Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

53A Warminster Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 4DQ

March 2025

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Project: 53A Warminster Road, South Norwood, London, SE25 4DQ

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Prepared by: Andrew May | Director

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1.0 Non-technical summary

1.1 This biodiversity-enhanced strategy has been prepared to discharge a planning condition.

1.2 Biodiversity improvements include installing swift bricks and bat boxes; a hedgehog strategy; creation of log piles and a sensitive lighting strategy.

2.0 Introduction

Purpose of the report

2.1 The biodiversity enhancement strategy aims to ensure it is successfully established and functioning as designed. The objectives include the following:

- Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
- Detailed designs to achieve the stated objectives;
- Location of the proposed enhancement measures;
- Persons responsible for implementing the enhanced measures;
- Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance.

Qualifications and Competence of the Author

2.2 The ecologist has over 25 years of conservation experience. They are the founder of a new conservation charity and previously worked as Head of Conservation for a Wildlife Trust, Director of Studies for the Field Studies Council and Course Director and Lecturer for the University of Essex and Cambridge.

2.3 Respected organisations have nationally recognised the ecologist and they have been awarded various fellowships for their *outstanding or significant contribution* to these disciplines, including conservation and biodiversity for the delivery of landscape-scale conservation projects.

2.4 They are currently on the external advisory board for the University of Essex and represent the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management at the University of Southampton, judge national ecological projects and are an ecological expert for the Southwood Foundation.

3.0 Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures

3.1 To enhance biodiversity following the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and ensure a net gain in biodiversity.

Swift Bricks

3.2 Swifts are currently on the UK Red List of conservation concern as their numbers have declined dramatically due to lost habitat. A recommendation of 1 brick per 2 dwellings will allow for the swifts colonial needs. Sparrows, who are also a red-listed species, can utilise these bricks as well. Sparrows are social birds and observation of their nesting habits has shown that they often prefer swift bricks over sparrow terraces. [1] Installing swift bricks will provide space for both species and is a cost-effective ecological enhancement. 1 will be installed in this development.

3.3 This location will provide sufficient opportunities for swifts and sparrows to feed. Swifts have a large foraging radius and feed on insects, whereas sparrows primarily eat seeds.

3.4 The nest bricks are included within the framework of the build and will be positioned on the east-facing wall of the proposed development.

3.5 The bricks will be installed as close as practical under the eaves roofline at least 4m above ground and not above windows or doors. A clear flightpath should be established, which should be achievable as the brick is not directly blocked by buildings. Swift bricks require very little maintenance as swifts only bring in a small amount of nesting material which is then reduced by invertebrates over winter and do not befoul the area.

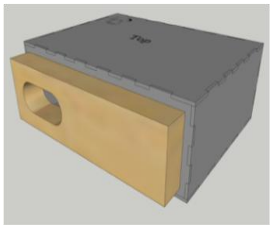
3.6 Swifts are gregarious birds that like to nest, feed and migrate in groups. They mate for life and like to return to the same nesting site year after year, so having these nest bricks as a permanent fixture made with durable materials will cater to this. Other small cavity-nesting birds may also use the bricks if not taken by swifts and sparrows, such as starlings.

<u>Recommended Proprietary Integral Swift Nest Bricks:</u>

[1] Swift Bricks the 'universal' nest brick, 2022



3.7 The "**Ibstock"** integral Swift nest brick is suitable for installing high up in gable ends where cavity insulation is not an issue. Still, if the cavity insulation width is adequate, they can be installed directly under the eaves on other elevations. Ensure that they are installed the right way up.



3.8 The **"S brick"** replaces a single brick and involves no cutting of adjacent bricks. Suitable for high up on gable ends where insulation is not required and can be fitted on other elevations where the cavity width allows for additional insulation. "S bricks" are obtainable from "Action for Swifts".

Bat Block Bat Brick

3.13 To address the lack of suitable roosting potential on this site, 2 Bat Block Bat Bricks will be introduced within the framework of the development to create roosting space for crevice-dwelling bats. These bricks shall be positioned on the south-facing wall.

3.14 Installing this Bat Block Bat Brick in a south-facing position will provide summer maternity roosting opportunities. The microclimate within a new roost is essential in increasing the chance of successful bat uptake. Sun exposure is critical to help bats retain body heat and keep young pups warm.

3.15 The Bat Block will be installed during the development, secured with mortar mix, and used as a main building component in place of a standard brick or block. It will be positioned at least 4m above ground level, in proximity to vegetation. It features a small entrance space that deters larger birds and predators. The Bat Block does not require maintenance as the design allows droppings to fall from the entrance.

Breeding Birds

3.16 All clearance work associated with the approved scheme shall be carried out outside the core bird breeding period, restricting works between the 1st of September and the 1st of March. However, suppose work must commence during the nesting season. In that case, a pre-

commencement inspection of the vegetation for active bird nests should be carried out by a qualified Ecologist 48 hours before any works start.

3.17 Work should be allowed to commence only if no active nests are present. If any active nests are present, they will be protected with a suitable buffer and vegetation left around the nest until chicks have fledged.

Bird Boxes

3.18 Bird boxes provide essential nesting opportunities for various bird species, particularly in urban environments where natural nesting sites may be scarce. Proper placement and maintenance of bird boxes can significantly enhance local biodiversity.

3.19 Bird boxes should be affixed to trees and houses in sheltered locations, ideally facing north or east to avoid the hottest sun and wettest winds. Position the boxes at least 2-5 meters above ground level to reduce the risk of predation. Ensure bird boxes are spaced adequately apart, typically at least 2 meters, to prevent competition and aggression between birds. Avoid placing boxes in direct sunlight or areas exposed to strong winds, and ensure they are slightly tilted forward to prevent rain from entering. Securely fix the boxes to trees using adjustable straps or to buildings using brackets, ensuring they are stable and safe.

3.20 Different bird species have specific nesting requirements. For small hole boxes, which are suitable for species such as blue tits and great tits, install boxes with a 25-28mm entrance hole. Open-fronted boxes are ideal for species like robins and wrens and should be placed in dense vegetation or sheltered spots to provide extra protection. Sparrow terraces, which consist of boxes with multiple compartments, should be installed to support colony-nesting species like house sparrows.

3.22 Regular inspection and maintenance of bird boxes are crucial. Annually clean out bird boxes in the autumn after the breeding season to remove old nesting material and parasites. Regularly inspect bird boxes to ensure they remain secure and in good condition. Cleaning the boxes once a year promotes healthy nesting conditions and reduces the risk of disease.

Hedgehogs

3.23 Hedgehogs regularly occur in urban environments and more rural locations and may use

the site for foraging and shelter, with their main active period occurring between April and November. As a result, they can benefit from sympathetic habitat management, particularly in built-up areas.

3.24 Caution is needed in case of nesting hedgehogs when clearing the ground before development, particularly piles of deadwood or leaves and areas of long grass or dense vegetation. Areas should be cleared on rotation with scrub left to provide nesting habitat and cover. If this is not possible, piles of dead wood and brash piles can be created in other areas around the site to mitigate the removal of suitable nesting areas.

3.25 Hazards such as open holes, pits, ditches, ponds and drains should be covered over or fitted with ramps to allow for escape. Netting should be kept off the ground to avoid entanglement and any slack netting tied up.

3.26 Road crossing points will be provided at all entrances to the site. The crossings are provided at carriageway level with DDA-compliant dropped kerbs serving them from the pavements, such that the kerb around the site's boundary will not be a continuous barrier.

Hedgehog Strategy

3.27 To ensure hedgehogs can freely access the site and move between gardens and other green spaces, create 13x13cm holes at the base of fences and walls. These hedgehog highways allow hedgehogs to move safely in search of food, mates, and nesting sites. Implementing these access points is crucial for maintaining connectivity between habitats, which is essential for the survival and health of hedgehog populations.

3.28 These access holes should be evenly distributed along the site's boundary fences and walls to create a network of passageways for hedgehogs. Ensure that these holes remain unobstructed and regularly check them for any blockages or damage.

Log Piles

3.29 Deadwood is a valuable resource for a range of flora and fauna. Wildlife associated with wood decay is very diverse and of exceptional value. Deadwood occurs in various forms – varying in size, in a dry or wet place, sun or shade, standing or fallen. Therefore, a wide range of deadwood should be retained for conservation.

3.30 The type of deadwood is valuable, ranging from fallen timber rotting from the outside with a short 'life' to standing wood rotting from the inside with a longer 'life'. In addition, the fauna supported by different tree species holds different fauna than others. The richest faunas tend to be associated with native broad-leaved tree species, which are long-lived and decay slowly. Oak is slow to decay, giving rise to many niches and diverse fauna whilst silver birch decays rapidly once dead.

3.31 The most straightforward rule about deadwood is that it should be left to undergo natural decay processes. Though any deadwood can be valuable, timber of a large diameter is essential – large dead timber is scarce.

3.32 The best location for deadwood is in partial shade. In addition, the deadwood should be placed in a suitable location that will not be disturbed to allow for flora and fauna colonisation. Some wood should be inserted into the ground and placed on top. The wood should be left as long as possible to allow for different decomposition rates and micro-climates and micro-habitats to develop. Timber's smaller short 'life' should be replaced when possible to continue the available resource.

3.33 1 log pile will be created onsite, one in the north-western corner under the pre-existing trees. This location will keep the log pile partially shaded and reduce disturbance compared to other potential locations on the plot, as it is away from the road and areas of foot traffic.

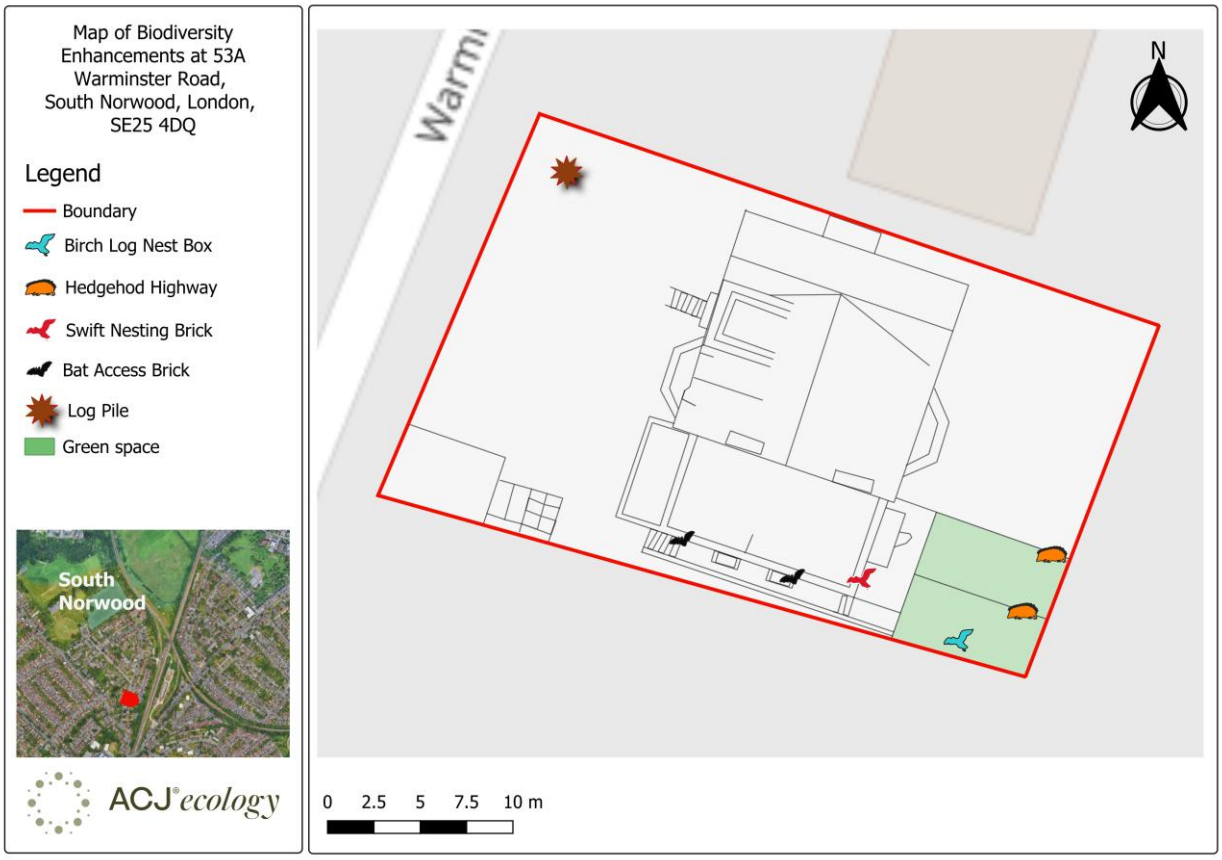
4.0 The person responsible for implementing the enhanced measures

4.1 The occupier will retain and manage the landscape management areas in perpetuity.

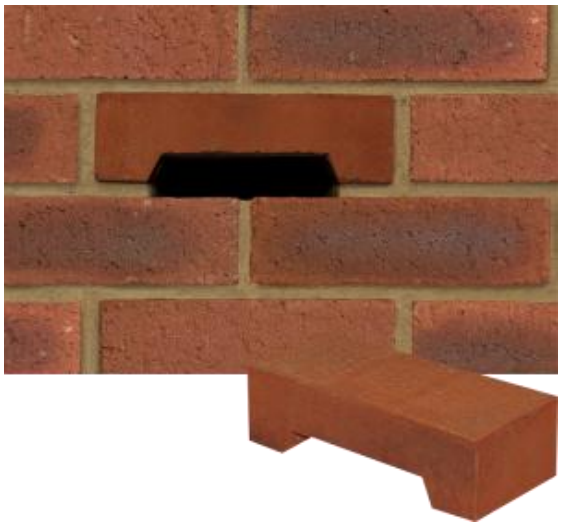
5.0 Ongoing Monitoring and Remedial Measures

5.1 The occupier will monitor the landscape management. This will include site visits and meetings with the contractor to ensure the work is carried out according to the specifications and schedules.

Appendix 1: Map showing location of biodiversity enhancements



Appendix 2: Red Ibstock Bat Access Brick



Appendix 3: Manthorpe Swift Nesting Brick



Appendix 4: National Trust Birch Log Nest Box (32mm Hole)



Appendix 5: Hedgehog Highway Hedgehog Gate Hedgehog Tunnel Hedgehog Fence Hole (Amazon)

