

Sandringham Gardens Yorkshire

Redrow Homes

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award category: Medium Scale Permanent

Project overview

As part of Redrow Homes Yorkshire's development of 32 new dwellings at Haigh Moor Road, West Ardsley, we undertook a programme of ecological enhancement. Though previously undeveloped, the parcel of land was assessed as being species-poor and of low ecological value. At the initial design stage, it was considered that there was an excellent opportunity for the **site's** ecological value to be enhanced.

The key objective for the project was to take a part of the development including the unmanaged pond which had resulted in it being of low ecological value and enhance the habitat by working with the local authority and an ecologist team. The result was outstanding not only did it allow the local community to have safe access this area, it also resulted in biodiversity improvement and diversity.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

Prior to the project, the area had sparse habitat barely capable of sustaining wildlife or supporting any diversity in biodiversity as shown through an ecological survey. A small unmanaged pond, known locally as '**Jude's Pond**', was present at the site frontage. This was almost entirely covered with dense bulrush.

Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

During initial consultations with local planning authorities it was decided the area up for development required a strategic approach during the construction project to enhance the local biodiversity. Redrow have gone above and beyond the requirements set out by planning to ensure the area can be accessed and enjoyed by everyone.



The above picture highlights the low biodiversity conditions prior to the enhancement, the thick bulrush did not support a wide variety of fauna and blocked out other species of flora due to high levels of silt resulting in poor drainage.

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

Pond Enhancement Works:

Given its initial condition, it was considered that rudimentary pond management could result in a significant improvement to the ecological value of **Jude's Pond**. Through scrub removal and de-silting it would be possible to create open water areas which would benefit invertebrates, plants and amphibians. Furthermore, long term management would have the potential to provide even greater enhancement. This included ensuring there are open sections of waters for habitat breeding, removal of silt/plant build up from the pond and the introduction of a biodiversity corridor. We also utilised the pond to accommodate the 1 in 100 year + climate change event surface water drainage event, removing the need for additional concrete underground storage.

The site works were particularly challenging given the need to carry out invasive works in a way that was sympathetic to the existing biodiversity value of the pond. This was managed through close working between

Biodiversity Corridor

Development of any piece of open countryside should be planned strategically to create valuable and functional wildlife corridors and interconnected habitat areas. The site was designed with this principle in mind and thus the submitted scheme included a link of semi-natural habitat with unrestricted access between **Jude's Pond** and the linear woody belt to the west.

Planting in this corridor comprises a number of British native tree and shrub mixes planted as whips and undersown with wildflora mixes. Mixes close to the water include willow, Alders and Geldered rose.



The biodiversity corridor in the above picture is one of many enhancement to the site, during the construction phase was also bird boxes, and bee homes installed to ensure the area was benefiting from biodiversity improvements throughout the build

How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement

Further information

In addition to satisfying planning and legislative requirements for the site, through the provision of a biodiversity corridor and managed pond, Haigh Moor Road has significantly enhanced the ecological value of the site and surrounding area to the benefit of the local community. We worked closely with the Local Authority Planning Department, appointed ecologists and local residents throughout this project something we are keen to continue. We have planned education school talks and for information on the project and resulting biodiversity improvements within the show home, this will allow both the existing community and new residents to the area to be fully aware of their local biodiversity and how to live amongst it.

One of the objectives for this project was to allow **Redrow's** designers, construction and technical teams the chance to learn how to undertake site environment improvements. The skills learnt through habitat restoration, community relations and environmental management during construction will now be replicated on other sites, this will help us achieve our goals and aspirations set out in our companies sustainability plan.

Our top tip is to always look closely at the environment you are working with, there is always an opportunity to take the requirements of a project one step further if you assess the needs of the local habitats. .



The pond and ecological habitat after completion, they not only provide an enhancement for biodiversity and practical drainage but are also very attractive and now accessible.

What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

When we are given the opportunity to develop an area we want to ensure that we do the best possible job in creating a thriving community. This is a brilliant example of where our passion for community engagement with our developments and commitment to the environment go hand in hand.