

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

November 2022

Coach Road Farm

Cut Lane

Kirkby

Knowsley

L33 3AJ

National Grid Ref: SJ45559739



Document Title	Biodiversity Enhancement Plan
Issue no.	1.1
Prepared for	Mr. B. Leonard
Prepared by	Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

Author	Mr. H. Mulligan Qualifying CIEEM
Reviewed by	Miss T. Hesketh
Review date	25/11/2022
Approved by	Mrs. K. Wilding CEnv MIEMA ACIEEM
Date of Issue	25/11/2022
Supporting Documents	Preliminary Roost Assessment (April 2022 – ADAS) Dusk Survey Results in Relation to Bats (September 2022 – Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd)

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Introduction

Coach Road Farm

The application site Coach Road Farm is located directly south of Cut Lane, south-east of Kirkby. The site consists of four derelict farm buildings, a small number of trees and a large pond immediately to the south. The surrounding habitat is distinctly rural, with expanses of arable farmland and agricultural fields, divided by country lanes, hedgerows and Knowsley Brook to the east.

During the application process, ADAS and Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd have been consulted and commissioned to undertake a number of ecological surveys and provide mitigation and enhancement strategies for the site.

For context the previous Ecological documents issues to date are as follows:

- **April 2022 – ‘Preliminary Roost Assessment’ – ADAS**
- **September 2022 – ‘Dusk Survey Results in Relation to Bats’ – Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd**

Local Policy

Policy CS8 of the Adopted Knowsley Local Plan, titled Green Infrastructure, echoes this national focus on preservation of biodiversity, stating:

1) Knowsley's existing Green Infrastructure and its beneficial functions will be protected, managed and/or enhanced, primarily to:

- a) Ensure more attractive and cleaner residential neighbourhoods;*
- b) Sustain and promote biodiversity (including designated sites, priority habitats and protected and endangered species) in accordance with importance and contribution to ecological networks;*
- c) Preserve the character and function of historic environments and valued landscapes;*
- d) Mitigate the effects of climate change and flood risk;*
- e) Mitigate air, water and noise pollution;*
- f) Provide local opportunities for sport, recreation and allotments; and*
- g) Provide sustainable transport linkages between residential neighbourhoods and easy access to employment and services.*

Point 5.87 delves further into the priorities of the council, and states:

The key priorities for natural assets and geology in the Liverpool City Region are:

- *To manage the natural assets better – to protect the integrity of nature sites of international importance, and to protect the city region's nature and geodiversity assets; and*
- *To make sure there is no net loss of these natural assets and to extend and enhance the city region's Ecological Network and natural assets.*

Proposals

Proposals for the scheme have been revised and now comprise the conversion of one former agricultural barn into a new dwelling with associated access. The application is still being determined, but following further consultation, MEAS have submitted a supplementary advice note KN22-034 dated 25th October 2022. This requires the applicant to submit additional information prior to approval; and proposes a number of conditions for inclusion should the LPA be minded to approve the application. Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd have been commissioned to prepare "site specific detailed mitigation / compensation proposals, including locations / specifications of proposed new nesting provision and a timetable of works, prior to determination", as per Paragraph 15 of the MEAS supplementary advice note. We have also included a biodiversity enhancement plan in order to adequately enhance the site to fulfil proposed **Conditions 15 and 17**, which state:

"15. Further observations of the barn buildings were completed in conjunction with the dusk bat surveys. No evidence of nesting by barn owls was identified, however roosting by barn owl was confirmed in Barn B. Outline barn owl mitigation/compensation proposals are provided in the dusk bat survey report, including provision of building/tree mounted nest boxes and new nesting provision within the converted buildings or a nearby structure. The outline measures are acceptable however I advise that site specific detailed mitigation/compensation proposals, including locations/specifications of proposed new nesting provision and a timetable of works, should be submitted for approval prior to determination.

17. The proposed development will result in the loss of bird breeding habitat. Including nesting/roosting sites for kestrel. Local Plan policy CS8 applies. To mitigate for this loss, details of bird nesting boxes (e.g. number, type and location on an appropriately scaled plan) that will be erected on the site should be provided to the Local Planning Authority for agreement. The following planning condition is required.

CONDITION

The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until details of bird boxes to include number, type and location on an appropriately scaled plan as well as timing of installation, has been provided for approval and implemented in accordance with those details. Nest boxes should include specific nesting provision for kestrel."

In addition, a Method Statement in relation to swallows has been provided within the document, in accordance with Condition 18 of the decision notice, which states:

"18. The proposed development will result in the loss of breeding habitat for swallow and Local Plan policy CS8 applies. Swallow are site faithful and to mitigate for this loss, the applicant must provide details of bird nesting boxes (e.g. number, type and location on an appropriately scaled plan) that will be erected on the site for agreement with the Council prior to commencement of works. The replacement nesting provision must be in place before the existing breeding habitats are obstructed, damaged or destroyed and swallows return. The following planning condition is required.

CONDITION

No development shall take place (including any demolition, ground works, site clearance) until a method statement for swallow has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the method statement shall include:

- *Avoidance measures to avoid harm to swallow;*
- *Extent and location of proposed swallow nesting provision; and*
- *Timing for implementation of replacement swallow nesting provision.”*

Proposed Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

A Biodiversity Enhancement Plan has been provided (see Figures 1-2), with recommendations in relation to barn owl, kestrel and swallow. It is additionally recommended that these enhancement measures are undertaken in tandem with native replanting where feasible; these native botanical species improve the value of a site for a wide variety of native wildlife through provision of food and shelter, whereas non-native species are frequently not used or are of lower value to our native species.

The plan comprises of the installation of one pole mounted barn owl nest box, one indoor barn owl nest box, one kestrel open nest box and six woodstone swallow nest bowls (or appropriate alternatives). This provision will suitably enhance the development site for birds.

Key	
Symbol	Legend
	Suitable pole mounted barn owl nest box (Total: 1 box)
	Indoor barn owl nest box (Total: 1 box)
	Kestrel open nest box (Total: 1 box)
	Woodstone Swallow Nest Bowl (Total: 6 bowls)

Figure 1: Proposed Biodiversity Enhancement Plan Key

Coach Road Farm, Cut Lane, Kirkby, Knowsley, L33 3AJ
Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

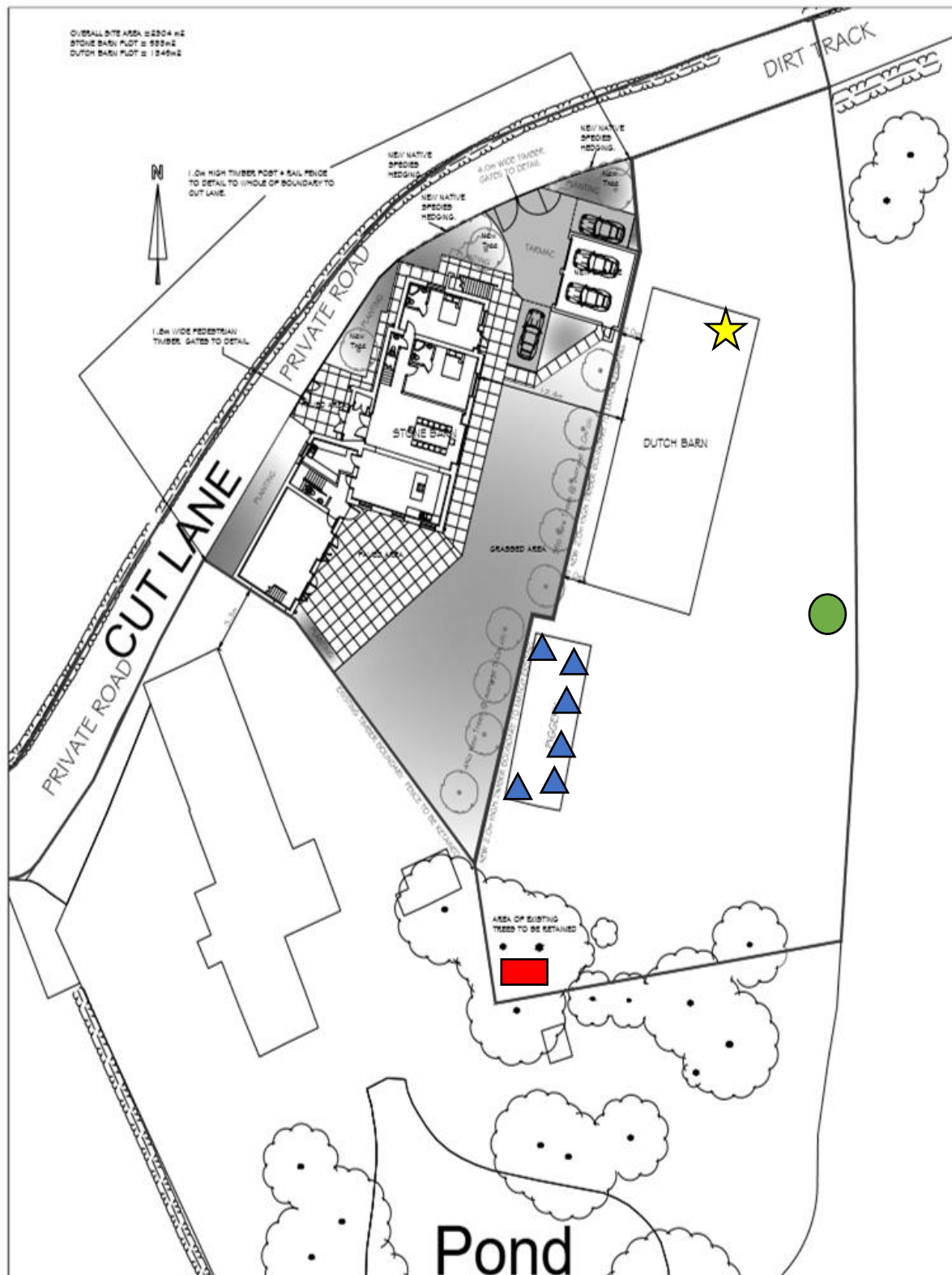


Figure 2: Biodiversity Enhancement Plan via proposed site plan

Timings

The proposed enhancement measures for birds, as indicated above, should be implemented prior to the breeding bird season, which is generally accepted as being within March – August inclusive, to avoid any impacts to nesting birds. All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests, whilst being built or containing eggs or dependent young, are protected from destruction, damage and disturbance under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is a punishable offence to interfere in any way with an active nest. As such, it is imperative that the mitigation measures are erected prior to this time period and are left undisturbed through the breeding season, unless they have been checked by a suitably qualified ecologist within 48 hours or less of any works which may have potential to disturb the nests.

Method Statement in relation to Swallow

The measures in relation to swallows within the biodiversity enhancement plan have been designed to fulfil condition 18 of the decision notice for this application, by way of providing adequate mitigation for the loss of a nesting habitat for this species. The timings section above is considered to apply also to this species. The measures should be implemented before the breeding bird season (and so within the period of October – February), in order to prevent any chance of impacts to swallows. Swallows are a migratory species and return annually from their wintering grounds in Africa to breed and raise their young in the UK. By undertaking the works outside of the breeding season when no swallows will be present at the site, the risk of impacts to this species can be entirely negated, and no adverse effects are predicted. With the implementation of the above timing measures, Condition 18 is considered to be fully discharged.

The contents of this document can be relied upon and have been presented in accordance with best practice guidance, an understanding of the site, and the extensive combined experience of the Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd team.

Best wishes,



Mr. H. Mulligan Qualifying CIEEM
Trainee Ecologist at Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd

Proposed – Enhancement for Birds

Barn Owl

Indoor Nest Box

The Barn Owl Trust's deep indoor Barn Owl nestbox is a safe home for owlets due to its 455mm (17¾") drop between the entrance-hole and inside floor. Designed to go inside a building where it is dry; **NOT** suitable for outdoor use.

Hand built to last, from environmentally friendly FSC-approved 9mm plywood.

Approximate size – 610mm x 510mm x 410mm (HxWxD)

Approximate weight – 14.7kg



For more information:

Pole Mounted Nest Box

A basic owl box should be built using rot-resistant or Tanalith E treated sheet material manufactured using a waterproof adhesive. The box should be covered with heavy duty roofing felt alongside waterproof sealant on all joints, and the front, back and sides must overhang the floor of the box.

The box must be mounted on a pole standing a minimum of 4.5 metres above the ground.

The box should be cleaned every two to three years, from November to January to avoid the breeding owl season.

For more information, including full criteria and suitability:
<https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/barn-owl-nestbox/barn-owl-pole-nest-box/>



Kestrel

The Kestrel Open Nest Box is a wooden nest box constructed from exterior grade plywood and has been designed to provide a secure nesting site this declining species. The large opening is perfect for kestrels and the nest box has a felt covered roof to protect the nest against the elements. The nest box has a wooden bracket for fixing and should be sited in a tree, or on a post, at least five metres above the ground with a good viewpoint.

Specification

Dimensions: 40cm x 45 cm x 34 cm (LxWxH)

Opening: 42 x 27cm

Roof: 54 x 52cm

Weight: 10.3kg

Material: Exterior grade plywood

For more information: <https://www.nhbs.com/kestrel-open-nest-box>



Swallows

Swallows are a migratory species and annual visitor to the UK. Faithful to their nesting sites, they will return to nests on an annual basis for summer breeding purposes following long migrations from Africa. They nest in either single pairs or in small loose clusters of pairs, or colonies. Nests are typically made from straw, mud and saliva then lined with feathers to form a 'cup', open at the top, from which young hatchlings can often be observed awaiting feeding. Swallows are a species which have largely become accustomed to anthropogenic land manipulation by humans and will commonly nest within buildings, inclusive of barns, stables, porches, under bridges and so on. With adaptation to buildings, conflict with humans is commonplace, particularly with individuals seeking to develop their property/land. As a result, barn conversions, refurbishments and building demolition can lead to permanent loss of nesting sites, which inevitably impacts the conservation status of Swallows at a local level. A further issue is bird droppings, which can be undesirable in relation to new developments, particularly on a new housing plot.



Although Swallows are currently placed on the Green list for Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC), meaning that they are under the least protection, numbers of this species can fluctuate heavily based on environmental and ecological factors, with high regional variation observed.

Swallows will readily adopt these nest cups which are based on the size and shape of natural swallow nests. The nest cup is ideal for placing in a garage, shed, stable, barn or even beneath an archway and should be placed beneath the roof with free access. It provides somewhere secure for swallows to nest and means that they will expend less energy in producing their own nest. It also means that they do not need to find suitable nest building mud which can be in short supply in a dry spring. This WoodStone® Swallow Bowl is made from durable WoodStone®, a mixture of concrete and wood fibres, that is guaranteed to last for years and is mounted on an exterior grade plywood board.

Specifications

* Height: 120mm

* Width: 200mm

* Depth: 110mm

* Weight: 600g

For more information: <https://www.nhbs.com/woodstone-swallow-nest-bowl>