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Biodiversity Enhancements, Bat Lighting Plan and Reptile Method Statement

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1. INTRODUCTION

Aims of the Report

This document outlines:
1) The details and locations of enhancement measures to be implemented ahead of or at the commencement of the operational phase of the development; and
2) The features or habitats of the site used by foraging and commuting bats, and lighting specifications required to avoid or reduce impacts upon those features and species. This report is based on the baseline ecological assessment for the scheme as well as current guidance. It assumes all recommended mitigation measures identified within the Ecology Report will be implemented as per planning conditions.
3) A strategy for reptiles on the Site providing a method statement and mitigation strategy.
These are conditions 23, 25 and 26 of the Planning Permission as outlined by Wokingham Borough Council (App 241828).

Proposed Works

Full application for proposed erection of 4 detached dwelling houses following demolition of the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings.

Baseline Description of Site

A walkover was carried out on the Site by ecologist Jamie-Lee Anderson of Arbtech on the 26th of November 2024 to assess any existing habitat and potential for bat roosting in the existing building, Preliminary Ecological Report V3 (Arbtech).

The Site comprises of one main residential dwelling due to be demolished. There is an additional bungalow and outbuildings present. There are expansive farmlands and amenity greenspace in the wider landscape.

1. Reptile Method Statement

Background

Habitat for reptiles onsite was found to be suboptimal however, the surrounding and connecting habitats provide opportunities for reptiles and a precautionary method statement has been produced to prevent the death of any reptiles on Site during the clearance phase. Biodiversity Enhancements for reptiles have also been included.

Legislation

All UK species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 making it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately injure, kill or take any wild reptile;
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a reptile (dead or alive) or any part of a reptile.

All UK reptiles are also listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Precautionary Method Statement

All site personnel shall be appropriately trained regarding identification of reptiles via a toolbox talk and also briefed on the contents of the translocation strategy to ensure that the agreed methodology is fully adhered to.

Vegetation should be maintained to a short sward of 5cm (maximum height) to make habitat less suitable and discourage reptiles from the area.

If reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or if at immediate risk moved to a sheltered vegetative area.

If a reptile is identified on Site work should cease and advise sought from a suitably qualified ecologist and how to proceed.

2. Lighting Design

The following recommendation are based on the baseline ecological assessment for the scheme as well as current guidance, specifically:
• Bats and artificial lighting guidance note (2018) produced by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP); and
• Eurobats guidance on bats and artificial light (2018) produced by a panel of experts including the BCT, to provide broad international guidance that complements the nationally drafted BCT/ILP guidance above. The specifications aim to balance the important safety and amenity needs of future occupiers of the property, with the requirement to minimise impacts upon biodiversity features on and adjacent to the site (and to comply with the relevant wildlife legislation).

The site itself is assessed as providing moderate value foraging habitat, with treelines providing important features to bats. Therefore exterior lighting will incorporate the following features:
• Light levels will be as low as possible, and the number of fixtures kept to the minimum required, to fulfil the lighting need;
• Lighting will aim to minimise light spillage towards boundary features and adjacent trees;
• Lighting should have a maximum of 7.5 to 10 lux;
• LED lights will be installed, using the warm white (or amber) spectrum, with peak wavelengths >550nm (2700 or 3000°K) and no UV component;
• Lighting will be directed to where it is needed, with horizontal spillage towards retained habitats minimised. This can be achieved on the building by restricting the height of the lighting installation and the design of the luminaire;
• Luminaires will have an upward light ratio of 0%, mounted on the horizontal; • Where appropriate (e.g. patios and porch) lighting should incorporate Passive Infra Red (PIR) motion sensors and timers to minimise the lit time, set to the minimum to minimise the duration of disturbance;
• As a matter of last resort, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill;
• Low level bollard lighting design will reduce spillage to the rear and above the unit, should incorporate sensors and timers where possible to minimise the lit time, and will be of the following style and specification:

3. Biodiversity Enhancements

The following ecological enhancements will be implemented on Site:

Bat Boxes

Two integrated bat boxes (eg. Forticrete), regularly used by locally common species, will be integrated within 2 of the buildings on Site.

The following guidance will be considered when erecting the boxes:

• Bat boxes can be installed at any time of year, but they are more likely to be used during their first summer if they are put up before the bats emerge from hibernation in the spring.

• All bat boxes should be positioned at a height of 3-6 metres (the higher the better) in an open, sunny position (6-8 hours of direct sunlight, or in a location where it receives the morning sun if this is not possible), avoiding areas to be lit at night.

Bird Boxes

The installation of 2 Schwegler No 17 swift nest and 2 sparrow terrace boxes on the buildings. These boxes should be installed in the eaves of the buildings and incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.

1 Schegler 1B nest box and 1 Woodstone nest box to be installed on mature trees on the Site. These boxes should be installed approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain, and strong sunlight.

Schwegler 2H nest boxes should be installed on trees on site. Open-fronted boxes for robins and wrens need to be low down, below 2m, well hidden in vegetation (essential to avoid predation issues).

Unless there are trees or buildings which shade the box during the day, face the box between north and east (or sheltered western aspects, thus avoiding strong sunlight and the wettest winds. Make sure that the birds have a clear flight path to the nest without any clutter directly in front of the entrance. Tilt the box forward slightly so that any driving rain will hit the roof and bounce clear. If fixing a nestbox to trees, nails may damage the tree. It is better to attach it either with a nylon bolt or with wire around the trunk or branch.

Details of the boxes are included in Appendix 5

Positions of the boxes are included in Appendix 4

Hedgehog House

Three hedgehog house are to be installed in three of the gardens, within the edges of planting away from any roads and driveways. In addition, hedgehog gaps in fences between the gardens and on the perimeter should be installed to allow transition between the garden habitats for hedgehogs.

Bee bricks

Two integrated bee/ insect bricks are to be installed on the southern elevations of two of the new houses. Ideally placed 1 m from the ground these will be near pollinator friendly planting.

Hibernacula

It is recommended that hibernacula for amphibians and reptiles be created within the Site to provide refuges for wildlife. The materials for creating these features can come from using trees and vegetation that might be cleared for the works. Hibernacula provides a place where reptiles and over wildlife can seek shade and protection.
Hibernacula design is shown in Appendix 4.

Planting Scheme

A planting scheme for the Site has been produced which includes a variety of hedge and shrubs which will provide additional nesting and foraging opportunities as well as shelter for local wildlife.
Some species to be planted include:

- Beech hedge Fagus sylvatica native woodland tree which will be used for hedgerow. This species can support hundreds of insect species and the dense hedge can provide excellent nesting opportunities and shelter for reptiles and mammals underneath.
- Pollinator plants providing a source of nectar for insects include lavender, escallonia and Himalayan sweet box.

See Appendix 3 for the proposed planting design.

Maintenance of Biodiversity Enhancements

A well-designed nest box will only need one annual clean in the autumn. It is important not to clean out nest boxes before August as they may still be occupied. Wait until autumn and then remove the contents, scattering them on the ground some way from the box to help prevent 2 parasites re-infesting the nest box. Wear gloves and use a small brush or scraper to remove debris from the corners. Boiling water can be used to kill any parasites remaining in the box, but remember to leave the lid off for a while for it to try out. Do not wait until the winter to clean out nest boxes as birds may already be roosting in them.

Flight paths to nest and bat boxes should be kept clear with branches trimmed if necessary. Lighting around these boxes should be avoided.

Planting will need to be well maintained particularly in its first year with regular water to establish plants.

Hedgehog fence gaps should be kept clear and new owners informed of their purpose.

4. Work Schedule

See Appendix 6 for indicative timing, relative to the build programme.

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the landowner/developer's responsibility (and their contractor as instructed) to install and maintain the agreed enhancements outlined and lighting as per the specifications proposed. If any significant deviations or amendments are subsequently required in relation to the latter, the prior consent of the LPA must be sought by the proposer prior to installation.

Monitoring

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.

Appendix 1: Site Location and Plans

Appendix 2: 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.

Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts receive full protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 2010 ('Habitat Regulations') (as amended). These make it illegal to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a great crested newt;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb great crested newts; in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating animals, to hibernate or migrate.

Appendix 3: Planting Design

	Plant schedule				
	Species	Form	Height	Spec.	Density
No	shrubs and ground cover				
24	Berberis x thunbergei 'Orange Rocket'	Bush	30-40cm	5L cg	4/m²
13	Choisya Aztec 'Pearl'	Bush	40-60cm	5L cg	4/m²
6	Choisya ternata 'Sundance'	Bush	40-60cm	5L cg	4/m²
23	Cornus sericea 'Kelseae Gold'	Bush	30-40cm	5L cg	4/m²
16	Escallonia 'Apple Blossom'	Bush	30-40cm	5L cg	5/m²
34	Hebe 'Midsummer Beauty'	Bush	20-30cm	2L cg	5/m²
55	Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote'	Bush	30-40cm	5L cg	5/m²
10	Nandina domestica 'Fire Power'	Bush	40-60cm	5L cg	4/m²
14	Pittosporum tobira 'Nanum'	Bush	40-60cm	5L cg	4/m²
31	Sarcococca hookeriana var. digyna	Bush	30-40cm	5L cg	4/m²
8	Sambucus racemosa 'Sutherland Gold'	Bush	40-60cm	5L cg	4/m²
29	Skimmia japonica 'Nymans'	shrub	30-40cm	5L cg	4/m²
No	hedge				
253	Fagus sylvatica	hedge	120-150cm	BR	staggered row

Contractors are not to scale dimensions from this drawing

LEGEND

Existing tree retained
Existing hedge/understorey retained
lawns
Amenity shrub planting
Garden hedge
Access road - Tarmac
Paths and patios - concrete slab paving
1.8m high timber close boarded fence
1.2m high cleft chestnut post & rail fence
Gate

REV	BY	DESCRIPTION	DATE

landscape perspective
Chartered Landscape Architects

Client
BlueKing Holdings ltd

Project
58 Finchampstead Rd, Wokingham

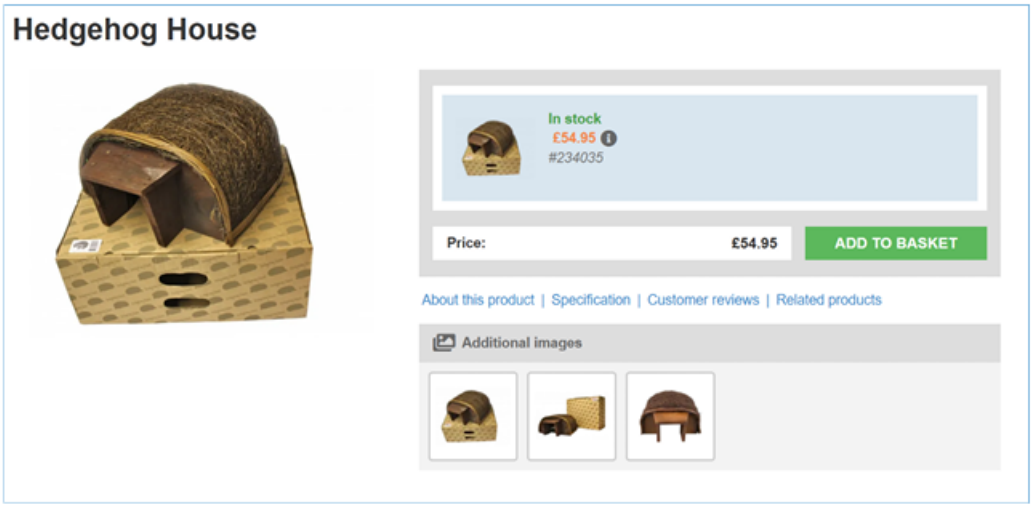
Title
detailed planting plan

Status
for planning

Scale	Drawn	Date
1:200 @ A1	AR	Jan 2026
Job number 1802	Drawing number L90-300	Revision

Appendix 4: Biodiversity Enhancements

Appendix 5: Details of Biodiversity Enhancements



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.

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 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.

WoodStone Build-in Swift Nest Box A

Manufacturer: CJ Wildlife

- Constructed from FSC certified WoodStone
- Designed to be incorporated into buildings

- **In stock**

  £31.99

#217262 The WoodStone Build-in Swift Nest Box A is constructed from FSC certified WoodStone and has a plywood back. The nest box is designed to be incorporated into the side of a building making it ideal for including in new buildings or renovations. The WoodStone material gives this nest box excellent thermal properties and means that it will last for many years.

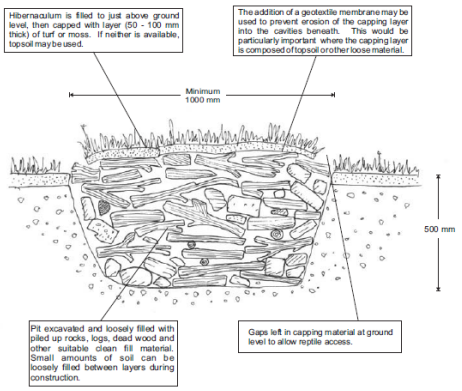
This nest box should be built in at a height of at least five metres

ANNEX D **HIBERNACULA DESIGN**

VOLUME 10 SECTION 4
PART 7 HA 116/05

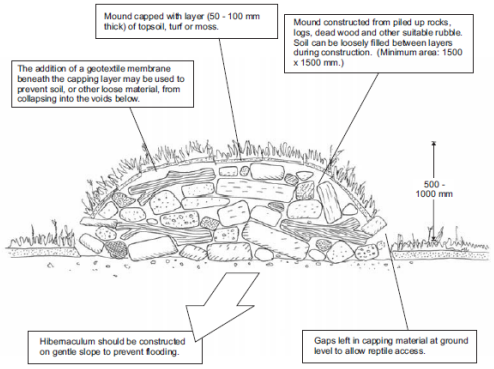
Hibernaculum on free-draining ground

Where ground conditions allow, the hibernaculum should be incorporated into a shallow pit. This design is more likely to remain frost-free, and will be less obtrusive and thus unlikely to be subject to interference.



Hibernaculum on impermeable ground

Where ground conditions are impermeable, then an 'above-ground' or mounded design should be utilised in order to prevent the hibernaculum from flooding. This design should also be used if it is not possible to excavate a pit for any other reason.



MAY 2005

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Appendix 6: 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	If any new workers begin on Site	
Vegetation kept short	To deter reptiles to be present on Site	To maintain unsuitable reptile habitat during construction phase.	
Installation of enhancement features (bat box, nest box, hedgehog homes, insect houses, hibernacula).		Within a planting season of completed construction.	Within a planting season of completed construction.
Landscaping			To include native planting and pollinators. To be cared for and watered.
Lighting kept low and works occurring during daylight hours only.		Throughout works	
Compliance checks of enhancements			Within 2 months of works completing. 1 year after completion and 5 years after completion.