

## Devonshire Gardens rooted in conservation as sustainable project enters new phase of development



Environmental surveys and ecological protection work have begun at Devonshire Gardens, the new mixed-use development off Mill Road, as preparations continue on site before demolition begins later this month. Located on Devonshire Road, developer Railpen and development manager Socius have undertaken work, in conjunction with an independent Ecological Clerk of Works, to sensitively manage the ecology of the site. The development aims to increase biodiversity on site by 350% by the time the project completes.

Wildlife conservation surveys have also been carried out across the site to ensure that no wildlife are hibernating or nesting in the area ahead of the works. Taking advice from experts at Cambridge Hedgehogs, Railpen and Socius have also supplied the on-site construction teams with wildlife awareness material and included updates on wildlife awareness in the daily site staff meetings.

As well as activity to prepare the site, the team has trimmed back the hedges along Devonshire Road to allow safe passage for pedestrians along the site boundary. Through the site clearance, a small number of trees have also been removed, to meet the conditions set out by the council's Environmental Officer. The trees which have been removed will be reused as natural creature habitats. Overall, half of the development will be dedicated to public open spaces, including new rain garden beds with wildflowers, grass lawns, planting beds, bird and bat boxes, hedgehog habitats, with a 55% increase in the number of trees, representing a substantial increase for a new development.

Richard Van Lente, Senior Asset and Development Manager, Railpen said: "We are proud of the effort and lengths that our teams go to ensure that they are working safely, sensitively and with their

immediate environment in mind. Our plans for Devonshire Gardens include increasing the biodiversity on the site significantly and we will be mindful of this goal throughout the development process. We will continue to undertake regular monitoring and survey work, in line with advice from our ecology experts, to ensure environments are protected wherever we possibly can.”

This preparation works on site include the demolition of the former Travis Perkins buildings before main construction work begins later this year.

Following the completion of preparatory activities, Total Reclaims Demolition (TRD), the contractor appointed by Railpen and Socius to deliver the works, will proceed with the start of demolition, which is scheduled to last for approximately 12 weeks.

Railpen and Socius received planning permission in May 2023 to provide new public green spaces, homes and apartments for local people, workspace, and community amenities at the Devonshire Gardens site.

**ENDS**

**For further information contact:**

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**Photo caption:** Artist's impression of Devonshire Gardens

**About Railpen**

- Railpen (formerly known as RPMI and RPMI Railpen) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).
- Railpen acts as the investment manager of the railways pensions schemes and is responsible for the management of around £35bn.
- Railpen runs the railways pensions schemes on behalf of its parent, the Railways Pension Trustee Company Limited (RPTCL).

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Socius is an impactful developer with a £2.2bn development pipeline across the UK's fastest-growing cities including Bristol, Brighton, Cambridge, Milton Keynes and London. Privately-owned and a certified B Corporation, Socius partners with institutional investors, leading architects and local communities to create inspiring and sustainable places whilst balancing profit and purpose.

Current projects include Botanic Place, the AHMM-designed 500,000 sq ft workspace scheme in central Cambridge, the £210m regeneration of Soapworks in Bristol, a £190m development of innovation space

and homes in the centre of Milton Keynes and the London Cancer Hub, a new five-hectare district dedicated to cancer research in Sutton.

For further information please visit: <https://socius.dev/>

Socius publishes an annual social value report. You can read the 2022 report [here](#).