

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

24-28, West Street, Epsom

April 2025

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Woodstone Built in Open nest box



Occupants: This half-open build-in block is an ideal breeding ground for the common and black redstart, the grey flycatcher, the wagtail, the robin, and the wren. Occasionally it will even be inhabited by tits.



The Schwegler 1SP Sparrow terrace provides insulated accommodation that is perfect for your local sparrow populations.

The terrace is designed for three families and will be used by both the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and the Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*).

Occupants: Sparrows, but also Tits, Redstarts, and Spotted Flycatchers on occasion.



The Habibat Starling Nest Box is a small, solid box made of insulating concrete which provides an internal roost space and can be seamlessly integrated into the fabric of a building as it is built or renovated. The access hole is specifically designed to accommodate starlings.

Biodiversity Enhancements & Great Crested Newt Precautionary Method Statement

11.



Bee Brick

These bricks act as an ideal nesting site for solitary bees making a garden look aesthetically pleasing, as well as being a viable option to replace a standard brick in construction which creates more habitat for non-swarming solitary bees. This brick comes in a variety of colours to make an accommodating nesting site for red mason and leafcutter bees, amongst others to suite any

bee friendly garden, allotment or building.

Positioning: The Bee Brick should be positioned in a warm sunny spot, south facing, with no vegetation in front of the fascia. Ideally placed at least 1 metre from the ground with no upward limit.

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Summary

Plan Ecology have been commissioned to produce an Ecological Management Plan for Garages at Heathlands Road, Heathlands Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 3AY.

The proposed works seek to demolish the existing garages on the site and replace it with one, two-bedroom detached dwelling with associated bicycle store and access.

The proposed development of the site offers opportunities to deliver ecological and biodiversity benefits as part of the building design. The management plan has also laid out how the habitats surrounding the buildings will be protected during the works to ensure foraging bats and great crested newts are not harmed.

Badgers are a highly mobile species and although no evidence of badgers was found it is recommended that materials during the build are stored carefully and covered to ensure badgers are not harmed during the works.

Although no bats were found to be roosting on the site; any lighting on the site should follow the guidelines to prevent impact to foraging bats and other nocturnal creatures.

Biodiversity enhancements include installing bird boxes, bat boxes, insect house and a hedgehog house on the Site. Landscaping plans specify low level lighting and hibernacula and hedgehog gaps in fencing to be installed on the Site.

Landscaping plans include planting native hedgerow, retaining trees and planting pollinator friendly plants.

Following the completion of the builds and landscaping it is proposed that a mitigation, compensation and biodiversity enhancement check is completed by the ecologist to ensure all aspects of the proposed features have been successfully completed a compliance memo should be produced following this visit and subsequent monitoring visits. Recommendations for improvements may be made.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of the Report

This document provides recommendations for biodiversity enhancements at the Site as per condition 24 of Application Number: 22/01294/FUL conditioned by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

No development shall commence on site until details of the siting and scale of bird boxes and bat boxes are submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The bird boxes and bat boxes shall be installed in accordance with the agreed details prior to the first occupation of the proposed development. Reason: To preserve and enhance biodiversity and habitats in accordance with Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy 2007 and Policy DM4 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

The overall aim of the Plan is to help guide the creation and enhancement of the biodiversity of the Site. This will ensure the successful implementation of habitat enhancement and biodiversity mitigation measures for the Proposed Development in relation to existing habitats.

The precautionary method statement is proposed to ensure the survival of species protected by legislation and notable species that may otherwise be affected by the development.

1.2 Proposed Works

The proposed work seeks to erection of 1 two-bedroom detached dwelling with associated bicycle store and access; following demolition of the existing garage blocks.

1.3 Baseline Description of Site

A walkover was carried out on the Site by an ecologist on the 2nd of February 2023 by AA Environmental Limited to assess any existing habitat and potential for protected species.

The Site consists of buildings present on the site included a five-bay garage and a double garage. The site was dominated by the existing garages and associated hardstanding areas, with some ornamental hedging and individual trees present.

Herpetofauna: There were no ponds on the site and therefore no breeding opportunities for amphibians. The site, being dominated by hardstanding areas, does not provide suitable terrestrial habitat for any species of herpetofauna. In addition, despite a careful search of the site, no species of herpetofauna was found sheltering under any refugia lifted. The nearest records for any species were at some distance from the site, with the nearest reptile (grass snake), located over 500 m away and no records for great crested newt returned for the surrounding 2 km study area.

2. Preconstruction Ecological Management, Mitigation & Enhancement Measures

2.1 Great Crested Newt Precautionary Methodology

All amphibian species have some level of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). The intentional or reckless killing, injury or taking, and intentional or reckless disturbance of great crested newts whilst occupying a 'place used for shelter or protection' is prohibited, as is the destruction of these places.

These are precautionary measures only. If a great crested newt is found on the Site at any time works must cease immediately and an ecologist informed. The ecologist will then advise on how to proceed.

A site induction toolbox talk should be arranged for site personnel, to be provided by a suitably experienced newt ecologist to include great crested newt identification and what to do if newts are found, the legislative protection and the reasonable avoidance measures to be adopted on site.

The Site should then be hand searched. This refers to the careful searching, by hand, of potential refuges and suitable habitat features. The supervising ecologist should as a minimum hold a great crested newt survey licence, as this demonstrates the licence holder has experience in handling newts and has appropriate understanding of welfare and biosecurity issues.

To reduce the risks to great crested newts and keep the habitat on Site low newt potential in advance of the works all vegetation will be inspected by an ecologist and should be removed within 48 hours of the check.

- a) In advance of works, vegetation should be managed to reduce suitability for newts, to discourage newts from areas which will be soon stripped: i. Cut scrub and tall grass no lower than 150mm; carefully remove arisings and leave habitat undisturbed for 48 hours ii. To be followed by directional vegetation clearance (avoiding wet weather during the active period).
- b) Vegetation management should be undertaken at the appropriate time of the year and in appropriate weather conditions, to avoid killing/injuring newts
- c) Working areas should avoid any retained habitat
- d) Measures should be implemented to avoid indirect impacts on retained or off-site habitats, such as run-off or accidental encroachment from working vehicles, material or operatives
- e) Machinery, materials etc should be stored on areas of hardstanding or raised off the ground on pallets where possible
- f) Waste materials should be removed off site immediately or stored in skips where possible

- g) Excavations should be backfilled, covered overnight, or ramps placed in to allow any animals to escape
- h) Excavations and working areas should be managed so as not to create temporary waterbodies which may attract newts onto site
- i) Access roads should use existing roads and tracks and keep habit disturbance to a minimum, avoiding any areas of sensitive or potentially valuable habitat.

2.2 Tasks to be completed prior to the construction phase

2.2.1 Breeding Bird Checks

Where possible any trees and vegetation to be removed should be cleared outside of breeding bird season (September- February) to avoid damage to nests and birds. Where this is not possible the trees should be inspected by a suitably qualified ecologist for any signs of nests and nesting behaviour.

2.2.2 Badgers

Although no evidence of badgers was found, it is recommended that due to being a highly mobile species that materials during the build are stored carefully and covered to ensure badgers are not harmed during the works. Precautionary mitigation for badgers should be carried out, all equipment should be safely secured at night to prevent badgers becoming trapped or injured and any excavations should be covered overnight.

2.2.3 Reptiles

Although potential habitat for reptiles on Site is low if any vegetation clearance is required it should take place using hand trimmers under the watch of an ecologist to allow any reptiles to remain within the rest of the Site. Phased removal of habitat which encourages the reptiles to move themselves into adjacent retained habitat and negates the need for translocation. This is to be undertaken in the active season (March to September inclusive) when the weather is considered warm enough for reptiles to move on their own accord.

2.2.4 Bats

During development works and for the operation of the dwelling on site, light spill onto the surrounding vegetation is to be avoided, to avoid adversely impacting foraging bats in area.

Demolition and the Site will be set up as per Appendix 1 Proposed Site Set Up Plan with Heras installed to protect the vegetation to be retained.

2.3 Biodiversity Enhancements

Ecological Enhancement Opportunities

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), issued in March 2012, states that the planning system should contribute to "minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures". It also states that "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged".

The master planning process should maximise opportunities for enhancement, in order to achieve a net increase in biodiversity. This is in accordance with the NERC Act (2006) which requires that "every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat." Recommendations for ecological enhancement are provided below.....

Incorporation of Bird nesting (bird boxes)

It is recommended that a variety of integrated Nest Boxes built into the design. One Starling nest, one open nest box and one sparrow nest box have been recommended on the new building. By incorporating these into the build permanent enhancements are created. See Appendix 3 for particulars of the integrated features.

Incorporation of Bat box

It is recommended that integrated forticrete or similar bat bricks be installed within the new house to be built; this will provide permanent bat roosting features to the Site. These should be placed ideally on the south or west aspects of the buildings and be located away from windows and lighting at least 3 m high to prevent them be as susceptible to predation. The brick should be away from lighting to avoid disturbance. Placing the bricks towards the top of the elevation near the soffits has been illustrated in Appendix 2.

Incorporation of Bee Bricks

These should be positioned at least 1m high in a sunny position. See Appendix 2 for a recommended position on the South elevation.

Hedgehog Houses

A hedgehog house will be provided at the base of hedgerow away from driveways and roads. One hedgehog house has been recommended to be positioned within vegetation.

Management and maintenance practices should take into account the potential presence of hedgehogs and leave leaf litter in place or in piles as well as leaving log or brash piles. Where possible, in any development the total area of hard standing should be minimised in favour of grassland or permeable 'living driveways.' Hedgehog houses can be installed to the boundaries of the garden away from the roads and adjacent to neighbouring gardens. Any new fencing will need to have 13cmx13cm square holes in the base every 10-15m as to not block current commuting routes. Any new landscaping could include a wildlife friendly garden area with log piles, leaf piles and areas of long grass which would offer refuge for hedgehogs.

Planting of pollinator friendly plants

This includes lavender and mock orange planted at the front of the building and near to the bee brick. Please refer to the Landscape Plans for full planting details. Appendix 4.

Suppliers of these nesting boxes included, but are not limited to:

www.nhbs.com

www.wildcareshop.com

See Design and Positioning in Appendix 1 & 2

Planting of Native Hedgerows

Hedgerows consisting of native species including silver birch, dog rose, hawthorn and field maple will be planted along the boundaries of the Site. These are important to provide shelter, food source and connectivity for native species using the Site.

See Appendix 4 for a full list of species and planting positions.

3. Ecological Management Post Construction

3.1 Lighting

There is the potential for increased lighting on the Site which may affect foraging and commuting bats as well as nesting birds. It is recommended that the lighting installed within the new building is designed with respect to reducing light impacts on wildlife.

A sensitive lighting strategy should be implemented across the development to minimise impacts on bats and other wildlife.

Best practice measures include:

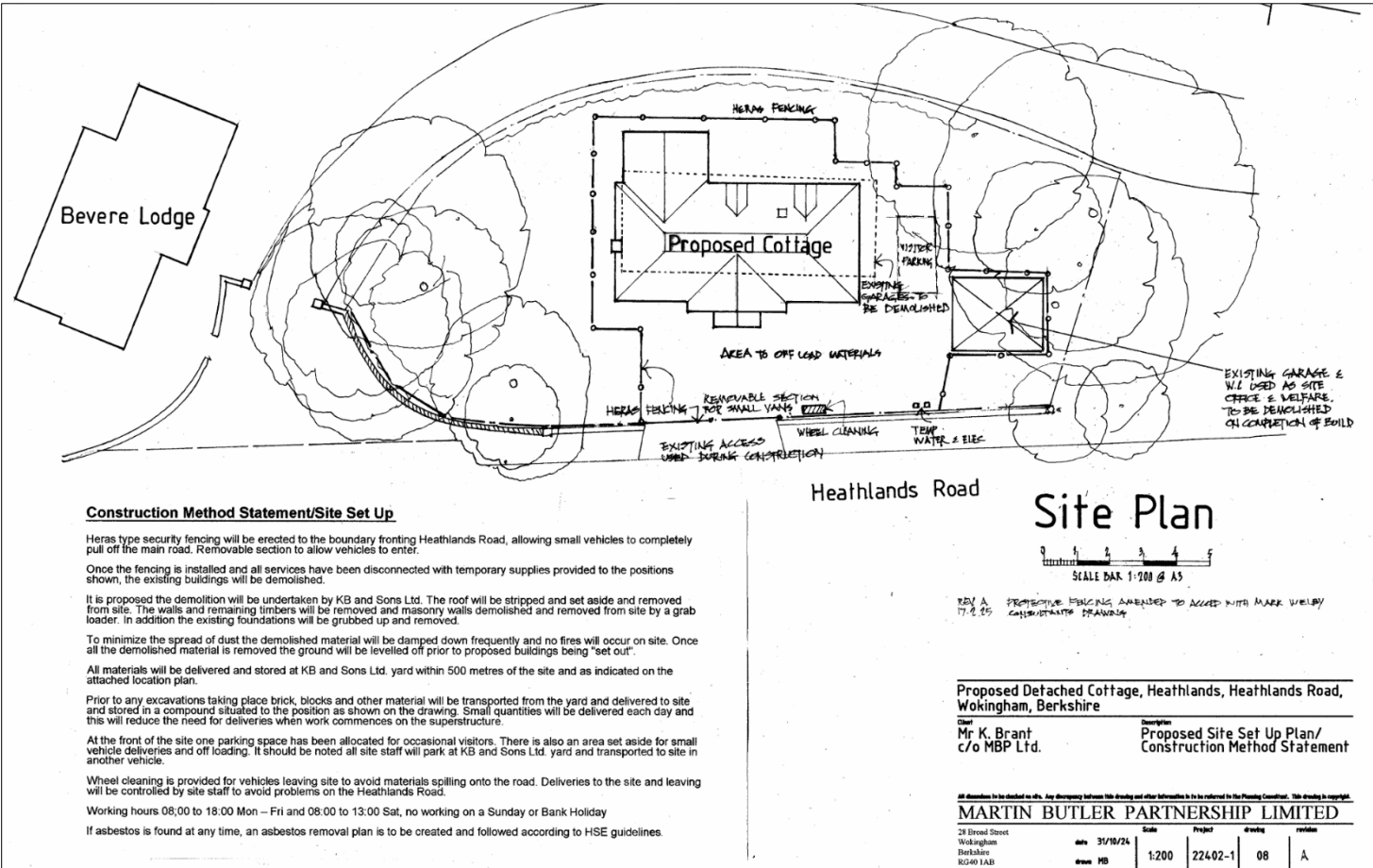
- The avoidance of unnecessary lighting and direct lighting on boundary habitats.
- Minimising light spill with the use of directional lighting.
- Restricting the height of light columns to reduce horizontal spill.
- Installing low wattage LED security lighting on timers on properties close to green infrastructure during construction to avoid future homeowners installing unsuitable lighting for bats.
- Maintaining “dark corridors” between roosting and foraging habitats.

Institute of Lighting Professionals (2021) Guidance Note 01/21 The Reduction of Obtrusive Light. ILP, Warwickshire. 3 Institute of Lighting Professionals (2023) Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting. ILP, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

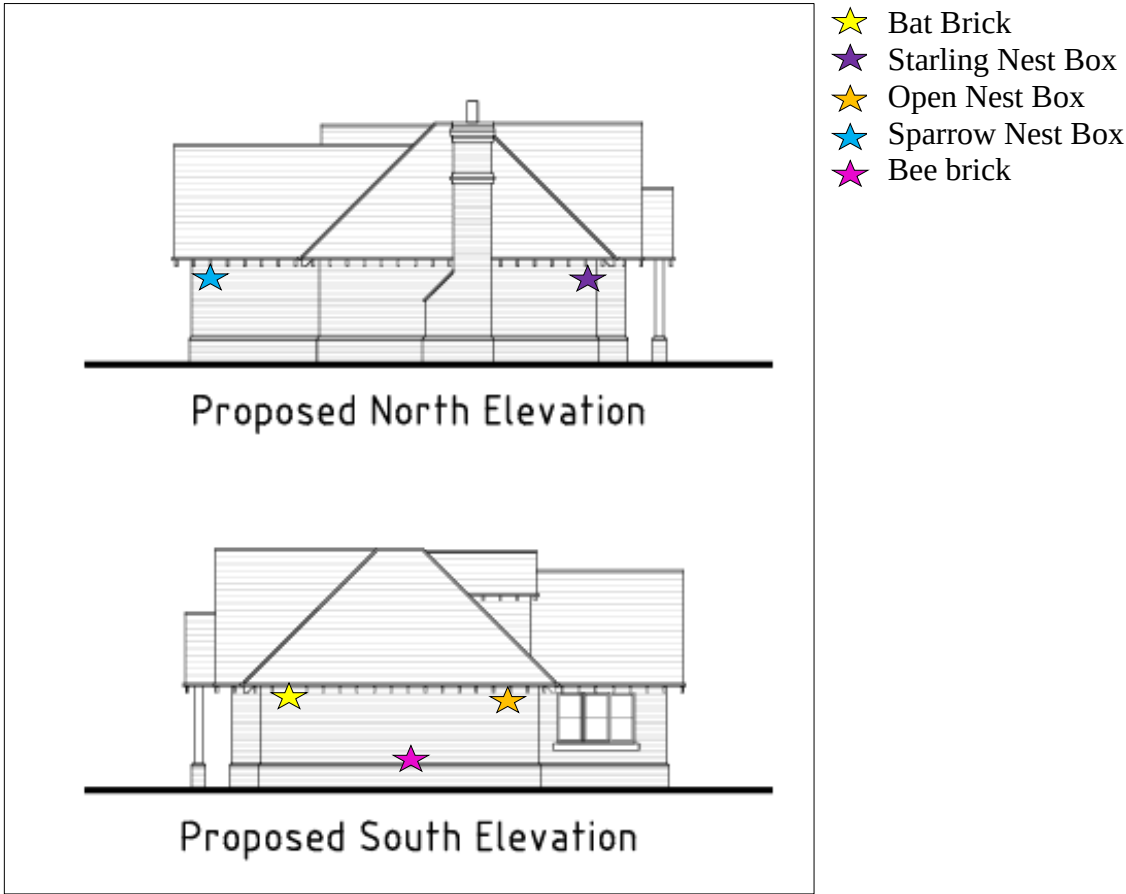
The enhancements should be checked by a suitable experienced ecologist post implementation after construction and a year later and five years later to assess the effectiveness and make any recommendations to improve them.

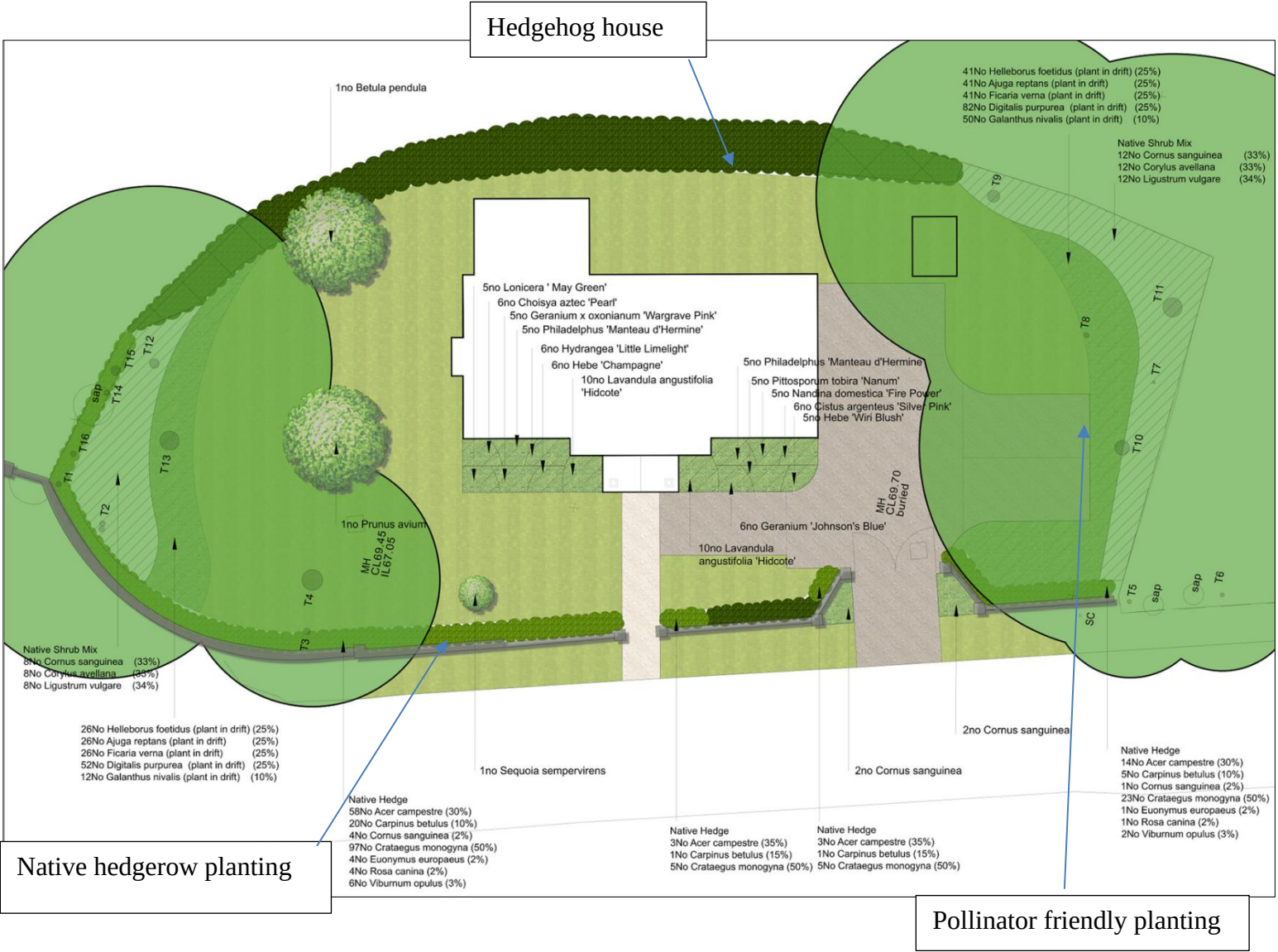
See Appendix 5 for the Work Schedule.

Appendix 1: Proposed Site Set Up Plan



Appendix 2: Biodiversity Enhancements





Appendix 3: Biodiversity Enhancements Particulars



The Forticrete Bat Box has been developed to be used in new build construction or renovation where there is a requirement to provide a habitat for pipistrelle bats.

Width 440mm x Height 215mm x Depth 100mm

Benefits

- The box is made of conventional cast stone front face but is backed with high grade plywood which is sawn and roughened internally to provide a haven for bats.

The Bat Box is maintenance free due to bottom entrance.

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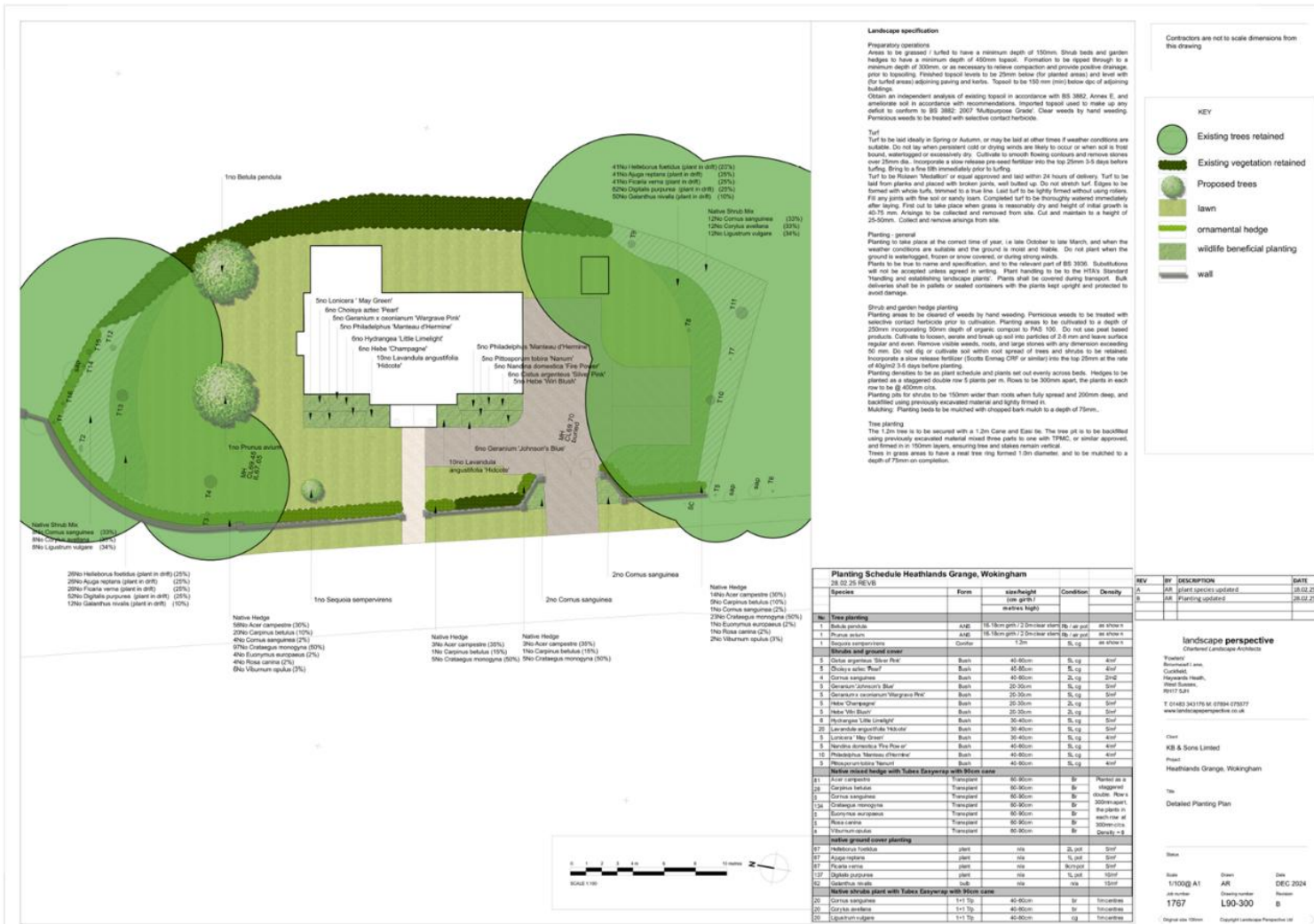


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Appendix 4: Landscape Plans



Appendix 5: Work Schedule

Works to be carried out	Preconstruction	During Works	Post Construction
Toolbox talk from ecologist to any workers on the site.	Before any works begin		
Nesting bird checks if within nesting bird season/ vegetation clearance checks for reptiles.	Before works begin on the buildings.		
Installation of enhancement features (hedgehog homes, insect houses).		Within a planting season of completed construction.	
Installation of integrated bat and bird bricks in houses		During construction.	
Lighting kept low and works occurring during daylight hours only.		Throughout works	
Compliance checks of mitigation and enhancements			Within 2 months of works completing. 1 year after completion.

Appendix 6: Legislation

Badgers

Badgers are protected under the Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence to kill, injure or disturb a badger whilst in a sett. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a sett.

Bats

As population numbers have fallen, all bats and their roosts are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat;
- intentionally, recklessly or deliberately disturb a bat (in relation to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) the offence applies whilst the species is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; in relation to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 it applies anywhere);
- damage or destroy the breeding or resting place (roost) of a bat;
- possess a bat (alive or dead), or any part of a bat;
- intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost;
- sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead), or parts of bats.

Please refer to the original legislation for the definitive interpretation.

Breeding Birds

The majority of UK bird species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, and a number of species are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006), identifying them as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

Reptiles

The four common native reptiles; grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), and adder (*Vipera berus*) are partially protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended. Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally kill or injure these species. The widespread reptile species are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006), identifying them as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

