern of small fields, hedgerows, woodland and orchards'*. It goes on to advise '*the road edges abutting the arable and grazing fields are for the most part marked by lengths of hedgerow and soft verges, but in a number of instances these hedgerows are thin and gappy and in need of concerted management to promote their rejuvenation'*. Reference is also made to Mutton Lane and Vicarage lane, stating that the '*overhanging trees and hedgerows accentuate their narrow, winding form and reinforce their distinctively rural character'*.

1.4.4 The Landscape and Visual Appraisal advises that '*a sensitive landscape strategy is proposed to reflect the historic character of the site and its context at the village edge within the valley. The landscape proposals include the creation of a wildflower meadow to the west of the site with a reformed dry channel following the course of the Nailbourne. Native hedging to Water Lane and Mutton Lane would enclose the site. A line of lime trees would follow the channel and groups of orchard trees mark the site entrance from Water Lane. Communal areas of open space around the residential properties also comprise areas of meadow with informal groups of trees and a simple courtyard with lawn and paving'* (para 9.1.5). It goes on to advise '*the strategy for the site has the potential to result in a material improvement to the environmental conditions and character of the site and thereby also to the Conservation Area and local landscape. The proposals would reinforce the rural edge character on Water Lane, facilitate enhanced views towards the restored Listed Barns and locate a sensitive grouping of residential units to the east of the site set within the context of an enhanced valley'* (para 9.1.7).

1.4.5 The Statement of Heritage Significance advises '*the proposed development and the attendant investment in the landscape presents wider opportunities for enhancing the heritage assets and restoring lost elements of the immediate landscape, which could have beneficial repercussions for the wider area. These include the demolition of unsightly, redundant agricultural buildings of little or no historic merit and the removal of extensive areas of hard-standing. Revival of active management in the immediate surrounding landscape also offers the opportunity to improve the aesthetic appearance of the farm and perhaps to reinstate elements of the lost Nailbourne Brook in the form of an artificial body of water, as we see in historic maps. With new planting and appropriate landscaping, this could enhance the setting of the historic buildings, restore views from Mutton Lane and provide an appropriate backdrop'*.

1.4.6 Consequently, the proposed development would remove the detractive features within the historic landscape setting, and combined with the landscape proposals and ongoing management of the Site, would enable the enhancement and protection of the character and appearance of Ospringe Conservation Area and the setting of the adjoining Grade II* Queen Court Farm Barns and Farmhouse and Grade II barn at corner of Mutton Lane and Vicarage Lane. The LEMP sets how this will be managed to secure these long term benefits.

1.5 Acknowledgements

1.5.1 Discussions were held with between The Landscape Partnership (Landscape Architects) and Ecology Solutions (Ecologists) during the preparation of the proposals and LEMP.

1.6 Description of the scheme

Historic Landscape Restoration:

1.6.1 The proposals incorporate site-wide enhancements including clearance of unattractive built forms, introduction of a sympathetic locally vernacular inspired grouping of units to the east and landscape works to the remainder of the Site. The strategy looks to provide a material improvement to the environmental conditions within the Conservation Area, by reinforcing the rural edge character on Water Lane, facilitate enhanced views across a reinstated meadow towards the restored Listed Barns and locating a sensitive new grouping of residential units to the east of the Site. The Open Space Historic landscape Restoration would include:

- A communal meadow with occasional tree planting to echo the historic rural land uses.

- To the north and west frontages with Water Lane and Mutton Lane the dying Elm and chestnut pale fencing would be removed. A new native hedgerow (with hawthorn, field maple and hazel) would be planted to the road frontages and set back to the required sight lines at the access onto Water Lane. This approach would considerably improve views to the listed barns to the south.
- Existing mature tree groups within the Site boundary would be retained and new tree planting provided. The new features would include a row of lime trees following the dry channel to reflect the historic presence of trees along the Nailbourne. These trees are to be pollarded (once established) to reflect the line of pollarded willows present when the channel was regularly wet. The use of lime also reflects the existing trees to the frontage of Queen Court Farmhouse.
- Two groups of orchard trees (one group apples and one pears) on an open grid are proposed at the Site entrance and east of the cart shed to provide a connection with the listed barns and former land uses. The orchard trees would be managed to retain the prominence of the listed barns. An area of native trees and shrubs would also be provided to the northern boundary and east of the dry channel adjacent to a property which contains number of unsightly pallets stacks.
- Provision of vehicular access between the proposed barn development and Water Lane. The vehicular access will be visually discreet to reduce impact on the setting of the listed barns whilst maintaining priority for pedestrians along Water Lane. The proposed width of access will be 3.7m as agreed with KCC Highways although could be reduced to 3m wide if required. KCC Highways have agreed to support a crossover instead of a bellmouth which will have less impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed barns and maintain rural access into the Site. No illumination along the access road is required which will further reduce impact on the setting.
- Public access is proposed across the Site via a new pedestrian link from the northern boundary on Mutton Lane and running south adjacent to the dry channel crossing at the culvert/ bridge and then to the south-east boundary to reconnect with Mutton Lane. This would be a mown grass path. The open land that forms part of the Site would be available for recreational use, partly for communal use and partly for the housing development use, although the proposals do not distinguish between the areas of use.
- Information boards will also be provided explaining the history of Queen Court Farm.
- The proposals would also enable proposed barn development to integrate with the Site's historic landscape setting and mitigate any of the impacts of the proposed changes.

Ecological Enhancements:

1.6.2 The proposed scheme includes the management of an area of semi-natural grassland to the north-west of the Site and also for the creation of additional areas of species rich grassland both on the location of areas of hardstanding and dilapidated barns and to the north-east of the Site up to Mutton Lane. These areas are to be managed for the benefit of biodiversity and informal recreation. The scheme further includes the provision of new native tree and shrub planting, a small orchard and native hedging to the boundary with Water Lane and Mutton Lane to the west and north, as well as the establishment of wet grassland within an open channel through the Site close to the course of the former Nailbourne stream.

1.6.3 The scheme comprises the management of existing vegetation and the provision of new planting, with the goal of conserving and enhancing the value of the Site for wildlife and enhancing the amenity and recreation value of the Site for local residents together with enhancing the setting of the listed buildings at Queen Court and Queen Court Barns.

1.6.4 The landscape proposals are detailed on Drawings B20005.701 as included at Appendix 2.

1.7 Objectives of this report

1.7.1 The objectives of the LEMP are to provide sufficient information for submission to the Local Planning Authority as part of a Section 106 Agreement to accompany the planning application 22/504036/FUL, to demonstrate a positive strategy to both minimise any adverse impact upon biodiversity and to provide a positive approach to the management of existing and proposed landscape restoration elements for the long-term betterment of biodiversity, landscape character and visual amenity.

1.7.2 The intention is that the LEMP will set out the measures for the establishment of new features and provide for the management of the Site for a period of 10 years that can be used by the body responsible for the management of the relevant part of the Site. Measures are provided separately for Years 1-5 (establishment) and Years 6-10.

1.8 Other relevant studies

1.8.1 Related documents as part of application 22/504036/FUL are:

- Landscape and Visual Appraisal – The Landscape Partnership July 2022
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal Addendum – The Landscape Partnership September 2023
- Ecological Assessment– Ecology Solutions 2016
- Briefing Note: Walkover Survey January 2021 - Ecology Solutions
- Briefing Note: Walkover Survey June 2022 – Ecology Solutions
- Briefing Note: Walkover Survey November 2023 – Ecology Solutions

2 Description and evaluation of ecological and landscape features to be managed and created

2.1.1 This section describes the range of existing and proposed habitat types on the Site. Locations for existing and proposed habitats, can be found on the Landscape Proposals Drawing number B20005.FIGURE_05 in Appendix 3.

2.1.2 The Landscape Proposals have been developed by TLP in consultation with Ecology Solutions to fulfil both landscape and ecology objectives. The proposals identify different landscape/habitat types including different forms of planting. For each landscape/habitat type the design aims in terms of ecology and landscape are provided.

Existing Trees

2.2 Aim: Existing trees to be retained where in a sound condition to provide valuable habitat to local bat and bird populations as well as providing visual amenity to local residents.

2.3 Existing mature trees to be inspected every 2 years and after major storms.

Existing Scrub

2.4 Aim: Existing scrub to the Site perimeter to be retained and will continue to provide valuable habitat to local bird populations as well as providing visual amenity to local residents.

Existing elm hedges

2.5 Aim: The existing dying/dead elm hedges to Water Lane are to be removed and replaced with a new native mix.

Proposed Meadow Grassland

2.5.1 Aims: To reinstate the traditional meadow grassland within the Site to contribute to the historic restoration of the landscape within the Ospringe Conservation Area and within the setting of the Queen Court Farm Grade II* Listed barns. To enhance the biodiversity value and to provide grassland for visual amenity and informal recreation.

2.5.2 Grassland areas to be sown with wildflower seed mix such as Emorsgate Meadow Mixture EM5 for loamy soils to the west of the Nailbourne course and EM6 for Chalk and Limestone soils to the east of the Nailbourne due to the variation in soil type across the Site. Seed to be sown as per supplier's website and managed accordingly. Once established, the main grassland areas are to be cut twice annually in August and late autumn/winter. Selected footways for pedestrian circulation, as shown on Drawing B20005.FIGURE_05 to be cut frequently.

Proposed native tree and shrubs

2.5.3 Aim: To provide additional habitat for wildlife, to the north-east of the Site and adjacent to existing areas of scrub.

2.5.4 The proposed native trees and shrub species will include: lime, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, aspen, native cherry, goat willow and birch.

Proposed standard tree planting

2.5.5 Aims: To reflect the historic alignment of trees along the Nailbourne and provide connectivity with the listed barns, while retaining the prominence of the listed barns. Pollarding to the lime trees to replicate the historically pollarded willows within the Site. To provide future nesting habitat for birds and tree groups within the open space to increase the amenity value of the location.

2.5.6 The specimen lime tree planting will follow the alignment of the former Nailbourne and once established, will be pollarded to reflect historic landscape features. Groups of apple and pear trees will form an orchard feature at the Site entrance. Individual specimens and groups of trees will be located in the new native hedges and in groups around the proposed dwellings and along Mutton Lane. Trees to include: field maple, walnut, native cherry, bird cherry and English oak.

Proposed native hedgerows

2.5.7 Aim: To provide an enhanced boundary feature to Water Lane and Mutton Lane to the north - west of the Site and a natural boundary feature to the south of the proposed units where a new footpath link is provided to Mutton Lane. These hedges will and also benefit the Site for biodiversity by providing a native hedgerow with additional nesting opportunities for birds and to add to landscape character.

2.5.8 The proposed hedgerow to the north-west will replace the dead /dying elm and dilapidated chestnut pale fencing and comprise a double staggered row of native shrubs including; hawthorn, hazel and field maple. The hedge to the south-east will comprise hawthorn. Hedgerows to be maintained at 1.5-2m in height to retain views into and across the restored historic landscape, providing visual connectivity to the Listed barns and wider Conservation Area.

Proposed species-rich wetland grassland

2.5.9 Aim: To establish a water-tolerant meadow grassland area within the proposed Nailbourne swale of high biodiversity value, that is attractive to wildlife as well as visually attractive.

2.5.10 An open channel is proposed through the Site close to the course of the former Nailbourne stream with the Site connecting to the existing culvert under Mutton Lane. A water tolerant grass/meadow mix such as Emorsgate Meadow EM8 for wetlands will be sown designed to tolerate both wet and dry conditions.

Non-Native Invasive species

2.5.11 Japanese Knotweed was identified on the northwest corner of the Site. Japanese Knotweed is difficult to eradicate. Options include repeated spraying with herbicide over several years with ongoing monitoring of regrowth, burying it and its roots several metres below ground, or removal of it and all its roots in soil offsite to a tip licenced to take such material.

2.6 JHD Ecological LLP (JHD) were commissioned by Shepherd Neame in October 2018 to conduct a treatment schedule of the Site following the excavation of Japanese knotweed. JHD is instructed to monitor and treat any resulting Japanese knotweed until 2028, with the Site Report and Management Plan (Jan 2024) included in Appendix 5.

Ecological enhancements

2.6.1 Aim: To provide additional sheltering, nesting and roosting habitat for wildlife post development.

2.6.2 In addition to habitat enhancements detailed above several species-specific enhancements will be provided as part of the scheme. Locations of the measures are shown on Plan ECO1 within Appendix 4.

2.6.3 Dead wood produced from any management works conducted on proposed trees, as well as debris gathered from the removal of the elm hedge that will occur following the development, will be retained as an ecological feature within the grassland area. This will offer valuable refugia for reptiles, as well as for saproxylic invertebrates and hedgehogs.

2.6.4 Four new bird boxes of a variety of designs, comprising two Schwegler 2GR and two Schwegler 1B bird boxes, will be installed on suitable retained trees within the Site. All bird nest boxes are to be installed at least 5m above ground, oriented north and in shaded areas with clear adjacent airspace to improve chances of successful occupation. Furthermore, two Woodstone Artificial House Martin Nest boxes will be provided beneath the overhang along the northern elevation of the proposed buildings. The artificial nests will be installed in pairs to promote colonisation by

this species. These enhancements will offer new additional nesting opportunities for birds, on top of those provided by new shrub and tree planting.

2.6.5 Bat boxes will also be installed on mature trees within the Site, providing improved roosting opportunities for this group. Four bat boxes will be provided comprising a variety of designs including two Large Multi-chamber Bat Boxes and two Chillon Woodstone Bat Boxes. Bat boxes will be provided amongst trees along the eastern Site boundary as well as amongst the retained black poplars. All bat boxes should be positioned facing south, at a height of at least 5m from the ground, to increase the chances of successful occupation.

3 Ecological Trends and Constraints

3.1 Review of Site potential and constraint

3.1.1 Ecology Solutions produced an Ecological Assessment of the Site initially in 2016. Ecology Solutions further conducted updated walkover surveys of the Site in each of 2021, 2022 and 2023, to assess the current state of the Site and identify and potential changes in habitats present. Briefing notes summarising these findings were subsequently produced following each survey. The information provided by these assessments has been used to inform this document.

3.1.2 The Site was surveyed based around extended Phase 1 survey methodology, as recommended by Natural England, whereby the macro-habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail.

3.1.3 Using the above method, the Site was classified into areas of similar habitats following the JNCC guidelines where possible and species lists for the broad habitat areas were compiled.

3.1.4 In addition, an assessment for protected, notable and invasive species was also conducted. This included an assessment of the potential suitability of the on-site habitats and landscape setting to support these species.

3.1.5 Full details of the survey methodology and findings are located within the Ecological Assessment produced by Ecology Solutions and are referenced herein where necessary.

Potential

Designated Sites

3.1.6 There are no statutory designations of nature conservation value within the Site or immediately adjacent to it. The nearest statutory designation is the Swale Estuary Proposed Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), located approximately 1.45km to the north-east of the Site. The habitats in this zone complement those in the Swale Ramsar site, which is also a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

3.1.7 Given the spatial separation, the existing intervening development and the lack of hydrological connections, it is not likely that there would be any direct adverse effects upon these designations as a result of the proposed development, during or after construction. As such, local designated sites do not pose a constraint to the development.

Habitats

3.1.8 The habitats within the Site consist of semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal, scrub, trees, a former hedgerow, buildings, hardstanding and recolonising ground. In general, the habitats present on Site are not considered to be of any significant intrinsic nature conservation importance and are rather valuable for the opportunities they present to protected species, with several trees that support roost features of most ecological interest within the Site. The landscape scheme includes the retention of these trees. The scrub, former hedgerow, semi-improved grassland and tall ruderal vegetation are of no intrinsic ecological value, the species present being common and widespread, but they do offer opportunities for wildlife and allow the continuation of wildlife corridors in the form of the habitats immediately offsite and are therefore of some ecological interest. Scrub is largely to be retained bolster planted with native species. Moreover, retained / newly planted areas of grassland will be sown with a native wildflower seed mix in order to increase the floristic diversity of the Site, which will compensate for losses to tall ruderal vegetation that will occur. Planting will include native and fruit-bearing species appropriate to the locality.

Bats

3.1.9 The buildings on-site are not suitable for roosting bats. However, four trees present good potential for roosting bats, as they contain splits, cracks and woodpecker holes. The former hedgerow and scrub on Site present some limited opportunities for foraging and commuting bats, although richer opportunities are available in the immediate vicinity of the Site and the wider local area.

3.1.10 The trees harbouring bat roost potential are to be retained. Moreover, new tree and shrub planting will improve invertebrate interest, and thus foraging opportunities for bats, within the Site. The provision of several bat roost boxes of varying designs will also improve roosting opportunities for bats here.

Hedgehogs

3.1.11 It is likely that hedgehog and other small common mammal species would make use of the woodland, scrub and boundary features within the Site and development area.

3.1.12 New shrub planting will provide new shelter and foraging opportunities for these species. Furthermore, new fencing installed within the associated residential development site should include Hedgehog Gateways, 13x13cm holes at their base, to facilitate access for hedgehogs and other small mammals.

Birds

3.1.13 A number of common birds and evidence of previous nesting were recorded within the Site, but it is not considered to be of any special ornithological interest. It is likely that the trees, scrub and former hedgerow provide some foraging and nesting opportunities, although richer resources are present immediately offsite and in the wider local area.

3.1.14 New planting undertaken as part of the proposed development will comprise native species and offer significant new areas of foraging and nesting habitats. In addition, bird boxes installed on retained / proposed trees would offer additional new nesting opportunities.

Reptiles

3.1.15 The semi-improved grassland in the north of the Site provides some limited opportunities for reptiles, but generally lacks the tussocky nature favoured by these species.

3.1.16 The area of grassland is to be retained and over-sown with meadow seed mixture, which will ensure a significant area of habitat suitable for reptiles is retained. The addition of new shrub planting, and the provision of refugia, will provide new sheltering opportunities for reptiles.

Amphibians

3.1.17 Two ponds are located within 0.1km of the Site. The Site contains some opportunities for amphibians in their terrestrial phase, albeit limited, provided by unmanaged areas of vegetation such as scrub.

3.1.18 A channel is to be established through the Site that will capture water run-off, so is to be occasionally wet. This channel will be sown with wetland meadow mixture and will provide suitable habitat for amphibians in their terrestrial phase, considerably improving opportunities for this group within the Site.

Invertebrates

3.1.19 The habitats present within the Site and development area will support a range of common invertebrates. Observations of stag beetle have been made within the locality and their presence within the Site cannot be ruled out.

3.1.20 New planting of native trees, hedgerows and shrubs as well as new meadow grassland will ensure that entomological interest in the area is enhanced post-development. The provision of refugia within the Site will improve opportunities for saproxylic invertebrates like stag beetle.

Constraints

Birds

3.1.21 In order to avoid impacts on nesting birds, and to avoid a potential offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, all necessary clearance of vegetation should be undertaken outside the nesting season (typically March to August inclusive) wherever possible. Where this cannot be achieved a check survey for nesting birds should be undertaken by an ecologist immediately prior to clearance, with any confirmed nests left in situ, with a five-metre exclusion zone around it until the young have fledged.

3.1.22 **Reptiles**

3.1.23 Where pathways are to be established within the retained grassland area to the north, habitat removal should be sympathetic to reptile presence. Grassland strimming should occur through the reptile active season, from April to September / October, and during favourable weather conditions. This will ensure any reptiles present are persuaded to move away of their own accord.

4 Aims and Objectives of Management

4.1.1 The aims of this report are to ensure the successful establishment and on-going management of the historic landscape restoration and to ensure the development includes biodiversity enhancement measures.

4.1.2 The overall ecology aim is to ensure wildlife persists and is encouraged within the Site and the local area. The overall landscape aim is to provide appropriate historic landscape restoration in order to provide opportunities for appreciation of the cluster of existing listed buildings at Queen Court Farm. Landscape restoration enhancement will also ensure that the standard of landscape amenity within the development is appropriate to the user, that the landscape of the Site is attractive to users of the Site, and that it integrates with the surrounding area.

4.1.3 The nature conservation objectives are to include the following:

- Retain existing trees identified to harbour bat roost potential, to retain roosting opportunities within the Site.
- The provision of appropriately managed wildflower meadow area to improve invertebrate interest in the Site and provide improved reptile opportunities.
- A channel will be established to provide new opportunities for amphibians.
- Manage new trees, shrubs and hedgerows to create and extend wildlife corridors within the Site for the benefit of birds and other wildlife, providing berries and nectar as food sources to encourage biodiversity.
- Provide species specific ecological enhancements through the provision of new bat and bird boxes amongst retained vegetation and/or on new buildings, as well as providing new hibernaculum for reptiles and insects.

4.1.4 These conservation objectives will be achieved through the retention and appropriate management of habitat within the Site, alongside species-specific enhancements.

4.1.5 The landscape objectives are to include the following:

- Retain existing trees and new hedgerow planting to provide visual screening, a sense of maturity, landscape structure, to assist with integration of the proposed adjacent residential development and to contribute to landscape character.
- Retain and manage meadow grassland areas with occasional tree planting to echo the historic rural land uses.
- Retain and manage the meadow grassland areas for visual amenity and allowing for informal recreational routes across and within the open space by way of cut footpaths.
- New standard tree planting to provide structure, visual interest, visual screening and highlight focal points.
- New native tree and shrub planting within and to the perimeter of the Site to provide visual screening and create a landscape structure for the proposed development.
- The new native hedgerow (with hawthorn, field maple and hazel) along the road frontages will be set back to the required sight lines at the access onto Water Lane, with the objective of improving views to the listed barns to the south.
- Existing mature tree groups within the Site boundary and new tree planting should be managed to preserve the longevity and provide attractive characteristic landscape features. The new features would include a row of lime trees following the dry channel to reflect the historic presence of trees along the Nailbourne. These trees to be pollarded (once established) to reflect the line of pollarded willows present when the channel was regularly wet. The use of lime also reflects the existing trees to the frontage of Queen Court Farmhouse.
- Two groups of orchard trees (one group apples and one pears) should be managed to retain the prominence of the listed barns.

- The new pedestrian link from the northern boundary on Mutton Lane that runs south adjacent to the dry channel crossing to reconnect with Mutton Lane, should be managed as a mown grass path.

5 Appropriate Management Options

Existing trees

5.1.1 Existing trees on Site should have a programme of periodic inspections to identify necessary tree surgery to ensure they continue to benefit to wildlife and for visual amenity.

5.1.2 The most appropriate management option for this habitat is to visit the area every 24 months to ensure the trees are in a good state of health

Proposed Meadow Grassland

5.1.3 Areas proposed for the removal of hardstanding, redundant derelict farm structures, and existing semi-improved grassland where meadow grassland is proposed are to be cultivated repeatedly to remove weeds. Soil to be ploughed or dug to bury the surface vegetation, harrowed or raked to produce a medium tilth and rolled to produce a firm surface.

5.1.4 Sowing and future management of Emorsgate mix EM5 and EM6 to be as per Emorsgate website with cuts twice a year in August and late autumn/winter once established with mown footways cut regularly.

Proposed and young native trees and shrubs

The most appropriate management option for the habitats is that they are actively managed through a range of measures including: weed control, firming, securing, pruning and replacement as required to achieve successful establishment. Four visits annually with 3 visits during growing season and one in winter (April, July, September and December)

Proposed new standard trees and orchard trees

5.1.5 The most appropriate management option for this Site is to regularly inspect the trees to ensure they become successfully established and are not a danger to the public or users of the Site and ensure that their life expectancy is maximised and their natural form can be achieved. Management of the newly planted trees would ensure they deliver the objectives of the landscape design proposals.

5.1.6 Lime trees along the former Nailbourne to be pollarded once established, approx. from 5 years after being planted, although should be assessed to ensure the main trunk is above 2m high where branches form. Pollarding to occur annually after initial tree works.

Proposed native hedgerows

5.1.7 The most appropriate management option for the hedgerow is to manage for amenity and biodiversity. This would see the hedgerow trimmed on a bi-annual cycle as opposed to every year. If the hedgerows are cut annually, they will not provide a food source that is beneficial to birds and other wildlife. Less frequent management would result in the hedge becoming overgrown, gappy and potentially cause a nuisance and impact upon adjacent residential gardens and land uses.

Information Boards

5.1.8 Two information boards to be provided along the mown access route. These should be inspected annually, repaired and repainted as necessary.

Proposed species-rich wetland grass seeding

5.1.9 The most appropriate management option for this feature of the Site is to mow annually in summer with removal of arisings as a hay crop to maintain species-richness and prevent establishment of ruderal species.

6 Prescriptions for management actions

6.1 Years 1-5

Existing trees

6.1.1 Important Note: All existing trees on the Site are within the Ospringe Conservation Area and are therefore protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990. Swale Borough Council will need to be notified of any required works on the existing trees (with a diameter exceeding 75mm) on the Site, 6 weeks before work is carried out unless an exception applies.

6.1.2 Existing trees will provide immediate structure, maturity and biodiversity opportunities. Trees are to be regularly inspected to ensure the health and safety for users:

- Scheduled for inspection every other year and after significant storm event for safety checks. Any work, which is deemed necessary after an inspection including safety hazard works and identified dead, damaged or diseased trees or overhanging branches will be carried out within the timescale set by the arboricultural consultant. Any ivy on the trees should be monitored at this time to ensure that it does not become established. Ivy growth to be removed to prevent long term harm to the health of the tree;

- Undertake any required formative pruning to maintain the tree shape and remove any dead wood, crossing branches and suckers. Pruning operations must not affect the vertical growth or spread of the establishing trees. Where there are competing leaders, prune tree to encourage one main leader; and

- Any works to be undertaken in accordance with best arboricultural practice. Where work is more complex, requires greater skill than general maintenance or creates a hazard and health and safety risk, an experienced and qualified tree surgeon is to undertake the work. All aerial tree works, and tree felling must only be undertaken by fully insured professional arboriculturists, holding a current NPTC Certificate. All tree works to be carried out by an 'Arboricultural Association' approved contractor known to work in accordance BS3998:1989 'Recommendations for Tree Work'.

6.1.3 Any tree removal or management should avoid the nesting bird season, between 1st March and 31st August (inclusive), or following a nesting bird check by an appropriately qualified ornithologist during the nesting season. This check must take place no more than 24 hours before the commencement of works and works must not take place if it would affect a nest. If during clearance, a nest which is in use is discovered, no works may occur which would harm the nest until it is no longer in use.

6.1.4 Retained trees will be protected through the construction phase for the adjacent residential development.

Proposed grassland

6.1.5 Grassland areas to be re-established and maintained as species rich and wildflower grassland areas of high biodiversity, creating ecologically valuable meadow areas of visual interest.

6.1.6 The following measures should be undertaken during the establishment phase and subsequently:

- Following the first cut of 5mm after reaching 100mm height, in the first year of establishment the grassland mix areas are to be mown regularly throughout the year to a height of 50mm, removing cuttings on each occasion. This will control annual weeds and help maintain balance between faster growing grasses and slower developing wildflowers;

- Areas of grassland damaged through trampling, scalping or excessive annual weed growth to be reseeded with the same original mix from mid-April to early May or in September. The ground to be adequately prepared prior to seeding;

- In Year 2 and subsequently, cut meadow grassland twice per year, once in August to a height of 50mm, after flowering, and then once in February to early March (or in late autumn / winter) to a height of 75mm, using a scythe, strimmer or tractor mounted mower. Arisings to be left to dry and shed seed for 1-7 days, before raking off and removed immediately from Site;
- Carefully dig out or spot treat any residual undesirable weed species;
- Pedestrian pathways are to be kept open by strimming twice a year during spring and summer, during warm conditions, so that any reptiles present will move out of the way;
- Ensure grassland is free from litter.
- Arisings to be gathered and used to bolster hibernacula.

Proposed native trees and shrubs

6.1.7 Areas of new and young trees and shrubs are detailed on Drawing B20005.FIGURE_05. These include bare root transplants, typically 60-90cm height and some feathered trees. Transplants to be planted at 1.5m centres in a mixed matrix of species and in pits c 300x 300 x300mm in size. Transplants to have excavated Site soil thoroughly mixed with 8 litres of peat free tree compost and replaced round the routes on planting. Feathered trees to be planted in 600 x600 x 600mm pits with 20 litres of incorporated tree compost.

6.1.8 Planting to be undertaken during frost free weather between December and February. Transplants to be protected by a suitable biodegradable shrub shelter (Tubex or other approved) to 600mm height and 130-160mm diameter and secured to a timber post from 25 x 25mm pressure treated sawn timber with suitable cable ties.

6.1.9 Each plant to have a biodegrade jute mulch mat sized 600 x 600mm suitably pegged to the ground to control competition for grassland and weeds.

6.1.10 After planting is completed each new plant station is to be inspected and maintained every three months during the 5-year establishment period. Operations to include:

- Removal of weeds from shrub shelters and surrounding mulch mat.
- Refirm plants, mulch mats and shelters as required.
- Replace any plants with plants of the same size and species (that have died or are substantially diseased/died or been vandalized in the next planting season (December-February). Replacements shall have the same supports and mulch mats as in the original plating as described above.
- An application of fertilizer is required in Year 5. Fertilizers will be applied as Sierrablen Flora or other approved slow-release fertilizer at a rate of 75g per sq m.
- Herbicide treatment three times per year in May, July and September during the five-year establishment maintenance period reducing to 1 by Year 5.

Proposed standard tree planting

6.1.11 New standard trees are to be planted in pits c 900x 900 x 600mm in size. New trees to have excavated Site soil thoroughly mixed with 40 litres of peat free tree compost and replaced around the roots on planting. Trees to be supported by a short stout softwood stake secured by a flexible tree tie and adjustable rubber block. Trees to have a spiral tree guard added to the base. Trees to be bare rooted and planting to be undertaken during frost free weather between December and February.

6.1.12 After planting is completed each tree to be inspected and maintained four times a year during the 5 years establishment period. Operations to include:

- Formative pruning to maintain their shape and remove any dead wood, crossing branches and suckers. Pruning operations must not affect the vertical growth or spread of the establishing trees;
- All vandalised, damaged, dead, dying or diseased trees are to be replaced in the immediate following planting season for the duration of the five year establishment maintenance period;

- Inspection four times a year in April, July, September and December, re-firming and adjusting ties where necessary and ensuring trees are vertical and not constricted. Check and adjust mulch mats. In Year 5, tree stakes should be carefully removed if trees have established sufficiently to support themselves with stakes disposed of to a licensed waste facility for recycling;
- An application of fertilizer is required in Year 5. Fertilizers will be applied as Sierrablen Flora or other approved slow-release fertilizer at a rate of 75g per sq m; and
- Herbicide treatment three times per year in May, July and September during the five-year establishment maintenance period reducing to 1 by Year 5.
- At five years the Lime trees along the dry channel should be inspected to determine if they are established enough to be pollarded, with all Lime tree trunks taller 2m in order to pollard all trees in the same year. The trunk should be supporting 3-5 branches. Pollarding should be undertaken in late winter to early spring by a trained arborist.

Proposed orchard

6.1.13 Due to their high amenity value, ensure fruit trees are well maintained and vigorous, and any dead or diseased, damaged or vandalised specimens are identified and removed immediately and replaced in the following planting season in accordance with the original specification. Maintain as follows:

6.1.14 The Managing Agency shall allow for adequate watering in of all newly planted fruit trees and keep the plant material well-watered to achieve field capacity as necessary during the five-year establishment maintenance period to maintain their vigour. During the five-year establishment maintenance period watering should also be via the planting pit. The need for trees to be watered shall be assessed by the Managing Agency to ensure that trees thrive. Care must be taken not to over water trees as this may kill them;

- ensure tree stakes are present, intact and functioning appropriately initially twice yearly in April and September during the five-year establishment maintenance period. Refirm stakes, replace stakes and ties if damaged or missing, refix and adjust ties as required;
- all fruit trees are to be pruned, every five years, to encourage fruit production with removal of any unwanted, dead, diseased or crossing branches and suckers, making a clean cut immediately above a budding point in the direction required of the new shoot;
- fruit trees to be maintained at a height of 2-3m height to retain the prominence of the listed barns;
- fruit trees should be pruned during the winter months to avoid the fruiting season;
- top up bark mulch each year to depth of 75mm;
- in Year 5, tree stakes should be carefully removed or when sufficiently established to support themselves and disposed of to a licensed waste site for recycling if possible;
- an application of fertilizer is required in Year 5. Fertilizers will be applied as Sierrablen Flora or other approved slow-release fertilizer at a rate of 75g per sq m; and
- spot herbicide treatment three times per year in April, July and September during the five-year establishment maintenance period reducing to 1 by Year 5.

Proposed native hedgerow

6.1.15 New native hedgerows are proposed adjacent to Water Lane and to the south and east of the proposed development adjacent to the proposed public access route and Mutton Lane.

6.1.16 Plants to be planted as a double staggered row, 0.6m between rows and 0.40mm between plants in the rows, in a trench dug 600mm wide and 300mm deep. 8 litres of peat free compost to be well incorporated added per sqm to the excavated Site soil. All transplants to have a spiral guard supported by a bamboo cane.

6.1.17 The aim is for the new native hedgerow to establish into a compact, continuous informal shaped hedge well maintained to a height of 1.5m after biennial cutting. Maintenance action to include:

- Ensure hedgerow area is free from litter.
- Ensure maintenance activities avoid disturbance to nesting birds (March-August).

- Hedge to be trimmed in the second year of the establishment period and biannually thereafter to encourage bushy growth.
- The base of the hedge line and trees will be kept weed free, for a width of one metre. The hedge line will be kept clear of undesirable species, by using an approved trans-located herbicide at a rate of three applications per year initially reducing to once at the end of the five-year period.
- An application of fertilizer is required to the hedge-line in year 5. Fertilizers will be applied as Sierrablen Flora or other approved slow-release fertilizer at a rate of 75g per sq m.
- All vandalised, damaged, dead, dying or diseased plants to be replaced after each growing season following planting for a period of five years.
- Biodegradable spiral guards to hedgerow to be checked at each maintenance visit (April, July, September and December) to ensure they are present and functioning effectively.

Proposed species-rich wetland grassland

6.1.18 Establish and maintain water-tolerant meadow grassland area within the proposed Nailbourne channel of high biodiversity value, that is attractive to wildlife as well as visually attractive.

6.1.19 The following measures should be undertaken during the establishment phase and subsequently:

- The wetland grassland should be mown regularly in the first year of establishment to a height of 40-60mm, cuttings should be removed. After the first year, wetland grass shall be cut once a year in August to a height of 50mm and all arisings removed from Site and composted to reduce soil nutrient levels and promote botanical diversity. The areas will be maintained to provide a weed-free, healthy grass, free of litter, debris and leaves.
- All nuisance weed species growing within the grass sward shall be removed through carefully digging out or selective herbicide application to spot treat any residual perennial weeds such as dock and thistle.
- Inlets and outlets of channel to be kept clear of obstructions.

Non-native invasive species

6.1.20 The area of the Site where Japaneese Knotweed is being treated should continue to be inspected and managed as per the JHD Ecological Site report and Management Plan 2024 (See Appendix 5).

Ecological enhancements

6.1.21 Bird boxes will be inspected annually between October and January (outside the nesting season), for signs of wear and tear and security. During the inspection, all nest debris will be removed and any vegetation that may be obstructing entrances cut back. Any boxes found to be damaged will be replaced by ones of the same type.

6.1.22 Bat boxes will be inspected annually by a suitably experienced ecologist in January or February. Inspection will involve removing debris and droppings from inside the boxes and checking for damage. Any missing or damaged boxes will be replaced with new boxes of the same type. The removal of any damaged bat box shall only occur following confirmation that no bat roosts are present by a licensed ecologist.

6.1.23 Habitat piles (hibernacula) will be maintained as effective habitat by the occasional addition of suitable woody arisings from soft landscape maintenance operations.

6.2 Years 6-10

Existing trees

6.2.1 Important Note: All existing trees on the Site are within the Ospringe Conservation Area and are therefore protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990. Swale Borough Council will need to be notified of any required works on the existing trees (with a diameter exceeding 75mm) on the Site, 6 weeks before work is carried out unless an exception applies.

- Existing trees will provide immediate structure, maturity and biodiversity opportunities. Trees are to be regularly inspected to ensure the health and safety for users:
- Qualified personnel (tree surgeon or arboriculturist) to inspect the trees every other year and after storm events to ensure the trees are in a healthy and safe condition. The ivy on the trees should be monitored at this time to ensure the trees do not succumb.
- Any works to be undertaken in accordance with 'Arboricultural Works 'in section 4. Any tree removal or management should avoid the nesting bird season, between 1st March and 31st August (inclusive), or following a nesting bird check by an appropriately qualified ornithologist during the nesting season. This check must take place no more than 24 hours before the commencement of works and demolition or clearance would not take place if it would affect a nest. If during clearance a nest which is in use is discovered, no works may occur which would harm the nest until it is no longer in use.

Proposed grassland

6.2.2 Grassland areas to be maintained as species rich and wildflower grassland areas of high biodiversity, creating ecologically valuable meadow areas of visual interest, while also ensuring continued pedestrian access to grass paths.

6.2.3 Existing grassland within the Site is to be managed to promote its suitability as a receptor site for existing reptile populations present within the development area, while also ensuring continued pedestrian access. Management should occur as follows:

- Cut grassland twice per year, once in mid-late July after flowering to c30-50mm and then once in October or November to a height of 75mm. Arisings to be removed during mowing and disposed of appropriately. The areas will be maintained to provide a weed-free, healthy grass, free of litter, debris and leaves.
- For 1m at base of hedge wildflower areas will be cut no more frequently than every 3 years on a rotational basis to provide habitat for hedgehogs.
- Carefully dig out or spot treat any residual nuisance weeds.
- Cut paths as required through grassland to maintain max height of 75mm. If paths are sufficiently worn by use, then cutting is not required. Arisings to be gathered and used to bolster hibernacula.

Proposed native trees and shrubs

6.2.4 Continue to ensure tree and shrub areas are well maintained and vigorous and establish true form and provide nesting and food source opportunities.

- Ensure planting area is free from litter, and time maintenance activities to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.
- Shrubs to be trimmed, if necessary, to encourage bushy natural growth.
- The base of the shrub area will be kept weed free, for a width of one metre.

Proposed standard tree planting

6.2.5 Continue to ensure trees are well maintained and vigorous and establish true form and provide nesting and food source opportunities.

- All trees to be inspected annually.

- Trees to pruned as required to maintain their shape and remove any dead or damaged wood, crossing branches and suckers. Pruning operations must not affect the vertical growth or spread of the establishing trees.
- If it is necessary for trees to have stakes retained beyond Year 5, the removal of stakes will take place when the tree are self-supporting with stakes disposed of to a licensed waste facility for recycling.
- Lime trees along the dry channel to be pollarded by trained arborist annually in winter to early spring. If trees were not considered to be established enough in year 5 to begin pollarding, they should be inspected annually to determine trunks are above 2m in height and supporting 3-5 branches to begin pollarding schedule. Pollarding to then occur every 3-5 years thereafter.

Proposed orchard

6.2.6 Continue to ensure trees are well maintained and vigorous and establish true form and provide nesting and food source opportunities.

- All trees to be pruned, once every five years to encourage fruiting with removal of any dead, diseased or damaged wood, crossing branches and suckers.
- Fruit trees should be pruned during the winter months to avoid the fruiting season.
- Trees should be maintained at 2-3m in height.

Proposed native hedgerow

6.2.7 The native hedgerow located adjacent to Water Lane and to the south and east of the proposed development to be maintained to a height of 1.5-1.8m height to maintain views into the Site.

- Ensure hedges are free from litter, and time maintenance activities to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.
- Hedges to be trimmed every other year.

Proposed species rich wetland grassland

6.2.8 Establish and maintain water-tolerant meadow grassland area within the proposed Nailbourne channel of high biodiversity value, that is attractive to wildlife as well as visually attractive.

- Wetland shall be cut in July. Grass will be cut to a height of 50mm and all arisings removed and composted to prevent an increase in nutrient levels.
- Inlets and outlets of channel to be kept clear of obstructions

Non-native invasive species

6.2.9 Japanese Knotweed management going forward should be as per the JHD Ecological Site report and Management Plan 2024 (See Appendix 5). Once a completion certificate has been issued to the landowner, the area can be assessed for future grassland meadow management.

Ecological enhancements

6.2.10 Beyond five years, the initial management plan should be reviewed. If no further monitoring of bat, bird or dormouse boxes is considered necessary for this Site, then no continued management would be required.

6.2.11 Hibernacula will be maintained as effective habitat by the occasional addition of suitable woody arisings from soft landscape maintenance operations.

7 Work Schedule for securing biodiversity enhancement

	Years (Number of Visits)									
Description of Works	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Existing Trees										
Inspect trees for health and safety reasons	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-
Inspect trees for health and safety reasons after storm damage	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
Proposed Meadow Grassland										
Cut main grassland areas in August and late Autumn/winter	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Collect arisings and remove to tip/ecopile	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cut defined grass paths through grassland areas	2	2	2	2	2	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
Grass repairs	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
Dig out or spot treat weeds	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
Litter pick	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Proposed native trees and shrubs										
Weed control by spot treatment within planting areas	3	3	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-
Re-firming trees, shelters mulch mats and stakes, ensuring trees and shrubs are vertical and firm	4	4	4	4	Remove shelters	-	-	-	-	-
Replacement planting of dead, diseased or vandalised plants	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Application of fertilizer	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Trimming	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1
Litter pick	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Proposed standard tree planting including orchard trees										

	Years (Number of Visits)									
Description of Works	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Watering (New and Replacement Planting)	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	-	-	-	-	-
Spot Application of Herbicide to base	3	3	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	-
Pruning	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Replacement Planting	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	-	-	-	-	-
Re-firming trees and stakes, ensuring tree is vertical and firm	2	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Application of fertilizer	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Checking Stakes and ties	4	4	4	4	Remove	-	-	-	-	-
Top up bark mulch	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Pollarding to lime trees along dry channel	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Proposed native hedgerow										
Weed control by spot treatment within planting areas	3	3	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-
Re-firming plants, ensuring shrubs are vertical and firm	4	4	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-
Replacement planting of dead, diseased or vandalised plants	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Trimming – Native hedge every other year	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1
Application of fertilizer	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Checking spiral guards and shrub shelters	4	4	4	4	Remove	-	-	-	-	-
Top up bark mulch	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Spot application of herbicide/hand weed of undesirable species	3	3	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-
Proposed species-rich wetland grassland										

	Years (Number of Visits)									
Description of Works	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Cutting and removal of grass clippings	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Grass Repairs	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	-	-	-	-	-
Dig out or spot treat	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
Clearance of inlets and outlets	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
Information Boards										
Repair and repaint as required	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Ecological Enhancements										
Addition of suitable woody arisings to hibernacula.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Check condition of bird boxes and clean. Replace if missing or damaged.	1	1	1	1	1	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
Check condition of bat boxes and clean by licensed ecologist and replace if missing or damaged.	1	1	1	1	1	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required
Check condition of dormouse boxes and clean by licensed ecologist. Replace if missing or damaged.	1	1	1	1	1	As required	As required	As required	As required	As required

8 Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities

8.1.1 Shepherd Neame Limited or a subsequent owner of the Site is responsible for implementing the ecology and landscape works, including appointing one or more landscape and or arboricultural contractor.

Appendix 1

Legislative and policy context

There are a number of pieces of legislation, regulations and policies specific to ecology which underpin this assessment. These may be applicable at a European, National or Local level. References to legislation are given as a summary for information and should not be construed as legal advice.

Birds Directive

The European Community Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC), normally known as the Birds Directive, sets out general rules for the conservation of all naturally occurring wild birds, their nests, eggs and habitats. It was superseded by the 'new' Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) which generally updated the previous directive.

These requirements are interpreted into English law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) with regard to protection of birds, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 with regard to the registration and regulation of Special Protection Areas.

Habitats Directive

The European Community Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC), normally known as the Habitats Directive, aims to protect the European Union's biodiversity. It requires member states to provide strict protection for specified flora and fauna (i.e. European Protected Species) and the registration and regulation of Special Areas of Conservation.

These requirements are interpreted into English law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 with regard to European Protected Species and the registration and regulation of Special Areas of Conservation.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 interpret the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive into English and Welsh law. For clarity, the following paragraphs consider the case in England only, with Natural England given as the appropriate nature conservation body. In Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales is the appropriate nature conservation body.

Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation are defined in the regulations as 'European Sites'. The Regulations regulate the management of land within European Sites, requiring land managers to have the consent of Natural England before carrying out management. Byelaws may also be made to prevent damaging activities and if necessary land can be compulsorily purchased to achieve satisfactory management.

The Regulations define competent authorities as public bodies or statutory undertakers. Competent authorities are required to make an appropriate assessment of any plan or project they intend to permit or carry out, if the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect upon a European Site. The permission may only be given if the plan or project is ascertained to have no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European Site. If the competent authority wishes to permit a plan or project despite a negative assessment, imperative reasons of over-riding public interest must be demonstrated, and there should be no alternative to the scheme. The permissions process would involve the Secretary of State and the option of consulting the European Commission. In practice, there will be very few cases where a plan or project is permitted despite a negative assessment. This means that a planning application has to be assessed by the Local Planning Authority, based on information provided by the applicant, and the assessment must either decide that it is likely to have no significant effect on a European Site or ascertain that there is no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European Site.

Government policy is for Ramsar Sites (wetlands of global importance) to be treated as if they were European Sites within the planning process.

Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment is required in certain instances under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Regulation 63 says that:

> *63.— (1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which-*
>
> *(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site or a European offshore marine Site*

(either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Site,

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that Site in view of that Site's conservation objectives.

(2) A person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation shall provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable them to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required.

(3) The competent authority shall for the purposes of the assessment consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority may specify.

(4) They must also, if they consider it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if they do so, they must take such steps for that purpose as they consider appropriate.

(5) In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 64 (considerations of overriding public interest), the competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European Site or the European offshore marine Site (as the case may be).

(6) In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the Site, the authority must have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which they propose that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given.

The competent authority is typically the local planning authority. The appropriate assessment contains the information the council requires for the purposes of its assessment under the Habitat Regulations.

The Habitat Regulations also are applicable to local authority land use plans and policies. If a policy or plan is likely to have a significant effect upon a European Site, the permission may only be given if the policy or plan is ascertained to have no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European Site. This approach gives rise to a hierarchy of plans each with related appropriate assessments. For example, the appropriate assessment of a Regional Spatial Strategy will affect policies within a Core Strategy, which will then need its own appropriate assessment, and so on.

European Protected Species

European Protected Species of animals are given protection from deliberate capture, injury, killing, disturbance or egg taking/capture. Their breeding Sites or resting places are also protected from damage or destruction, which does not have to be deliberate. A number of species are listed as European Protected Species, with those most likely to be considered in planning applications being bats, dormouse, great crested newt and otter. Natural England may give a licence for actions that are otherwise illegal, subject to them being satisfied on the three tests of no alternative, over-riding public interest, and maintenance of the species in favourable condition.

European Protected Species of plant are also listed and given protection. These species are generally very rare and unlikely to be present in proposed development Sites.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 has been amended many times, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It contains provisions for the notification and regulation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and for protected species.

The Regulations regulate the management of land within Sites of Special Scientific Interest, requiring land managers to have the consent of Natural England before carrying out management.

All public bodies are defined as 'S28G' bodies, which have a duty to further the nature conservation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the undertaking of their functions. In practice, this prevents planning applications being permitted if they would harm Sites of Special Scientific Interest, as it would be a breach of that duty.

The Act makes it an offence intentionally to kill, injure, or take any wild bird, take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird, while that nest is in use or being built, or take or destroy an egg of any wild bird. Special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences of disturbing these birds at their nests, or their dependent young.

The Act makes it an offence intentionally to kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places. Some species have lesser protection under this Act, for example white-clawed crayfish, common frog and toads are only protected from sale, and reptile species, other than smooth snake and sand lizard, are protected from intentional killing or injury, but they are not protected from disturbance and their habitat is not protected. It is also an offence intentionally to pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated July September 2023 is at the time of writing the most up to date version of the NPPF and replaces previous Government Policy in relation to nature conservation and planning.

Chapter 15 paragraph 174 a) seeks to protect and enhance (inter alia) sites of biodiversity in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. Paragraph 174 (d) says planning policies and decisions should, minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
Paragraphs 170 and 180 require that plans Local Plans aim should protect and enhance biodiversity by:

- Identifying, mapping and safeguarding components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated Sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- Promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications Local Planning Authorities should apply the following principles:

- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating it on an alternative Site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused,
- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the Site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraph 181 adds protection to candidate Sites of European or International importance (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar Sites) and also to those Sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats Sites, potential SPA, possible SAC listed or proposed Ramsar Sites.

Paragraph 182 clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats Site (i.e. a SAC, SPA, Ramsar or candidate Sites) is being planned or determined.

Government circular 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact Within the Planning System' referenced ODPM 06/2005 has not been replaced and remains valid. It sets out the legislation regarding designated and undesignated Sites and protected species and describes how the planning system should take account of that legislation. It does however pre-date the NERC Act 2006 (see below), which includes a level of protection for a further list of habitats and species regardless of whether they are on designated Sites or elsewhere.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

This Act includes a list of habitats and species of principal importance in England. Local Authorities are required to consider the needs of these habitats and species when making decisions, such as on planning application.

Local Planning Authority's planning policy

The Local Planning Authority will have policies relating to biodiversity conservation.

Species Legislation

The following table provides an overview of legislation with regard to species.

Protected Species	Legislation			
	Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981	**The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017**	**Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006**	**Protection of Badgers Act, 1992**
Plants (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓[1]	✓	
Invertebrates (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓[2]	✓	
White-clawed crayfish	✓		✓	
Great crested newt, natterjack toad, pool frog	✓	✓	✓	
Other amphibians	✓[3]		✓	
Sand lizard, smooth snake	✓	✓[4]	✓	
Other reptiles	✓[5]		✓	
Breeding birds	✓	✓	✓	
Wintering birds (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓	✓	
Bats	✓	✓	✓	
Dormouse	✓	✓	✓	
Water vole	✓		✓	
Otter	✓	✓	✓	
Badger				✓

[1] Nine species present in the UK, with very specialised habitat requirements, are European Protected Species.

[2] Fisher's estuarine moth, large blue butterfly and lesser whirlpool ram's-horn snail are European Protected Species.

[3] The four other native amphibian species (smooth and palmate newts, common frog and common toad) are only protected against trade under this act.

[4] Smooth snake and sand lizard are European Protected Species.

[5] The four other native reptile species (common lizard, slow worm, grass snake and adder) are protected against intentional killing, injury and trade under this act.

Appendix 2

INDICATIVE PLANTING SCHEDULE

Trees			
Avenue trees following dry watercourse			
Species	**Common name**	**Size**	**Size**
Tilia x europaea	Lime	Heavy standard	12-14cm girth
Standard trees			
Acer campestre	Field maple	Feathered	1.5-1.8 m height
Juglans regia	Walnut	Heavy standard	12-14cm girth
Platanus x hispanica	London plane	Heavy standard	12-14cm girth
Prunus avium 'Plena'	Native cherry	Standard	8 -10 cm girth
Prunus padus	Bird cherry	Standard	8 -10 cm girth
Quercus robur	Oak	Standard	8 -10 cm girth
Orchard trees			
Malus 'Laxton Superb'	Apple	Light standard	6-8 cm girth
Pyrus Conference	Pear	Light standard	6-8 cm girth

Native tree and shrub mix				
Species	Common name	Size	Size – cm girth	%
Acer campestre	Field maple	Transplant	60-90cm height	20
Betula pendula	Birch	Transplant	60-90cm height	15
Corylus avellana	Hazel	Transplant	60-90cm height	20
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	Transplant	60-90cm height	20
Populus tremula	Aspen	Transplant	60-90cm height	5
Prunus avium	Native cherry	Feathered	1.5-1.8m height	10
Salix Caprea	Goat willow	Transplant	60-90cm height	10

Hedgerows				
Native hedgerow mix to site perimeter				
Species	**Common name**	**Size**	**Size – cm girth**	**%**
Acer campestre	Field maple	Heavy standard	12-14cm girth	30
Corylus avellana	Hazel	Transplant	60-90cm height	30
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	Transplant	60-90cm height	40
Yew hedge to courtyard				
Taxus baccata	Yew		45-60cm height	100
Hawthorn hedge to rear/side Units 5-7				
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	Transplant	60-90cm height	100

Shrubs and climbers				
Species	**Common name**	**Pot**	**Size – height**	**Density**
Cornus alba 'Sibirica'	Dogwood	3L	45-60	3
Hedera helix	Ivy	1L	30-45	5
Lavandula Hidcote	Lavender	2L	20-30	5
Lavandula vera	Lavender	2L	20-30	5
Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle	5L	60-90	/
Rosa Albertine	Climbing Rose	10L	45-60	/
Rosa Constance Spry	Climbing Rose	10L	45-60	/
Rosa rugosa	Shrub rose			2
Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary	3L	20-30	3

Meadow Mixes
Emorsgate Meadow EM5 for Loamy soils (to majority of site)
Emorsgate Meadow EM8 for wetlands – along dry channel
Hard wearing amenity mix with rye grass and fescues to footpath routes and road verges

Key

Trees
- Existing tree to be retained
- Proposed standard trees
- Proposed orchard trees

Shrubs
- Proposed low/medium height shrub planting
- Proposed mixed native shrub planting

Hedgerows
- Proposed mixed native species hedgerow
- Proposed single species native hedgerow

Grass
- Proposed mown grass
- Proposed water tolerant grass/meadow mix to channel
- Proposed wildflower meadow

Surfacing
- Proposed stable block paving to vehicular courtyard and mouth of drive eg. Marshalls Tegula
- Proposed Riven paving to pathways and patio areas
- Proposed tar spray and chip to access drive
- Proposed cobbles to courtyard

Boundaries
- Proposed privacy screen between rear plots
- Proposed retaining wall

LEMP Area

- LEMP Area
- Excluded Area (Planning Application 22/504036/FUL)
- Proposed area to be transferred to Faversham Town Council Area (approx.)
- Location of proposed Information Boards comprising historical imagery and text to provide context to the landscape restoration scheme

Based on Landscape Proposals Drawing B20005.FIGURE_05 BY TLP.

Letter	Revision	By	Date

thelandscapepartnership

Project	Queen Court Farm, Ospringe
Drawing	Landscape Proposals with LEMP Area
Status	Planning
Job No.	B20005
Dwg. No.	701
Scale	1:1000@A3
Drawn	EF
Checked	GF
Date	07.02.2024

Bedford 01234 261315
Woodbridge 01394 380509
London 020 3092 4141
Norwich 01603 230777

North

Appendix 3

INDICATIVE PLANTING SCHEDULE

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Lonicera periclymenum	Honeysuckle	5L	60-90	/
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Letter Revision	By	Date
A - Updates according to latest building layouts	AF	26-09-23

thelandscapepartnership
landscape architecture urban design environmental planning

Bedford	01234 261315
Woodbridge	01394 380509
London	020 3092 4141
Norwich	01603 230777

Project
Queen Court Farm, Ospringe

Drawing
Landscape Proposals

Status
Planning

Job No.	B20005
Dwg. No.	FIGURE_05
Scale	1:1000@A3
Drawn	EF
Checked	JB
Date	26.09.23

North

Appendix 4

The grassland will be subject to infrequent management, which will promote the growth of a tussocky sward as this constitutes favourable reptile habitat. Pedestrian access paths will be managed more intensely to ensure maintained public access through the area.

Reptile hibernacula will be provided in the grassland and bolstered with arisings collected from soft landscaping maintenance operations. These will create a varied vegetation structure and provide refuge, basking areas and suitable hibernation sites for reptiles. They will further provide refuge for saproxylic invertebrates such as stag beetle. Grass immediately surrounding these will be kept unmanaged.

New native tree and shrub mix planting will improve nesting and foraging opportunities for birds and foraging opportunities for bats in the area.

Bat and bird boxes provided amongst retained vegetation or newly erected buildings will provide improved nesting / roosting opportunities for these species. New areas of vegetation will also provide new foraging resources.

KEY:

- REPTILE REFUGIA
- SCHWEGLER 2GR BIRD BOX
- SCHWEGLER 1B BIRD BOX
- WOODSTONE ARTIFICIAL HOUSE MARTIN NEST
- LARGE MULTI-CHAMBER BAT BOX
- CHILLON WOODSTONE BAT BOX

N

Based on the Landscape Proposals - Drawing B20005.FIGURE_05 produced by The Landscape Partnership

ECOLOGYSOLUTIONS
Part of the ES Group

Cokenach Estate
Barkway | Royston
Hertfordshire | SG8 8DL

+44(0)1763 848084
east@ecologysolutions.co.uk
ecologysolutions.co.uk

LAND AT QUEEN COURT FARM, WATER LANE, OSPRINGE, KENT

PLAN ECO1:
SPECIES ENHANCEMENT LOCATIONS

Rev: A

Feb 2024