
Biodiversity Management Plan

Proposed residential development at
Collins Avenue, Whitehall, Dublin 9

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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 Collins Avenue, Whitehall, Dublin 9. The proposed development will involve the construction of up to 83 new residential units, with associated services and landscaping. This document outlines a strategy for the protection of biodiversity during the construction and operation of the proposed development.

2 Construction phase

The site does not contain any ecological features of value. No trees will need to be felled, so there is no risk of impacts on nesting birds or small mammals.

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). Some areas will be seeded with native wildflowers, and swales will be planted with native wetland plants. 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 dry meadow and bare ground that was present on the site before the development, the proposed landscaping plan will result in 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 no nesting opportunities for birds. To enhance the value of the site, nesting boxes will be installed on trees in landscaped areas. Designs will be suitable for common urban birds such as robins, finches and tits.

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.

4 Conclusion

The measures proposed in this plan will increase the diversity of plant species suitable for birds and pollinators, and enhance the value of the site for nesting birds. 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.