

**WALL PARK: REDEVELOPMENT OF FORMER HOLIDAY PARK
BRIXHAM – DEVON, UK**

Arcadis / Bloor Homes/ Northern Trust / Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: *Biodiversity Legacy*

Project overview

The Wall Park The Wall Park Road development on the eastern edge of Brixham, Devon has been created on a derelict holiday centre, sports pitches, associated leisure and sports facilities, a caravan park, and open space redevelopment. Arcadis delivered ecological surveys and assessments, along with **landscape and ecological enhancement works and monitoring**. Arcadis has provided **pragmatic and innovative solutions** to the ecological challenges posed by this redevelopment project.

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

The whole of the proposed redevelopment **site comprises 17.34ha**. The land allocated to **ecological mitigation is almost half of this area**. The different habitats on site were a derelict holiday centre, sports pitches, associated leisure and sports facilities, a caravan park, and open space redevelopment and built development.

What were the reasons behind this project ?

The site lies near **South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**, which supports an Internationally important maternity population of greater horseshoe bats. The bats are known to commute across the site, to foraging grounds beyond the site to the west. The population is geographically constrained by their roost being located on the Brixham headland and the expansion of the town. The redevelopment therefore had potential to further restrict the movement of bats and reduce their foraging resources. This would potentially put the survival of the colony at risk. The site supports **numerous protected species including badgers, reptiles and roosting common pipistrelle and lesser horseshoe bats**.



Masterplan showing habitat creation

What were the biodiversity measures taken?

The redevelopment has been environmentally led, with the scheme design balancing residential, recreational/tourism and ecological needs. It delivers sustainable development through protection and enhancement of the existing natural environment. Habitats created in advance of development include **hedgerows, trees, woodland, organic rare breed cattle grazing, cirl bunting habitat, bespoke bat barn**, planting schemes incorporate **native and/or wildlife-friendly species**, and **swales provide sustainable drainage**. Sustainable transport has been promoted through provision of new cycle and walking networks across the site. In collaboration with the landscape team, we have created a scheme which includes an area of **Ecological Management Land** which has been designed to provide greater horseshoe bats associated with the SAC with **enhanced foraging opportunities**. The EML also accommodates the translocated reptile population and a bat barn. **Badger setts and foraging resources have also been protected and enhanced** through the management of the EML. The compilation of detailed **Landscape and Ecological Management Plans** (LEMPs) directed the creation and on-going habitat management on site. The **Dark Areas Map** and **Ecological Monitoring and Early Warning Strategy** produced by Arcadis provides **measurable targets** on which to monitor the success of the mitigation measures and inform any management changes. It is envisaged that these documents will contribute to maintaining the favourable conservation status of the SAC bats. The installation of habitats was completed in 2017 but the scheme is still under development, Arcadis continue to monitor the site from a habitat's and species population perspective.

The mitigation has been designed to **improve foraging**, as well as **strengthen and enhance the original bat commuting routes**. Full benefits of these actions will take approximately **5-8 years to establish and mature**. It is anticipated that greater horseshoe bat activity levels **will rise in the long term**. Early monitoring is focused on ensuring mitigation has been implemented correctly. **Interpretation boards** are provided to raise awareness of the site's ecological value.



Bespoke Bat Barn



Information boards, reptile habitat and enhanced hedgerows

Further information

Monitoring continues, Arcadis will undertake further monitoring this year in 2021, including, SAC **roost counts**, and **dung beetle presence/abundance surveys** and **automated and manned activity surveys** and **cirl bunting surveys**. Enhancements for the small numbers of non-breeding common pipistrelle and LHS bats present on the site include **a bat barn and bat boxes** which will also be monitored. Habitat for reptile populations that were translocated from the development footprint before works commenced into enhanced reptile habitat will continue to be monitored. **Light monitoring** will be undertaken to ensure that the habitat proposed for screening does deliver the Dark sky areas as intended. The EML delivers **sustainable ecosystem services** including **organic farming, sustainable drainage and pollination**. The **organic cattle support dung beetles**, thus supporting greater horseshoe bats. Semi-natural habitats supported by the EML will be **partly accessible to the public via new footpaths**. Our ecologists are working with **TCCT** to ensure management issues are swiftly resolved and lessons captured for the benefit of future projects.

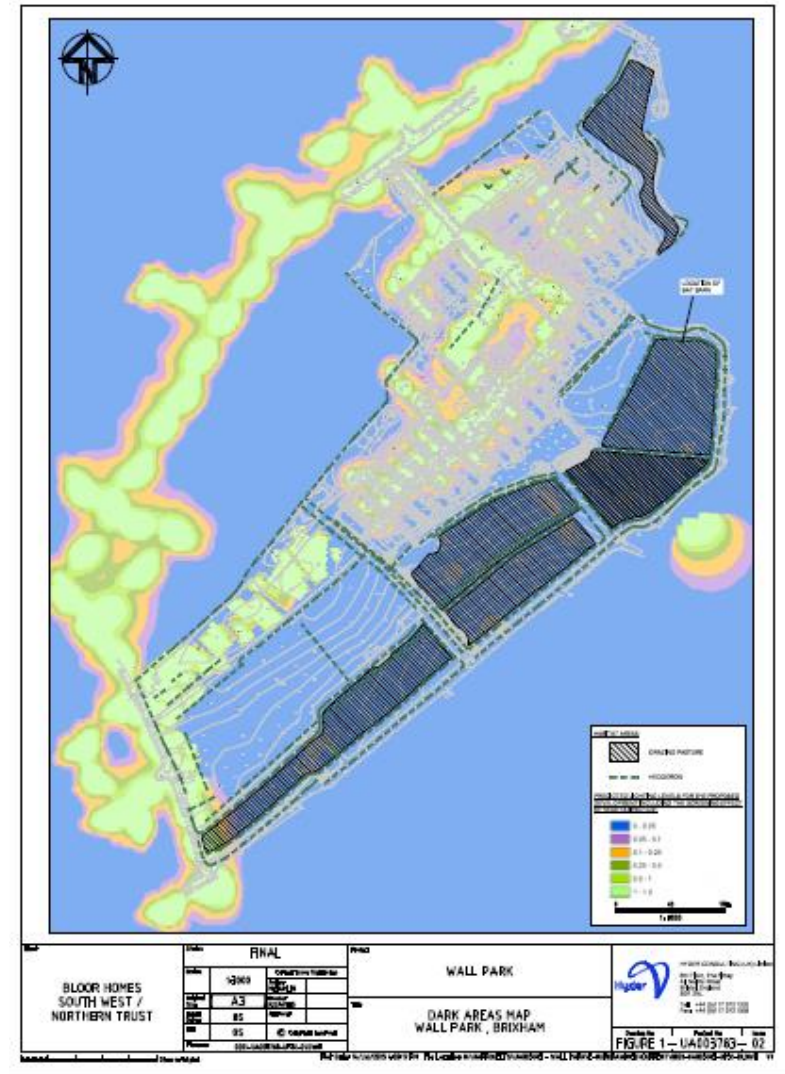
Project Team

- Project team: Arcadis, Bloor Homes, Northern Trust, Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust (TCCT)
- Other design team members: SLR

What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement?

Either from an organisational, individual or group point of view i.e. why did you do this one thing for biodiversity that goes over and above anything that was asked of you or your organisation?

Arcadis is committed to improving the quality of life for all generations by maximising social, economic and environmental value. Confidence in the sustainability of the habitat was delivered by detailed **Landscape and Ecological Management Plans (LEMPs)** and robust monitoring via the **Ecological Monitoring and Early Warning Strategy**. All ensuring that the habitat created delivers the functionality intended.



Dark sky areas map