

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

The Maples, Spencers Place, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2EZ

Updated to Incorporate Bat Emergence Survey Findings (May 2025)

Prepared for Horsham District Council

Date of Issue: 17 December 2025

Purpose and Scope

This Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy sets out a comprehensive programme of habitat creation / enhancement and species safeguards designed to secure a measurable enhancement in biodiversity at The Maples site. It fully aligns with:

- the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Building Inspection prepared by Phlorum Limited dated 26 November 2024 (“the Phlorum Report”); and
- the Bat Emergence Survey Report produced by Arun Ecology Ltd dated 21 May 2025 (“the Maples Bat Report”).

All recommendations contained in those documents have been incorporated without material deviation. The Strategy is intended for satisfaction of the pre-commencement condition [Point 6] in the Decision Notice and for use by contractors and other stakeholders during all stages of the development.

Current Biodiversity Status

The 0.1 ha residential plot comprises five buildings (B1–B5), hardstanding, modified grassland, ornamental shrub beds and scattered trees. The site carries no statutory or non-statutory nature-conservation designations and does not include UK BAP Priority Habitat. Ecological value is therefore limited to the immediate locality.[1]

Key baseline findings are:

- **Bats** – The Phlorum Report assigned Building 1 (B1) low roost potential. [2] The Maples Bat Report confirms that a dusk emergence survey undertaken on 13 May 2025 recorded **no bats emerging or re-entering B1**; bats are therefore *likely absent* at the time of survey. Buildings 2–5 and all on-site trees retain negligible roost potential. [3]
- **Breeding birds** – The site offers low suitability but contains shrubs and building features that could support common garden species.
- **hedgehogs** – [REDACTED], low suitability for foraging/commuting hedgehog.
- **Other protected species** – Negligible potential for great crested newt, reptiles, dormouse, otter, water vole and stag beetle.

No Schedule 9 invasive plants were recorded.

Implications of the Maples Bat Report

- The absence of confirmed roosts means a Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSM) or Bat Low-Impact Class Licence (BLICL) **is not currently required** for demolition of B1.
 - Precautionary measures remain necessary to ensure legal compliance should bats be encountered unexpectedly.
 - Ecological enhancements for bats (roost boxes and light-sensitive design) remain integral to achieve biodiversity net gain and accord with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 187(d).
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Proposed Enhancement Measures

Bats

Precautionary Working Method:

Demolition of B1 to proceed under a toolbox talk as described in the Phlorum PEA Report.

Should a bat be discovered at any stage, works will cease, Natural England / a suitably qualified ecologist [Arun Ecology] will be consulted and licensing action will be instigated if required.

Roost Provision:

Install **one bat box** prior to first occupation:

– One Chavenage (or equivalent) wooden box on a retained mature tree at c. 4 m height with a south / south-east facing if possible. [4]

Lighting Design:

External lighting to follow ILP/BCT Guidance Note 08/23: ≤ 0.5 lux at the site boundary and adjacent vegetation corridors; warm-white LEDs (< 3000 K) with cowls, timers and PIR sensors.

Breeding Birds

Clearance of any hedgerows or other vegetation providing nesting habitats to be undertaken outside of bird breeding season [Mar – Aug] where possible.

Demolition of buildings to take place outside of bird breeding season where possible, if demolition scheduled during bird breeding season then demolition contractor to conduct preliminary site investigation to confirm absence of nesting birds prior to commencement. If nesting birds are found a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted before further works are undertaken.

Future landscaping scheme to include suitable native hedgerows and planting to provide enhanced habitat for nesting birds [see below]

Hedgehog Safeguards

Site induction toolbox talk covering legal protection and identification.

Excavations to be covered or fitted with escape ramps ($< 45^\circ$) overnight; any pipes ≥ 150 mm diameter to be capped.

Create **13 cm × 13 cm** hedgehog access gaps at the base of any new boundary fences.

Vegetation and Habitat Creation

When developing the landscaping scheme planting species should be all native and berry, nectar or nut producing, to be beneficial for local wildlife. Species can include blackthorn, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, honey suckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, barberry *berberis vulgaris*, rose *Rosa* sp, hazel *Corylus avellana*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, spindle *Euonymus europaeus* and hebe *Hebe* spp – which is known to provide nectar for bees. [5]

A ‘bug hotel’ or ‘insect tower’ can also be included within the residential garden on the boundary hedgerows, which is beneficial of invertebrates, and larger rocks and stones can be beneficial for insects’ reptiles and amphibians. A suitable ‘bug hotel’ or ‘insect tower’ are available from NHBS and require no maintenance.

Implementation Programme

Phase	Action	Responsibility	Target Timing*
Pre-construction	Demolition toolbox talk (bats, birds, mammals)	Project Manager	Site induction day
Construction	Demolition of B1	Demolition Contractor	February 2026
	Installation of bat box	Principal Contractor	Q1 2027
	Hedgerow, tree & shrub planting	Landscape Contractor	Nov 2026–Mar 2027
Post-construction	Lighting installation to approved spec	Electrical Contractor	Prior to occupation
	Log pile / ‘bug hotel’ placement & fence gaps	Landscape Contractor	Prior to occupation

Policy Compliance

This Strategy directly supports NPPF paragraphs 187–193 and Horsham District Planning Framework Policies 25 (Natural Environment), 26 (Countryside Protection), 30 (Protected Landscapes) and 31 (Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity). Measures additionally contribute to Horsham District Council’s Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy by enhancing ecological connectivity within the urban fabric.

Conclusion

Incorporating the findings of the Maples Bat Report and the recommendations from the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal this Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy provides a robust, proportionate and fully integrated framework for safeguarding protected species during development, embedding high-value habitat features within the finished scheme and delivering demonstrable enhancements in biodiversity. Adoption and diligent implementation of the measures set out herein will ensure that The Maples becomes a benchmark small-scale development exemplifying best practice in ecological enhancement.

Documents

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Phlorum Nov 2024
- Maples Bat Survey Report, Arun Ecology May 2025

References

1. Phlorum PEA, 2.3, 3.9-3.11.
2. Phlorum PEA, 3.21
3. Phlorum PEA, 3.22 – 3.35
4. Phlorum PEA, Appendix F
5. Phlorum PEA, Appendix E

Chevenage Bat Box

Supports small crevice-dwelling bats: e.g. pipistrelles.

Install on trees in gardens or woodland and also on house walls. 2.5 - 5m high on a building, mature tree, or vegetation line (trees/tall hedge) or on a feeding/flight route in partial daytime sun.

