



Ecological Management Plan

Ty'n Yr Heol House, 1 Henfaes Road, Tonna, SA11 3EQ

A report for Emily Byrne

May 2025

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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Ecological Management Plan

Client: Emily Byrne

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This outline Ecological Management Plan (EMP) sets out a framework for the planting, management and monitoring of ecological mitigation and enhancement of habitats for the proposed residential development at Ty'n Yr Heol House, 1 Henfaes Road, Tonna, SA11 3EQ (hereafter referred to as "the Scheme"). This EMP concerns works which will be required during the operational phases of the Scheme.

Background and Purpose

- 1.2 A planning application (ref: P2024/0818) was submitted to Neath & Port Talbot County Borough Council in 2024 for the demolition of the existing listed building on site, including the outbuildings and erection of 8no. dwellings. The consultee response raised concerns regarding the future management of the Ecological Mitigation Zone, which was proposed around the periphery of the site. This application was subsequently withdrawn.
- 1.3 This EMP has been prepared in support of a revised planning application, and aims to address those concerns previously raised, and to provide the confidence that the proposed mitigation will be correctly implemented and managed appropriately in perpetuity.

Aims

- 1.4 The overarching aim of this EMP is to set out prescriptions for habitat creation and management in the Ecological Mitigation Zone in order to provide a significant ecological enhancement, strengthen the green infrastructure within the local area.
- 1.5 This EMP is set out as follows and has been prepared in accordance with British Standard for Biodiversity: BS 42020:2013
- Section 2 details the site description and evaluation of ecological features to be managed within the EMP;
 - Section 3 describes the ecological management aims and objectives; and
 - Section 4 details the management prescriptions that will be undertaken.
- 1.6 This report has been prepared by Ceri Griffiths, director at Herdwick Ecology, who is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

2.0 CONTEXT AND SUMMARY OF FEATURES

- 2.1 This section of the EMP summarises the existing ecological features within the site, which were recorded during the ecological survey work undertaken by Herdwick Ecology and detailed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal¹ and Bat Survey Report².
- 2.2 The site is situated in the village of Tonna, to the north-east of Neath. It is located to the south of Henfaes Road, along which are numerous residential properties of varying construction and age. A residential development, constructed in the 1990s, lies immediately to the south. The River Neath lies 140m to the northeast, beyond which lies the A465, 400m from the site. The wider landscape comprises agricultural land predominately of pasture, with large swathes of woodland and scattered trees.



Plate 1: Site Location (Google, May 2023)

- 2.3 The site comprises a derelict Grade II listed building and associated stone outbuildings that have collapsed in and overgrown in vegetation. The site was historically formal gardens associated with the property and this is still evident with a number of ornamental species. The site is now overgrown with a mix of ornamental and native scrub and self sown trees, with a large proportion being sycamore, goat willow and alder. There are a number of mature trees, mainly along the road side of the site and western edge. Whilst Japanese Knotweed is present in the locality, none was recorded onsite at the time of the survey. However, there were large stands of Himalayan balsam, mainly along the

¹ Herdwick Ecology *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (Dec, 2024)

² Herdwick Ecology *Bat Survey Report* (Dec, 2024)

southern side of the site where the ground had been previously wet, considered likely to be from a drain that runs through the site from the adjacent housing estate. The habitats, namely the mature trees onsite are considered to be **Local ecological importance**.

- 2.4 In terms of fauna, bat activity surveys did not identify any roosts but the site, in particular the mature trees on the northwestern/western side, were well used by foraging bats, with activity dominated by common and soprano pipistrelle. The assemblage of bats using the site is considered to be of **Local ecological importance**. A number of common garden species of bird were heard/seen on site during the surveys and the site is considered to support a common bird assemblage of site ecological importance. No other evidence of any other protected / priority fauna was identified onsite.

3.0 ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

3.1 Specific prescriptions which will be used to meet the ecology objectives within the site are detailed below and include the following:

- To maintain and protect the retained habitats of ecological importance and the fauna that may use them;
- To ensure that newly created habitats are maintained in order that they establish successfully and provide biodiversity benefits in the long term;
- To provide and maintain habitat boxes for species;
- To monitor the efficacy of the EMP and add or amend management prescriptions as required.

4.0 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

Objective 1: To maintain and protect the retained habitats cross the site of ecological importance and the fauna that may use them

4.1 The proposals for the site are shown on the Site Plan as Proposed Option 8A (Plan 1566 SK-080 P3 March 25). Habitats to be lost include areas of ornamental and native scrub and self sown trees, with a large proportion being sycamore, goat willow and alder. This will result in the removal of 23 trees:

- Sycamore x 11;
- Beech (dead) x 1
- Ash (all with ash die back) x 9
- Goat willow x 1
- Elm (dying) x 1

4.2 With the exception of the goat willow and sycamore, accounting for 12 trees, all the other trees are either dead or dying due to disease. The following 32 trees will all be retained within the proposals:

- Beech x 2
- Copper beech x1
- Sycamore x 12
- Lime x 1
- Monkey puzzle x 2
- Holly x 3
- Yew x 2
- Sweet chestnut x3
- Alder x 2
- Oak x 1

4.3 Existing tree management will be implemented to maximise biodiversity including rotational trimming during appropriate times. The mature trees were well used by foraging bats, and are also likely to be used by other species, as will provide a dark corridor from foraging and dispersal routes . These trees are of sufficient distance from the individual units so to avoid direct impacts but impacts associated with lighting must be avoided and any new external lighting should be implemented in line with the recommendations set out within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. It is anticipated that new lighting will be subject to an appropriately worded planning condition.

4.4 Retained trees within the site boundary will be managed to ensure minimal risk to the public, as well as to promote their vigour and longevity. Any trees should be surveyed and tagged by a suitably qualified arborist with any defects catalogued. Remedial action may be required to render trees in a

safe condition and corrective actions such as the removal of dead limbs, crown thinning or reduction and pollarding should be considered where directed by the arborist, although only where there is a risk to the public due to the benefits to wildlife that these features could support. Felling should only be undertaken where directed by the arborist.

- 4.5 Any tree works will have consideration for the potential presence of roosting bats and would be completed outside the active period for breeding birds (March to August inclusive) although should any management be required within the breeding bird period, checks for nesting birds by suitably trained ecologist will take place prior to any works commencing to ensure that no breeding birds are present.
- 4.6 Should any work to trees with bat roosting potential be required in future, further survey work and assessment will be required by a suitably qualified ecologist to avoid any potential impacts to bats.
- 4.7 No invasive species, including Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed or montbretia will be allowed to grow onsite and cover of undesirable species including nettles *Urtica* sp., cleavers, dock spp. will be managed to be below 20%.
- 4.8 This would be achieved by hand removal or the targeted application of selective herbicide treatments and with the removal of invasive species undertaken by a specialist contractor, as required.

Objective 2: To ensure that newly created habitats within the Ecological Mitigation Zone are maintained and protected in order that they establish successfully and provide biodiversity benefits in the long term

- 4.9 Whilst there are new native species hedgerows proposed within the development, as these will lie within the individual residential curtilages, around the perimeter and along the boundaries (outside of the mitigation zone) therefore, they are not subject to future management and hence are not included within this EMP.
- 4.10 The proposals allow for an Ecology Mitigation Zone along the eastern and southern boundaries of the site that will link to the mature trees along the western/northwestern areas. This will act as a buffer from the adjacent residential area and allow for the retention of a vegetated dark corridor. The area will be suitable fenced, with close board fencing or similar. There will be regular gaps at the base of the fence at least 130 x 130mm to allow movement of species, such as hedgehog.
- 4.11 It is proposed that the area will comprise of the grassland between the existing trees, together with the newly planted scattered small trees, with a mix of holly x 4 field maple x 5, hawthorn x 5 and bird

cherry x 3. Locations of species proposed are outlined on Plan 1566 SK-080 P3 (March 25) and management will include regular checks and any failures to be replaced on a like for like basis but intervention will be limited to allow establishment. Should the trees require pruning at any stage, advice should be sought from an arboriculturist and ecologist prior to works commencing.

- 4.12 The grassland within the ecological mitigation zone will be reseeded with a EH1 Hedgerow Mixture³ that will be suitable for the more shaded environment of the area. The ground will be prepared as set out within the Emorsgate sowing information and will include careful ground preparation to maximise establishment. The use of herbicides should be kept to an absolute minimum but advice must be sought from a specialist contractor on the removal of the Himalayan balsam.
- 4.13 The on-going management will include the on-going spot removal of species such as docks, nettle, thistles and cleavers. Again, if invasive species establish, then advice must be sought from a specialist contractor. This will be done by hand and avoiding the use of herbicides. A single strip of the grassland will be maintained at a lower sward through the centre of the zone (approximately a standard garden mower width). The remaining grassland will receive an annual cut once the plants have seeded late summer/early autumn. All the arisings must be collected and removed. A grass compost pile will be created in one corner of the mitigation zone as this will offer opportunities for species.
- 4.14 The grassland should reach 'moderate' target condition (based on the DEFRA BNG condition assessments for 'other neutral grassland') within five years. Where the targets are not achieved – as assessed during ongoing monitoring – then additional seeding and further removal of undesirable species may be required.
- 4.15 As stated in Objective 1 above, any new external lighting should be implemented in line with the recommendations set out within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and avoid any new light spill across the mitigation zone. It is anticipated that new lighting will be subject to an appropriately worded planning condition.

Ongoing Management Responsibilities

- 4.16 The responsibility of the delivery of this EMP will be an appointed Management Company. As well as the on-going management and maintenance of the Ecological Mitigation Zone, they will be responsible for the removal of any refuse, as a garden waste or householder rubbish that may be deposited within the area.

³ [EH1 Hedgerow Mixture - Emorsgate Seeds](#)

- 4.17 Private gardens will ultimately be the responsibility of the individual residents. It is recommended that information (e.g. home owners pack) will be provided to residents, to highlight the ecological sensitive areas and preferred restrictions on lighting etc. to protect the Ecological Mitigation Zone.

Objective 3: To provide and maintain habitat boxes for species

- 4.18 There will be placement of habitat boxes for species within the Ecological Mitigation Zone, to comprise:
- Hedgehog boxes x 2 [Hedgehog Homes](#)
 - Invertebrate towers x 5 [Insect Tower | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#)
 - Log piles ad hoc [Make a Log Pile for Wildlife | Habitats for Hedgehogs, Frogs & More](#)
 - Bird boxes on mature trees x 5 [RSPB Classic nest box - Bird houses & nest boxes](#)

- 4.19 These will be installed once the habitat enhancement measures have been completed and will be inspected annual and replaced as necessary.

Objective 4: To monitor the efficacy of the EMP and add or amend management prescriptions, as required

- 4.20 The implemented ecological prescriptions of the EMP will be monitored in order to ensure that opportunities for biodiversity are maximised and maintained post-development and that the proposed biodiversity net gain can be secured for the long term. All new planting within the site will be monitored for an initial 5 year period following completion of the development. Where any plants that die, become seriously damaged or diseased that would compromise the functionality of the new habitats at the site, these will be removed and replaced in the next planting season with other trees or plants of a similar size and species as those originally planted.
- 4.21 An assessment of habitats undergoing management will also be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist, and arboriculturist if required, together with a photographic record to provide advice and an ongoing review of habitat management, which would be summarised in a succinct monitoring report. These monitoring reports will be produced in years 2 and 5 from commencement of development. These reports can be submitted to NPTBC to demonstrate compliance, if required.
- 4.22 As part of these monitoring reports, should the functionality of any habitat become affected by the management prescriptions, as determined by the ecologist, remedial measures will be detailed and implemented as appropriate.

Ecology Management Prescriptions for Ecological Mitigation Zone

Prescriptions	Management/Requirements	Timing	Responsibility
Management of retained trees to promote biodiversity and ensure safety (Objective 1)	Undertake corrective tree surgery operations as necessary – this may consist of the removal of dead limbs, crown thinning or reduction or pollarding where necessary, although only where there is a risk to the public due to the benefits to wildlife that these features could support. Felling should only be undertaken as a last resort.	As necessary, between March and August, checks for nesting birds by an ecologist required. Checks for roosting bats or potential for roosting bats as necessary by an ecologist / ECoW prior to any works.	Management Company – advised as necessary by Ecologist Arboriculturist.
Installation of sensitive lighting scheme (Objective 1 & 2)	Implementation of a sensitive lighting strategy to ensure no additional light spill. Likely to be in accordance with future planning condition.	n/a	Developer
Implementation of Habitat & Species Enhancements within Ecological Mitigation Zone (Objective 2 & 3)	Preparation and planting of Ecological Mitigation Zone in accordance with approved plans.	Year 1 – seeding/planting in accordance planting guidance	Developer/ Landscape Contractor (advice from Ecologist/ Arboriculturist as required)
Management of grassland within Mitigation Zone (Objective 2)	Cutting (First Year) Cut to 40-60mm if there is sufficient material. Maintenance thereafter: Single garden mower width strip along length of mitigation zone to create sward diversity. Remaining grass to receive an annual in	Year 1 – Sowing in autumn /spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture. Year 2 onwards, annually - Regularly throughout the first	Management Company – advised as necessary by Ecologist.

	late summer to 50mm to remove excess grass. Once established grassland will be maintained to achieve condition as set out above. To achieve the proposed condition in the metric the coverage of rye grass will be maintained below 25% with the cover of wildflowers and sedges present above 30%. Cover of undesirable species, including creeping thistle, spear thistle, docks, ragwort	year, thereafter July/August	
Management of new tree planting with Mitigation Zone (Objective 2)	All new planting within the mitigation zone will be monitored following completion of the development and any trees or plants that die, become seriously damaged or diseased will be removed and replaced in the next planting season with other trees or plants of a similar size and species as those originally planted	Year 1 - At monthly intervals Thereafter - annually late spring or winter	Landscape Contractor – thereafter Management Company – advised as necessary by Ecologist
Management/monitoring of habitat boxes Mitigation Zone (Objective 3)	Inspection of boxes to include replacement of damaged or missing boxes	Year 2 & 5 – during monitoring inspections	Management Company / Ecologist
Monitoring of LEMP Prescriptions (Objective 4)	To monitor the efficacy of the EMP and to ensure the habitats are being managed This will comprise a photographic record to provide advice to the management company and an ongoing review of habitat management.	Year 2 & 5	Management Company / Ecologist

	A short report with recommendations will be produced following the site audits.		
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