
Biodiversity Management Plan

Proposed residential development
at East Wall, Dublin 3

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1 Introduction

This Biodiversity Management Plan has been prepared by NM Ecology Ltd on behalf of Dublin City Council (the applicant), as part of a planning application at the former Ready Mix Site, East Wall, Dublin 3. The proposed development will involve the demolition of an administrative building, the clearance of the remainder of the Site, and the construction of up to 68 new residential units. This document outlines a strategy for the protection of biodiversity during the construction and operation of the proposed development.

2 Construction phase

2.1 Protection of birds and small mammals during site clearance works

Under Section 22 of the *Wildlife Act 1976* (as amended), it is an offence to kill or injure any birds, or to disturb their nests. Most birds nest between March and August (inclusive), so it is strongly recommended that all tree felling, building demolition and other site clearance works are carried out between September and February (inclusive), i.e. outside the nesting season. If this is not possible, an ecologist will survey the affected areas in advance in order to assess whether any nesting birds are present. If any are encountered, vegetation clearance or demolition will be delayed until the breeding attempt has been completed, i.e. after chicks have fledged and a nest has been abandoned.

3 Operation phase

3.1 Landscaping proposals

The proposed development will have some landscaped areas. The primary purpose of these areas is to provide recreation and amenity for residents, but some areas will also have secondary value for biodiversity.

Trees will be native (e.g. hawthorn, rowan, common oak) or naturalised (e.g. beech, field maple, lime). A native wildflower mix will be planted in swales. There will be a range of ornamental planting at ground level, including shrubs, perennials, grasses and hedging plants. Many of these species are listed on the Pollinator Friendly Planting Code of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015 – 2020. These species are "*recognised to be particularly good for pollinators in Ireland, based on expert opinion*".

Considering the scrub and bare ground that was present on the site before the development, the proposed landscaping plan may represent a slight increase in the biodiversity value of the site. The trees will provide food and shelter for bird species, and flowering species will provide food and shelter for pollinators.

3.2 Installation of nesting boxes

Prior to construction, the site had some nesting opportunities for birds. To replace these, 7 no. nesting boxes will be installed on trees in landscaped areas. Designs will be suitable for common urban birds such as robins, finches and tits are widely available.

One innovative option for this development will be to provide nesting boxes for Swifts. Swift populations have declined by more than 40% in Ireland in the last twenty years, and they are included on the amber list of *Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland*. They nest in the eaves of old buildings, and the main reason for their decline is the lack of suitable nesting sites in modern buildings. Swift nesting boxes can be purchased in a range of designs, which can be incorporated into brickwork, or bolted to the exterior of a structure. Swifts produce little waste, and the boxes do not need to be maintained. Swifts have been recorded in the area in recent years, so it is likely that they would be attracted to the new development if nest boxes were provided. Therefore, 2 – 3 no. swift boxes will be installed on one or more of the taller apartment buildings.

The installation of nesting boxes provides opportunities to attract new fauna to the Site, and to increase the overall number of species above the baseline levels.

3.3 Bat-sensitive lighting

Bats are highly sensitive to artificial lighting, and may be displaced from the Site if lights are of high intensity, or if they are directed towards trees. However, if 'bat-sensitive' lighting techniques are incorporated into the lighting plan, they would avoid or minimise any potential impacts.

'Bat-sensitive lighting' for this development would have the following design principles, which are taken from the *Bats and Lighting* guidelines (BCT & ILP 2018):

- Low-UV LEDs or low / high pressure sodium lamps will be the preferred bulb type, as they have least effect on bats. Mercury or metal halide bulbs will not be used. Lights will have a 'warm' tone, with minimal blue / UV content
- All external lights will be fitted with directional hoods to direct the light downwards onto targeted areas and to prevent unnecessary light-spill
- No lights will be directed towards any trees or landscaped areas
- Lights in pedestrian areas will be installed at a low level, e.g. bollards of up to one metre in height. Lights will be directed onto ground level, with no light spill above the horizontal. Lux levels will be the minimum required for pedestrian safety
- External lighting on new residences will be fitted with motion sensors and timers in order to provide light only when required. Constant, overnight lights will not be permitted.

4 Conclusion

The measures proposed in this plan will avoid impacts on nesting birds / mammals during construction work, increase the diversity of plant species suitable for birds and pollinators, provide bird nest boxes, and reduce the impact of lighting on bats. These measures are appropriate and proportionate for an urban housing development of this type. Overall, we expect that the proposals will have a positive effect on biodiversity within the site.