

Paddock Green

East Hoathly, East Sussex

Redrow PLC

BIG Biodiversity Challenge Award Category: **Habitat Creation: Project of Year Award (Large scale biodiversity enhancement 5ha and above)**

Project overview (50 words max)

Paddock Green was formally a paddock and horse stables but is set become home to 202 new properties. The land is forecast to achieve between 30% and 35% BNG through enrichment of existing ecological features and introduction of new habitats.

What were the biodiversity conditions on site prior to the enhancement? (100 words max)

When we acquired the land, this former equestrian site was mainly made up of species-poor grassland. Existing features included a seasonal stream close to the centre and an ancient woodland, Alders Wood, to the northeast, which required buffering. We planned to protect and enhance as much of the existing habitats as possible while introducing new species-rich areas around them to create open space. While there was no statutory target for BNG at the time of planning, internally we set out to ensure a minimum of 10% improvement, but with careful consideration, have been able to boost that target three-fold.

What were the reasons behind this project? (100 words max)

While there was no statutory target for BNG at the time of planning, internally we set out to ensure a minimum of 10% improvement. The ancient woodland and rural surroundings of the site also gave way to an opportunity for the enrichment of the current habitat and to blend itself into the local landscape. This development's biodiversity boosting measures have been centred around enhancing the existing ecological features. We've created plentiful green space between the homes to promote play and encourage time spent outdoors. Social areas will help to create a thriving new community as the development takes shape.



Paddock Green ancient woodland 1



Paddock Green ancient woodland and watercourse

What were the biodiversity measures taken? (300 words max)

Our plans include three ponds for attenuation that are designed to provide an ecological boost with native planting around them, plus the planting of species rich grasses around the natural play area and areas of wildflower grassland dotted frequently throughout the site to provide nectar rich plants for pollinators. One poor-quality pond also existed prior to development which will be enhanced later in the project.

In total, we're planting 42 additional trees next to the ancient neighbouring Alders Wood to create a buffer for the conservation area, and attractive views from the homes, as well as additional planting in a woodland friendly seed mix.

Hedgerows provide habitats for a wide range of insects, birds, mammals and other flora, so we're expecting to increase hedgerow habitats by 158%.

Local bats are also considered in the design of lighting on site. The development will have no street lighting, with only low-level bollard lighting across the site which is deemed bat-friendly.

The measures ensure that the project will achieve a BNG of over 30% and provide a blueprint to replicate similar schemes at other sites that contain existing features such as ancient woodland and ponds. Pre-development biodiversity units equated to 37 area units, 11.85 linear units and 1 watercourse unit. The post-development forecasts 48.9 area, 30.67 linear and 1 watercourse habitat, all to be delivered on-site.

A management plan is in place, and meetings are held monthly with the LPA (Local Planning Authority), at which times the site's ecology may be discussed to ensure that the development continues to align with the plans and requirements.



Paddock Green ancient woodland 2



Paddock Green ancient woodland 2

Further information (250 words max)

The development has focused on enhancing the expanding existing habitats on site and the parish have taken a very active role in discussions over the ancient woodland buffer due to the sensitive nature of the habitat with continuing involvement.

On-site enhancement should take the existing pond from poor to fairly good quality, the broadleaved woodland from moderate to good quality, scrub from poor to good quality and tree lines and hedgerows from moderate to good quality.

A challenge on this site has been the existing watercourse close to the centre. This had to be planned around and enhanced, with additional drainage measures required.

The plans project a BNG which far exceeds the required no-net loss, and even the internal target of a 10% BNG. Ecological enhancements have led to added focal points on-site which will be attractive to the new local community and beneficial to local wildlife. The key factor in this success is the site's motivation to work with the existing features in the landscape, enhancing them rather than removing and replacing.

Project Team

- Formerly Redrow Southern division, now Redrow South East division

What was the motivation for carrying out the enhancement? (100 words max)

Though the site only had local planning requirements for no-net-loss, the existing features in the landscape (the pond, ancient woodland and hedgerow) served to inspire the design of the site; enhancing existing habitats to blend with the rural local landscape.



Birdseye view of Paddock Green 1



Birdseye view of Paddock Green 2