

HOGWOOD FARM, FINCHAMPSTEAD
DETAILED BAT MITIGATION STRATEGY – PARCEL 13

Prepared for Vistry Thames Valley

by

Hankinson Duckett Associates

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hankinson duckett associates

t 01491 838175 **f** 01491 838997 **e** consult@hda-enviro.co.uk **w** www.hda-enviro.co.uk

The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8BA

Hankinson Duckett Associates Limited Registered in England & Wales 3462810 Registered Office: The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location and summary description

1.1.1 This report describes a Detailed Bat Mitigation Strategy in relation to Parcel 13 of the development of approximately 110ha of land at Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead. The Parcel 13 development area comprises approximately 1.9ha of land, hereinafter referred to as 'the site'. The site centre is located by National Grid Reference SU 7756 6459. The Detailed Bat Mitigation Strategy was commissioned by Vistry Thames Valley in phases in January and February 2025.

1.1.2 The Parcel 13 site is located to the south of Arborfield Green, Berkshire. In general terms, at the time of the Phase 1 habitat survey in 2023 it comprised a triangle area of ruderal vegetation and hardstanding, bordered by a native hedgerow with trees to the north-east and roads. It should however be noted that prior to this, the Parcel 13 site had been used as a site compound for the Nine Mile Road Extension (NMRE) road as can be seen on *Figure 1* below. The Parcel 13 site is bordered to the south by the NMRE road beyond which is a future development parcel which currently comprises ruderal vegetation and bare ground; to the north-west by NMRE road beyond which is a future development parcel which currently comprise bare earth; and to the north-east by Park Lane beyond which are residential dwellings and Robinson Crusoe Park. The location and boundary of the Parcel 13 site is shown in *Appendix A*.

Figure 1: Satellite imagery of the site from February 2022 (GoogleEarth, 2025)



1.1.3 The Parcel 13 site is part of a larger area covering a total of 110ha, hereinafter referred to as the 'wider site'. The wider site includes residential properties and a construction site associated with previous phases in the north-west and a SANG in the south which comprises a mix of wetland, species-rich grassland, scrub and woodland habitats. In general terms, the western area of the wider site is comprised of three fields of disturbed ground dominated by short ruderal vegetation with scattered areas of tall ruderal vegetation and large spoil heaps bordered by mature trees and woodland with scrub field

margins. The central and eastern areas of the site are comprised of areas of hardstanding and construction/disturbed ground bordered by mature treelines and woodland. The south-eastern areas of the site comprise two fields of semi-improved grassland fields intersected by a ditch with associated scrub and scattered trees. A species-rich hedgerow with trees adjacent to Park Lane is present along the southern boundary. Woodland shaws and copses are located in the northern, western and central areas of the site, including mixed, broadleaved and broadleaved plantation woodland types, some of which are included on Natural England's Inventory of Ancient Woodland. Wetland habitats within the site include drainage ditches and small streams associated with the field boundaries and several ponds in poor condition are located across the site. The wider site is bordered to the north by a construction site, the Bohunt School and the Hogwood Industrial Estate; to the east by Park Lane beyond which lie residential dwellings and park homes; to the south by Park Lane and farmland; and to the west by A327 Reading Road and Sheerlands Road beyond which lie farmland and woodland. The wider area is dominated by agricultural land interspersed with woodland and residential properties.

- 1.1.4 Further information on the extent and composition of habitats across the Parcel 13 site and the wider site is provided in the Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Target Notes (HDA, 2025a).

1.2 **Legislative context**

- 1.2.1 All UK bat species are 'European Protected Species' (EPSs) protected under the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended). In relation to an EPSs, unless subject of an appropriate Natural England derogation licence the 2017 Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species, in particular any disturbance which is likely to: (i) impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or to hibernate or migrate; (ii) affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; and/or
- To (a) be in possession of, or to control; (b) to transport any live or dead animal or any part of an animal; (c) to sell or exchange or (d) offer for sale or exchange any live or dead animal or part of an animal of an EPS.

- 1.2.2 In addition, all UK bats are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). All species are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act and are subject to the provisions of Sections 9.4b and 9.4c, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat.

1.2.3 If works are planned that are likely to constitute an offence under the current legislation, an application for a derogation licence should be made to Natural England.

1.2.4 Seven species of bat (Barbastelle, Bechstein's, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Greater Horseshoe and Lesser Horseshoe) are also identified as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. This requires planning authorities to regard these species as a material consideration in the planning process.

1.3 Development proposals

1.3.1 Planning permission (O/2014/2179 and 140764) was granted in January 2017 for a hybrid application. This comprises:

- Outline permission for demolition of all existing buildings on site; up to 1,500 new dwellings; employment floor space; a Neighbourhood Centre; a primary school; sports pitches and associated pavilion building; highways infrastructure; associated landscaping, public realm, open/green space and sustainable urban drainage systems; and
- Full permission for a 29.7ha Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) in the south of the site.

The hybrid planning permission was subsequently amended by a Section 73 application (181194) which was approved in November 2018. Subsequently, in April 2023 a Non-Material Amendment (NMA) application was submitted to WBC to vary the parameter plans approved as part of the Section 73 application (ref:181194)

1.4 Scope and purpose of the report

1.4.1 Surveys of the Parcel 13 site and wider site undertaken by Entec in 2008 and Amec in 2012 identified features suitable for roosting and foraging bats. During subsequent bat activity surveys, species recorded included Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Nathusius' Pipistrelle, *Myotis* sp., Brown Long-eared bat, Noctule and Serotine (Royal Haskoning DHV, 2014). Further survey work was carried out between 2017-2021 by HDA to assess the suitability of buildings and trees within the site and wider site to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats (HDA, 2019). This is further supplemented by a Phase 1 bat roost scoping survey and Phase 2 bat roost survey carried out Stantec in 2020 for the construction of the Nine Mile Ride Extension (NMRE) which included surveys of some trees within the Parcel 13 site (Stantec, 2020).

1.4.2 In recognition of the potential of the Parcel 13 site to support bats, the time that has passed since the original surveys were undertaken and within the legislative context set out in *Section 1.2*, an updated Phase 1 bat roost scoping survey, Phase 2 bat roost

surveys and Phase 2 bat activity survey were carried out by HDA between 2022-2025 to assess the suitability of buildings and trees within the site and wider site to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats (HDA, 2023). Together with the work undertaken in 2008, 2012 and 2017-2021 this information has been used to inform this Detailed Bat Mitigation Strategy for Parcel 13 of the proposed development.

1.4.3 This Detailed Bat Mitigation Strategy describes the results of the suite of bat surveys, provides an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on bats, and identifies measures to maintain and, where possible, enhance the value of the site for the local bat population. Specifically, the aims of the study are:

- i) To identify potential bat roost sites within the Parcel 13 site;
- ii) To determine the need for any further surveys prior to development commencing to identify the presence/likely absence of roosting bats within suitable features where affected by the proposed development, and identify species and numbers present;
- iii) To determine levels of bat foraging and commuting activity within habitat potentially affected by the Parcel 13 development;
- iv) To determine the requirement, if any, for licensing in respect of bats; and
- v) To identify appropriate mitigation and/or enhancement measures to ensure that the Parcel 13 development avoids adverse impacts on bats, and, where possible, provides enhancements to support the long-term favourable conservation status of bats in accordance with nature conservation legislation, planning policy and the 2006 NERC Act.

1.4.4 With respect to the Parcel 13 development, this Detailed Bat Mitigation Strategy for Parcel 13 also addresses Planning Condition 24, which requires that:

“Prior to or concurrent with the submission of a reserved matters application for any sub phase of the development a detailed bat mitigation strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority for that sub phase of the development. Each detailed bat mitigation strategy shall include an appropriate detailed lighting scheme that maintains the dark corridors as set out in Appendix 1 Recommended Dark Corridor Locations Plan of the submitted Hogwood Garden Village Bat Activity Survey Report - Revision: 02/Final (Royal Haskoning DHV, 10th September 2015) and should be in accordance with the submitted Hogwood Garden Village Bat Activity Survey Report - Revision: 02/Final (Royal Haskoning DHV, 10th September 2015). The mitigation, contingency and enhancement measures contained within each of the submitted detailed bat mitigation strategies shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.”

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The methodology followed by HDA in relation to all updated bat survey work undertaken at the site is consistent with current legislation and good practice guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust, at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016; BCT, 2023). The following sections detail the suite of surveys undertaken to date to inform the development of the

Parcel 13 site and the wider site and the results of these surveys are provided in *Section 3*.

2.2 Phase 1 bat scoping survey

2.2.1 The Parcel 13 site was most recently subject to a Phase 1 bat scoping survey by Bob Goldsmith of HDA on the 19th February 2025. All buildings and trees within the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and classified according to their potential.

Phase 1 building survey

2.2.2 All buildings were inspected externally from ground level using binoculars and a powerful torch to identify and investigate any potential entry and exit points such as missing roof tiles, loose fascias and lifted lead flashing, and to look for evidence of entry/exit in the form of staining, discolouration and/or scratch marks.

2.2.3 Internally, buildings were searched exhaustively where possible, to look for evidence of current or former occupation by bats. A powerful torch was used to investigate any accessible cavities, crevices and recesses in each building.

2.2.4 In view of the findings of the internal/external inspections, the potential of the buildings to support roosting bats ('confirmed roost', 'high', 'moderate', 'low' or 'negligible') was assessed in accordance with current best practice guidelines (BCT, 2023). Assessment of bat roosting potential requires consideration of a number of criteria, including the design and construction of the building or structure, the size and location of potential features and access points, the position of the building or structure, aspect, geographical location, surrounding land use and adjacent landscape linkages and previous survey results.

Phase 1 tree survey

2.2.5 All trees within and adjacent to the Parcel 13 site were inspected from ground-level with the aid of binoculars and a powerful torch to identify potential features suitable for use by roosting bats. Potential features include splits, cracks and cavities, peeling bark, woodpecker holes, broken branches and a covering of Ivy where this is of a sufficient age to provide a suitable microclimate between the tree and Ivy stem(s).

2.2.6 In accordance with current best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2023), trees were placed into one of the following four categories based on the nature, size, location and quality of features present in each tree and surrounding habitat and previous survey results:

- *Negligible suitability* - Trees with no or negligible features for roosting bats;

- *Low suitability (PRF-I)* - Trees supporting features only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitat;
- *Moderate or higher suitability (PRF-M)* - Trees supporting features suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony; or
- Known or confirmed bat roost.

2.3 Phase 2 bat roost surveys

2.3.1 All trees within and bordering the Parcel 13 site identified as having moderate or higher potential (PRF-M) to support roosting bats during the Phase 1 bat scoping survey or confirmed roosts identified by Stantec in 2020 (Stantec, 2021), were to be retained and not expected to be affected by the development proposals.

2.3.2 In line with current best practice guidelines (BCT, 2023), surveys of trees with low potential to support roosting bats (PRF-I) are not required in support of a planning application. However, in the event that the retention of any of these trees is not possible, the appropriate approach to works is given in *Section 5* below.

2.3.3 In addition, no buildings with bat roost potential were identified within the site. Subsequently, no Phase 2 surveys in the form of emergence/re-entry surveys or aerial inspections were conducted by HDA of the Parcel 13 site¹.

2.4 Phase 2 bat activity survey

Bat activity transects

2.4.1 Land to the immediate south-west of the site, as part of a survey of approximately 58.5ha of the wider site, was subject to a suite of dusk and dawn activity surveys most recently undertaken between May and September 2022². Due to the size of the survey area, the survey area was divided into two survey area transects of which land to the immediate south-west of Parcel 13 was located within Transect 2. Surveyors carrying hand-held bat detectors walked transects of the wider site, with listening stops at regular intervals for periods of up to 5 minutes. Visual observations of bats and bat call registrations were noted, recording time, location, activity and, where known, species. Recordings of foraging and/or commuting activity made using digital devices were subsequently analysed to determine the identity of any unconfirmed species recorded during the surveys. Times and dates of surveys carried out are given in *Table 1* below, along with weather conditions.

¹ It should be noted however, that Phase 2 bat surveys were carried out by Stantec in July-September 2020 for the construction of the NMRE (Stantec, 2021). Where relevant, information from these surveys is included below.

² The Parcel 13 site at the time of the activity surveys was inaccessible to survey due to the presence of a NMRE construction site. This is however not considered a significant limitation to the survey given the small size of the site and the habitats of interest for foraging bats being limited to the hedgerow with trees bordering the north-eastern site boundary which is proposed to be retained.

Table 1: Details of bat activity surveys of Transect 2 (located to the immediate south-west of the Parcel 13 site)

Date	Sunset / sunrise	Time	Weather conditions
04/05/2022	20.30	20.30 - 22.30	100% cloud cover, Beaufort Scale = 0, dry, 13-10°C
20/07/2022	21.08	21.08 - 23.08	100% cloud cover, Beaufort Scale = 2, light rain showers between 21.30 - 22.15, 20°C
13/09/2022	06.35	04.35 - 06.35	80% cloud cover, Beaufort Scale = 1, dry, 15°C

Automated surveys

2.4.2 Automated surveys were carried out as a supplement to the activity transect surveys and to gain further information on the species and frequency of bat activity at the Parcel 13 site and wider site. Two programmable electronic bat detectors³ were positioned in suitable habitat and left in place on three occasions between May and October 2022. The detectors were programmed to record all bat activity. Details of the times and dates of automated bat detector deployments are provided in *Table 2* below.

Table 2: Details of automated bat detector deployment

Location	Deployment and collection date	Sunset / Sunrise	Temp. Max. / Min. (°C)
A & B*	04.04.2022 – 05.04.2022	19:42 / 06:30	13 / 9
	05.04.2022 – 06.04.2022	19:43 / 06:28	11 / 8.
	06.04.2022 - 07.04.2022	19:45 / 06:26	9 / 7
	07.04.2022 - 08.04.2022	19:47 / 06:23	7 / 4
	08.04.2022 - 09.04.2022	19:48 / 06:21	8 / 2
	09.04.2022 - 10.04.2022	19:50 / 06:19	9 / 2
C & D	14.07.2022 - 15.07.2022	21:15 / 05:04	20 / 9
	15.07.2022 - 16.07.2022	21:14 / 05:05	21 / 11
	16.07.2022 - 17.07.2022	21:13 / 05:06	23 / 12
	17.07.2022 - 18.07.2022	21:12 / 05:08	24 / 14
	18.07.2022 - 19.07.2022	21:11 / 05:09	28 / 18
E & F	28.09.2022 - 29.09.2022	18:48 / 07:01	18 / 3
	29.09.2022 - 30.09.2022	18:46 / 07:02	15 / 4
	30.09.2022 - 01.10.2022	18:44 / 07:04	14 / 11
	01.10.2022 - 02.10.2022	18:41 / 07:05	16 / 12
	02.10.2022 – 03.10.2022	18:39 / 07:07	17 / 5

* *The static at Location B recorded one less night than the static at Location A (i.e. until the 09.04.2022).*

2.4.3 The results of the updated bat activity transect and automated detector surveys have been used to support the earlier assessment of bat foraging and commuting activity made in the Ecology Chapter of the Environmental Assessment submitted in support of the

³ Anabat Express with remote microphone and 'Analook' software.

planning application (Royal Haskoning, 2014) and the bat activity surveys undertaken by HDA between 2017 to 2018 (HDA, 2019).

2.5 Limitations of surveys

2.5.1 Although the most recent bat activity surveys were associated with the land to the immediate south-west of the site, rather than the site itself, the site is dominated by ruderal vegetation and hardstanding, bordered by a native hedgerow with trees to the north-east and roads (*Appendix A*). As such, the habitat of highest interest for foraging and commuting bats associated with the site comprises the native hedgerow with trees along the north-eastern site boundary which is proposed to be retained.

2.5.2 With due consideration to the limitation given above, all surveys followed best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016; BCT, 2023) and were conducted at an appropriate time of year, under favourable weather conditions and with an appropriate level of survey effort both in terms of the number of surveyors used and number of survey visits undertaken. Although periods of rain were experienced on one of the bat activity surveys, this was not found to have affected levels of bat activity and is not considered a constraint to the findings of the Phase 2 surveys. The surveys are therefore considered sufficient to allow a robust assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on bats and to inform the recommendations provided in *Section 5* of this report.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Phase 1 bat roost scoping survey

Buildings

3.1.1 All buildings within the Parcel 13 site were inspected during the Phase 1 bat scoping survey. The results of the Phase 1 building survey are summarised in *Table 3* below and the location of the building is shown in *Appendix A*. Photograph references relate to the photographs provided in *Appendix B*.

Table 3: Results of Phase 1 bat scoping building survey

Building	Description	Findings	Bat Roost Potential
B29 (Photos 1 to 4)	World War 2 pillbox of brick and concrete construction with a flat roof.	External: The building is heavily overgrown with scrub however no suitable features for roosting bats were recorded. Internal: The building was noted in 2018 to be light within from an open doorway and loopholes. However in February 2025, the pillbox was inaccessible for internal inspection due to the presence of floodwater within the structure. Evidence of bat activity: None recorded.	Negligible

Building	Description	Findings	Bat Roost Potential
		Phase 1 bat scoping survey carried out in 2018: B29 was recorded as having negligible potential to support roosting bats.	

Trees

- 3.1.2 All trees identified as having potential to support roosting bats within the Parcel 13 site are described in *Table 4* below and their locations are given in *Appendix A*.

Table 4: Results of Phase 1 bat scoping tree survey

Tree ref*	Species	Findings	Bat Roost Potential
45	Oak	Potential branch collars and deadwood in canopy.	Low bat roost potential (PRF-I)
52	Oak	Branch collars and occluded wood in higher canopy.	Confirmed roost for 2 Common Pipistrelle identified by Stantec in 2020
56	Oak	Heavily Ivy clad tree. No suitable features identified from ground level, but suitable roosting features could be concealed.	Low bat roost potential (PRF-I)
60	Oak	Trunk cavity on western aspect. Branch collar on north-western aspect. Heavily Ivy clad tree. No further suitable features identified from ground level, but suitable roosting features could be concealed.	Moderate or higher bat roost potential (PRF-M)
63	Oak	Branch collar on southern aspect. Split branch on western aspect. Heavily Ivy clad tree. No further suitable features identified from ground level, but suitable roosting features could be concealed.	Moderate or higher bat roost potential (PRF-M)
66	Oak	Peeling bark at trunk wound on southern aspect.	Moderate or higher bat roost potential (PRF-M)
75	Oak	Heavily Ivy clad tree. No suitable features identified from ground level, but suitable roosting features could be concealed.	Low bat roost potential (PRF-I)

* Tree reference numbers relate to those used for the *Arboricultural Impact Assessment (RPS, 2025)*.

- 3.1.3 All other trees within and immediately adjacent to the Parcel 13 site were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats.

3.2 Phase 2 bat roost surveys

- 3.2.1 All trees within and bordering the Parcel 13 site identified as having moderate or higher potential (PRF-M) to support roosting bats or confirmed bat roosts during the Phase 1 bat scoping survey are to be retained and not expected to be affected directly or indirectly by the development proposals. Therefore no Phase 2 bat roost surveys were carried out to inform the proposed development of the site.

3.2.2 It should be noted however, that Phase 2 bat surveys were carried out by Stantec in July-September 2020 for the construction of the NMRE (Stantec, 2021). This suite of surveys recorded the presence of two bat roosts in trees within the site:

- Tree 52 – During surveys carried out in August and September 2020, two Common Pipistrelles were recorded emerging. One bat was recorded emerging from a lower branch and one bat was recorded emerging from the main stem on the north-eastern aspect of the tree; and
- Tree 49 – During surveys carried out in July to September 2020, an individual Soprano Pipistrelle was recorded emerging from the tree. An EPS licence (2021-51944-EPS-MIT) was subsequently granted for the felling of this tree supporting roosting bats to facilitate the NMRE works, and this tree was subsequently felled.

3.3 Phase 2 activity transect surveys

3.3.1 Details of the date and time of bat activity transect surveys carried out, along with weather conditions and sunset/sunrise times, are provided in *Table 1*. The areas covered during each survey visit included the south-western boundary of the Parcel 13 site, as part of a survey of the wider site.

3.3.2 A visual summary of bat foraging and commuting activity recorded during the surveys of the Parcel 13 site has been provided in *Appendix C*. Although no bat activity was recorded in close proximity to the site, five species/species groups were recorded along a woodland belt to the south of the site during the transect surveys of this area: Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule, Brown Long-eared bat and *Myotis* sp. bat. A summary of each species/species group recorded, their activity and an estimation of numbers using the Parcel 13 site and wider site during any one survey is provided in *Table 5* below.

Table 5: Summary of bat activity during transect surveys

Species	Activity summary	Approx. number recorded*
Common Pipistrelle	Common Pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species during the activity surveys. The majority of Common Pipistrelles were recorded using hedgerows and woodland bordering the fields and woodland within the wider site. The majority of Common Pipistrelle activity was recorded along woodland edge habitats in the centre and north-west of the wider site, at least 540m to the west of the Parcel 13 site. It is expected that up to 1 Common Pipistrelle bats could have been using the Parcel 13 site at any one time for foraging and commuting and that the Parcel 13 site forms part of a much larger foraging range for a low number of individuals of this species.	1

Soprano Pipistrelle	Soprano Pipistrelle was the second most frequently recorded species during the activity surveys of the wider site. The majority of Soprano Pipistrelle activity was recorded along the woodland belt aligned east to west in the east of the wider site, approximately 300m to the south-west of the Parcel 13 site. Soprano Pipistrelles were also recorded on a less frequent basis scattered across the wider site, associated with the hedgerows and woodlands bordering the grassland and arable fields. It is expected that up to 1 Soprano Pipistrelle bat could have been using the Parcel 13 site at any one time during the survey and that the Parcel 13 site forms part of a much larger foraging range for a low number of individuals of this species.	1
Noctule	Noctule activity was scattered across the wider site, with activity focused on a line of scrub and tall ruderal vegetation aligned east-west to the west of the Parcel 13 site within the wider site. Noctules were also recorded on a less frequent basis using hedgerows and woodlands bordering the grassland and arable fields in the remainder of the wider site. The remainder of recordings were largely associated with high level passes by individuals crossing the wider site. It is expected that up to 1 Noctule bat could have been using the Parcel 13 site at any one time during the survey and that the Parcel 13 site forms part of a much larger foraging range for a low number of individuals of this species.	1
Brown Long-eared bat	Brown Long-eared bat was recorded on two occasions foraging along hedgerows in the east and centre of the wider site. It is likely that no more than 1 Brown Long-eared bat was using the Parcel 13 site at any one time during the survey and that the Parcel 13 forms part of a much larger foraging range for a low number of this species. It should be noted however that Brown Long-eared bat calls are very quiet which means that they are less easily recorded by bat detectors. It is therefore possible (in particular in view of the known presence of a Brown Long-eared bat maternity roost within the wider site) that higher numbers of Brown Long-eared bats may have been using the wider site than were recorded.	1
<i>Myotis</i> sp.	<i>Myotis</i> sp. bat have been recorded on one occasion foraging within a grassland field in the east of the wider site. It is expected that up to 1 <i>Myotis</i> sp. bat could have been using the Parcel 13 site at any one time during the survey and that the Parcel 13 site forms part of a much larger foraging range for a low number of individuals of this species group.	1

**This is an approximation of the number of bats of any one species estimated to have been using the Parcel 13 site during any one visit.*

3.4 Phase 2 automated activity surveys

3.4.1 The dates during which the automated detector was deployed, along with sunset/sunrise times and temperatures, are provided in *Table 2*.

3.4.2 The automated detectors were placed in six separate locations within the wider site to give an indication of the species and relative levels of activity throughout the night. A summary of bat activity recorded during the automated surveys in each location is provided below in *Table 6*. In total, five species/species groups were recorded during the automated surveys; Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule, Brown Long-eared bat and *Myotis* sp. bat.

Table 6: Summary of bat activity recorded by the automated detector

Location	Activity summary
A	The automated detector at Location A recorded bat activity along a woodland belt aligned east-west in the east of the wider site, approximately 200m to the south-west of the Parcel 13 site. A total of 336 bat passes were recorded over 6 nights; an average of 56 bat recordings per night. Soprano Pipistrelle the most frequently recorded species (63.1% of the bat recordings), with occasional to regular foraging activity recorded during every night. Common Pipistrelle was the second most frequently recorded species (22.9% of the bat recordings), with occasional foraging activity recorded during every night. Occasional passes by Noctule and <i>Myotis</i> sp. bat were also recorded (12.5% and 1.5% of passes, respectively).
B	The automated detector at Location B recorded bat activity associated with a woodland belt aligned north-south in the east of the wider site, approximately 980m to the west of the Parcel 13 site. A total of 684 bat passes were recorded over 5 nights; an average of 137 bat recordings per night. Common Pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species (55.7% of the bat recordings), with occasional to regular foraging activity recorded during every night. Soprano Pipistrelle was the second most frequently recorded species (32.6% of the bat recordings) with occasional to regular foraging activity recorded during every night in which bats were recorded. Occasional passes by Noctule, Brown Long-eared bat and <i>Myotis</i> sp. bat were also recorded (7.9%, 2.9% and 0.9% passes, respectively).
C	The automated detector at Location C recorded bat activity at the junction of a woodland belt and adjoining hedgerow in the east of the wider site, approximately 150m to the south-west of the Parcel 13 site. A total of 609 bat passes were recorded over 5 nights; an average of 122 bat recordings per night. Common Pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species (80.8% of the bat recordings), with occasional to regular foraging activity recorded during most night. Soprano Pipistrelle was the second most frequently recorded species (17.7% of the bat recordings), with occasional foraging activity recorded during most nights. Occasional passes by Brown Long-eared bat and <i>Myotis</i> sp. bat were also recorded (0.5% and 0.1% of passes, respectively).

Location	Activity summary
D	The automated detector at Location D recorded bat activity along a woodland margin located in the centre of the wider site, approximately 550m to the south-west of the Parcel 13 site. A total of 1194 bat passes were recorded over 5 nights; an average of 239 bat recordings per night. Soprano Pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species (69.3% of the bat recordings), with occasional to regular foraging activity recorded during most nights. Common Pipistrelle was the second most frequently recorded species (31.4% of the bat recordings), with occasional foraging activity recorded on all nights. Occasional passes by Brown Long-eared bat, Noctule and <i>Myotis</i> sp. bat were also recorded (0.8%, 0.3% and 0.1% of passes, respectively).
E	The automated detector at Location E recorded bat activity associated with a tree group in the centre of the wider site, approximately 550m to the west of the Parcel 13 site. A total of 49 bat passes were recorded over 5 nights; an average of 10 bat recordings per night. Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle were the most frequently recorded species (44.9 and 30.6% of the bat recordings), with occasional foraging activity recorded during most nights. Occasional passes by Noctule and Brown Long-eared bat were also recorded (14.3% and 10.2% of passes, respectively).
F	The automated detector at Location F recorded bat activity associated with the treeline and hedgerow located along the southern boundary of the wider site, approximately 580m to the south of the Parcel 13 site. A total of 46 bat passes were recorded over 5 nights; an average of 9 bat recordings per night. Common Pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species (80.4% of the bat recordings) with occasional foraging activity recorded during every night. Soprano Pipistrelle being the second most frequent recorded species (17.4% of bat recordings) with occasional foraging activity recorded during most nights. Occasional passes by <i>Myotis</i> sp. bat were also recorded (2.2% of passes).

3.4.3 In summary, the static detectors recorded Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle at all locations the remote detectors were deployed. *Myotis* sp. bat were recorded at all locations except Location E. Noctule bats were recorded at all locations except from Locations C and F. Brown Long-eared bats were recorded at all locations except from Locations A and F.

3.4.4 The greatest number of bat recordings was recorded at Location D and the highest diversity of bat species was recorded at Location B and D. The fewest number of bat recordings per night and lowest diversity of bat species was recorded at Location F. Soprano Pipistrelle and Common Pipistrelle were the most frequently recorded species

relating to 47.8% and 46.7% of all bat passes recorded, respectively, with all locations being used by foraging bats of these species on at least an occasional basis on each night. Noctule, followed by Brown Long-eared bat and *Myotis* sp. bats, were the next most recorded bat species/species groups (3.6%, 1.4% and 0.5% of all bat recordings, respectively), with similar patterns of activity to the Soprano and Common Pipistrelle bats however at much lower numbers.

4 SUMMARY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 Bat roosting habitat

4.1.1 In relation to the Parcel 13 site, the suite of bat surveys identified one confirmed bat roost (Tree 52), three trees with moderate or higher potential to support roosting bats (PRF-M) (Trees 60, 63 and 66) and three trees with low potential to support roosting bats (PRF-L) (Trees 45, 56 and 75). Buildings within the site are limited to a World War 2 pillbox (B29) with negligible potential to support roosting bats. It will be possible to retain all of the trees with bat roosting potential within the development scheme and subsequently no further surveys of these trees are required (RPS, 2025).

4.1.2 If any of these trees have to be trimmed/felled in the future e.g. on the grounds of health and safety, an appropriate approach to further survey and works is given in *Section 5* to protect any bats that might be present and to maintain roosting opportunities at the Parcel 13 site following works.

4.2 Foraging and commuting activity

4.2.1 Although no bat activity was recorded in close proximity to the site. During the automated detector surveys (and transect surveys of the wider site), Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule, Brown Long-eared bat and *Myotis* sp. bats were recorded and it is anticipated that these species/species group use the Parcel 13 site on an occasional basis as a small part of a much wider foraging territory for individuals of these species/species groups. The plan in *Appendix C* provides an overview of bat activity recorded during the transect surveys.

4.2.2 Overall the level of bat activity recorded was generally considered to be low, relative to the size of the site, and similar and higher quality foraging and commuting opportunities are relatively widespread in the wider area. As a whole the Parcel 13 site is therefore considered to be of no more than site interest for foraging bats.

4.2.3 Notwithstanding this, development proposals should seek to maintain and, where possible, enhance roosting, foraging and commuting opportunities for bats using the site in accordance with nature conservation legislation, planning policy and the 2006 NERC

Act. Recommendations to maintain and enhance the value of the Parcel 13 site for bats are provided in *Section 5* below.

5 MITIGATION STRATEGY

5.1 This section identifies measures to be implemented during development of the Parcel 13 site in order to avoid, mitigate and compensate potential impacts on bats, and to maintain the favourable conservation status of the local bat population. These measures will be implemented unless otherwise agreed with Natural England and/or the local planning authority. In addition, measures for long-term maintenance and enhancement of opportunities at the Parcel 13 site for roosting, foraging and commuting bats are included in accordance with the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the 2006 NERC Act.

5.2 Roosting bats

Works to trees

5.2.1 It is understood that all trees with bat roosting potential/confirmed roosts within the Parcel 13 site will be retained. No further survey of these trees are therefore required in support of the Parcel 13 development works. Due to the presence of opportunities for roosting bats within a number of trees across the site, an approach to future maintenance works on trees with potential to support roosting bats (e.g. for health and safety) is set out below. This involves either survey prior to works commencing to confirm presence or likely absence of roosting bats or through a sensitive approach to works. Measures to maintain the suitability of opportunities provided by these trees for roosting bats are given in *Section 5.2.6* below.

5.2.2 In the event that the future retention of a tree, or tree feature, identified as providing opportunities for roosting bats is not possible within the site (e.g. for reasons of health and safety), felling/trimming works will be carried out in accordance with the following procedure:

1. In the event that future pruning or felling works for reasons of health and safety are required to the tree with confirmed bat roosts (Tree 52) such works have the potential to disturb or destroy any roosts present. If it is not possible to retain the roost site associated with the tree, an EPS licence would need to be obtained from Natural England prior to the commencement of any works affecting the roost site associated with this tree.
2. Other trees with moderate or higher potential to support roosting bats (PRF-M) should first be subject to three aerial inspection surveys between May to September, with at least two of the surveys conducted from May to August by a licensed bat worker to inspect potential roost sites for bats (BCT, 2023). If a bat roost is encountered during survey of a tree not covered under an EPS licence,

then felling/works to this tree should be delayed until an EPS licence has been sought and obtained from Natural England.

3. Trees with moderate or higher potential to support roosting bats (PRF-M), for which an exhaustive climbed inspection is not possible or practical, should be subject to three emergence/re-entry surveys following current BCT best practice guidelines (BCT, 2023) to confirm the absence of roosting bats prior to any works affecting the tree commencing.
4. 'Low' potential trees (PRF-L) that are unsuitable for climbing inspections and/or have not been subject to an emergence survey immediately in advance of works should be 'soft felled' under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. Soft felling involves progressive removal of the tree, using ropes to gently lower sections of tree potentially supporting roosting bats to the ground for inspection by a suitably qualified ecologist. Where appropriate, features should be left on the ground overnight before clearing to allow any bats present to escape.

- 5.2.3 In the event that a roosting bat is discovered during any of the above works, works will cease and Natural England contacted to agree an appropriate course of action. A licence may need to be applied for, and approved, before works can continue.

Maintenance of roosting opportunities

- 5.2.4 The integrity of retained roosting opportunities within and adjacent to the site will be conserved through the maintenance of connections to commuting and foraging habitat and sensitive use of lighting throughout the construction and operational phases (see *Section 5.3* below and the *Detailed Ecological Permeability Scheme – Parcel 13* (HDA, 2025b)). In addition, trees not supporting roosting bats at the time of survey have potential to support bats in the future and therefore, where possible, these trees will be retained and their ability to support roosting bats maintained. Further measures to ensure that roosting opportunities provided by the site remain following development are given below.

Enhancement of opportunities for roosting bats

- 5.2.5 Development of the site will provide opportunities to enhance its current value for roosting bats in accordance with planning policy and the 2006 NERC Act through the provision of a range of new bat roosting features. In order to provide a variety of bat roosting opportunities suitable for a range of bat species, roost enhancement will consist of (or similar):
- 10 bat boxes on new buildings comprising a mix of Ibstock bat boxes, Wildcare soffit bat boxes and Beaumaris Woodstone bat boxes will be incorporated into/on the buildings (suitable for crevice dwelling bat species);

- Conversion of the World War 2 bunker in the east of the site into a bat roost.
Works will comprise:
 - Installation of a new door to make the bunker secure;
 - Installation within the bunker as high-up the walls as possible (i.e. above the height of the windows due to concerns regarding the building flooding), 2 x Greenwood Ecohabitats Tree Crevice Bat Boxes (favoured by crevice dwelling bats) and 2 x 1GS Schwegler Brick Roosts (designed for both winter hibernation and summer roosts by crevice dwelling bats).
- 3 x Greenwoods Ecohabitats Medium Hollow Bat Boxes attached to trees (favoured by species preferring a wider cavity such as Brown Long-eared bats, Noctule, *Myotis* sp.).

5.2.6 These will be located away from areas most affected by construction and operational phase noise and lighting and will integrate the location of suitable retained trees and habitat connections with avoidance of areas subject to significant levels of light spill as shown on the *Parcel 13 – Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan* provided in *Appendix D*.

5.2.7 By providing a variety of roosting opportunities in different locations and orientations across the new/retained buildings and retained trees, a range of roost spaces with varied microclimates will be provided by the new development, which would offer roosting opportunities for bats throughout the year and maintain and enhance the future long-term potential of the Parcel 13 site (and wider site) to support roosting bats.

5.3 Foraging and commuting bats

5.3.1 The Parcel 13 site is considered as a whole to be of no more than site importance for foraging bats. The site comprises a low proportion of foraging habitat for individual Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule, Brown Long-eared bat and *Myotis* sp. bats on an occasional or infrequent basis.

5.3.2 A number of the bat species identified within the wider site (Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule and Brown Long-eared bat) are listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act and therefore the effects of development on foraging and commuting habitat are a material consideration in the planning process.

5.3.3 The development proposals indicated on the *Parcel 13 – Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan* in *Appendix D* show the retention of the hedgerow bordering the site. Proposals include the retention, strengthening and lengthening of the hedgerow associated with the north-eastern site boundary. In addition, proposals include new native species-rich hedgerow planting western site boundary. The development of the site will

however result in the loss of limited areas of foraging habitat where buildings and hardstanding takes the place of areas currently dominated by tall ruderal vegetation. Although the site interior is currently of limited value for foraging bats and it is expected that the proposed gardens and areas of open space will provide new opportunities for roosting bats as these mature. The Parcel 13 development planting scheme includes the use of pollen and nectar rich species within the formal planting schemes, enhancement of hedgerows, new hedgerow, shrub and tree planting and inclusion of areas of rough and meadow grassland and scrub within areas of open space in order to maximise opportunities for foraging and commuting bats following development (Combined Hard and Soft Landscape Plans (Finc, 2025)).

5.3.4 A lighting assessment has been produced for the site and wider site (MMA Lighting Consultancy, 2018) which assessed that the site currently has limited light spill from off-site residential areas (MMA Lighting Consultancy assessed the site as having an E2 - Low District Brightness Areas). The lighting assessment details measures to achieve a minimum level of lighting required for public amenity and safety whilst restricting horizontal or vertical light spill into non-target areas. External lighting will be limited to the road system and footpath network and will be designed to accord with WBC specifications to ensure public safety. Within the necessary safety requirements, in accordance with the lighting design and light spill plans set out in the MMA lighting report (MMA Lighting Consultancy, 2018) a Illustrative Lighting Parameters Plan (HDA, 2018) has been prepared that identifies Lighting Exclusion Zones and Lighting Restriction Zones. The hedgerow along the north-eastern site boundary of the Parcel 13 site is located within a Lighting Restriction Zone, with the remainder of the Parcel 13 site to be sensitively designed.

5.3.5 *Lighting Restriction Zones (Hedgerow along the north-eastern site boundary)*

Unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority:

- Lighting will be avoided and lighting will be at the lowest level required for public safety, in order to limit levels of horizontal or vertical light spill into sensitive areas associated with the Lighting Exclusion Zones; and
- Lighting Restriction Zones adjacent to retained native hedgerows will be at least 5m.

Within the Lighting Restriction Zones it is proposed that lighting will comprise low-level bollard luminaries along footpaths/cycleway/bus routes. These will be approximately 1.2m in height, and will use LED bulbs with full cut off optics to contain light on the footpath/cycleway with negligible horizontal or vertical luminance on the opposite side of the roadway.

5.3.6 *Sensitive Lighting Zone (remainder of site)*

Within the remainder of the Parcel 13 site measures to achieve a minimum level of lighting required for public amenity and safety whilst restricting horizontal or vertical light spill into non-target areas will include:

- LED lighting with a correlated 'warm' colour temperature of 3000 Kelvin, which will be lowered to 2700 Kelvin (where practical) within the Lighting Restriction Zones)⁴.
- LED light sources contain no UV wavelengths and the warmer colour temperatures reduce the light emitted beyond the 550 nanometer wavelengths. These requirements are consistent with the current research on the impact of artificial lighting on bats as published by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals (BCT & ILP, 2023);
- The lighting columns will be 6m for subsidiary roads;
- Rear spill guards can be employed to focus light onto target areas;
- LED luminaires are suitable for dimming. A Remote Monitoring System will be considered for lighting in sensitive locations to allow luminaires to be dimmed to an appropriate level and then dimmed back further after a late night curfew (c. 23:00) (or switched off entirely); and
- Pedestrian only footpaths/cycleways will be unlit with the exception of bollard lighting at nodal points, fitted with LED luminaires and rear spill guards/louvres/cowls, as appropriate.

5.3.7 Furthermore, in addition to the above measures to maintain opportunities for foraging and commuting bats within and adjacent to the site, the proposed areas of informal public open space and SANG will provide extensive opportunities to enhance these areas of the wider site for bats through the creation and enhancement of meadow grassland, scrub, hedgerow and woodland habitats and the creation of new wetland features.

6 **CONCLUSION**

6.1 The bat survey work carried out at the site identified low activity within the Parcel 13 area. Development proposals seek to enhance opportunities for roosting bats within the site as described in *Section 5* above, through the provision of newly created roosting opportunities on retained/new buildings and trees.

6.2 Measures are also described for the maintenance and enhancement of current opportunities provided by the site for foraging and commuting bats. These include

⁴ The principle of locally lowering the colour temperature from the standard 4000 Kelvin within the Lighting Restriction Zones has been confirmed by Dave Halley of Wokingham Highways Street Lighting (15/08/2018).

sensitive lighting design and planting and habitat creation works. The development area is currently dominated by disturbed ground of limited value for foraging bats and it is likely that these measures could maintain and possibly enhance the value of the site in the long-term for this group.

- 6.3 Subject to the implementation of the measures described in *Section 5*, it is considered that the favourable conservation status of the local bat population would be maintained and, through long-term provision of higher quality roosting and foraging habitats, potentially enhanced. This would ensure compliance with the nature conservation objectives of the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended), the 2006 NERC Act and the guidance underpinning the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework.

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	Personnel	Position
Author	Clare Bird MCIEEM	Associate Ecologist
Revised by	Clare Bird MCIEEM	Associate Ecologist
Approved for issue	Sarah Thornton-Mills MCIEEM	Principal Ecologist

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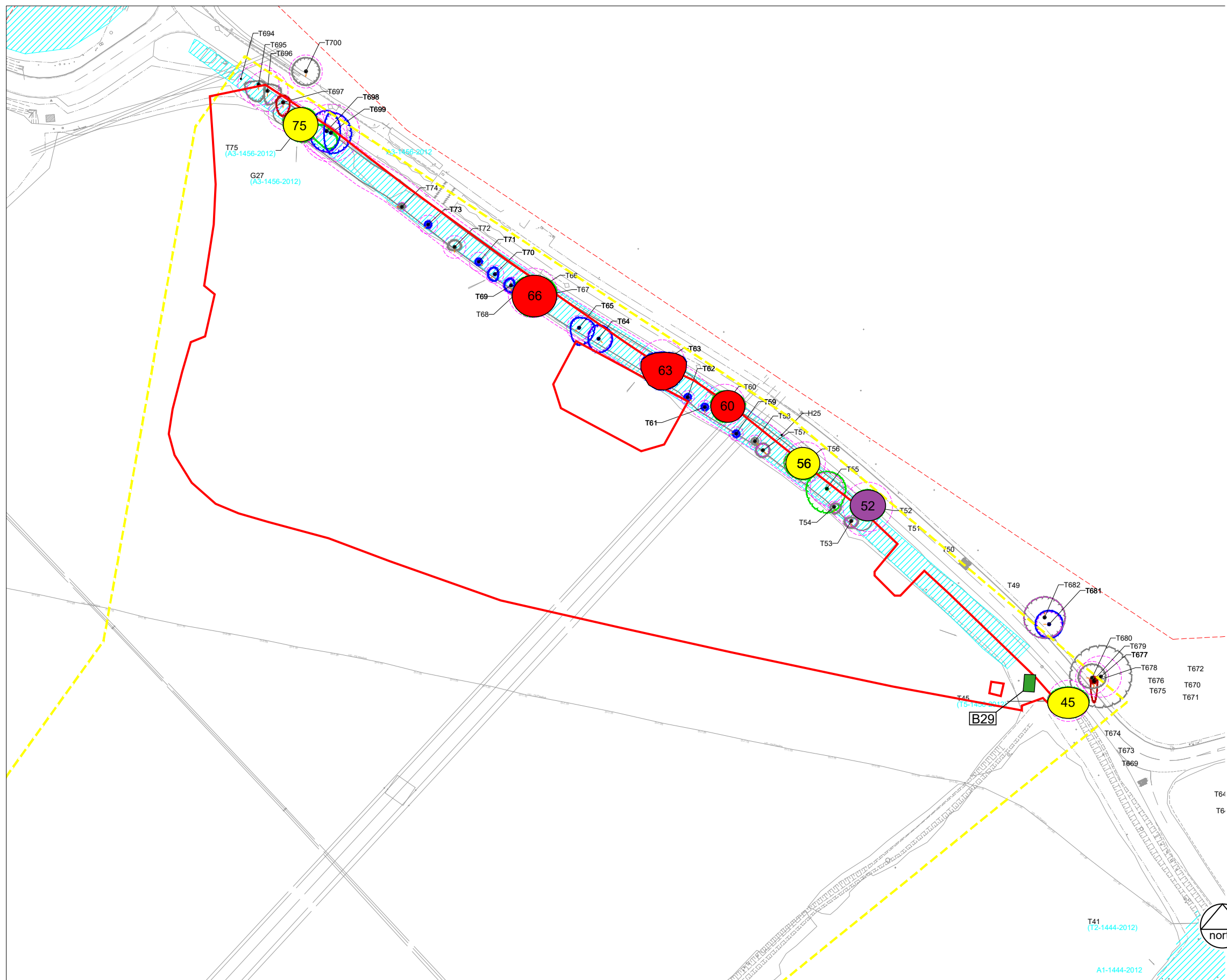
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APPENDIX A

Bat Roost Survey Summary Plan – Parcel 13



KEY

Parcel 13 boundary

BUILDING

Negligible bat roost potential

TREES

Confirmed bat roost recorded by Stantec in 2020

Moderate or higher bat roost potential (PRF-M)

Low bat roost potential (PRF-I)

All other trees within the site are regarded as having 'Negligible' potential to support roosting bats.

Roosting categories relate to roost potential in accordance with the BCT 2023 guidelines.

CLIENT:
Vistry Thames Valley
PROJECT:
Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead
TITLE:
Bat Roost Survey Summary Plan: Parcel 13
SCALE AT A3:
NTS
DATE:
March 2025

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The Stables, Howbery Park, Benson Lane, Wallingford, OX10 8BA
t 01491 838175 e consult@hda-enviro.co.uk w www.hda-enviro.co.uk

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APPENDIX B

Photographs

	
Photo 1: Image of B29 in February 2025. Building heavily overgrown with vegetation.	Photo 2: Image of B29 in March 2019 of the north-eastern elevation taken to inform a historic building record (Wessex Archaeology, 2019)
	
Photo 3: Image of B29 in March 2019 of the eastern elevation taken to inform a historic building record (Wessex Archaeology, 2019)	Photo 4: Image of B29 in March 2019 of the western elevation taken to inform a historic building record (Wessex Archaeology, 2019)

APPENDIX C

Bat Activity Survey Summary Plan – Parcel 13

APPENDIX D

Parcel 13 – Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan



KEY

- Parcel 13 boundary
- Hibernacula (indicative)
- Log and brush pile (indicative)
- Dropped kerb (Ecological use)*
- Wildlife corridor features (comprising wildlife kerbs, offset gully pots and/or gully pot ladders with gully pots to be provided to avoid entrapment in the site drainage system).
- Proposed Hedgehog access point (indicative)
- New opportunity for nesting birds provided on new buildings and retained trees (indicative)
- New opportunity for roosting bats provided on new/retained buildings and retained trees (indicative)

* All kerbing types remain subject to detailed design and approval with WBC.

CLIENT:
Vistry Thames Valley

PROJECT:
Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead

TITLE:
Parcel 13 - Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan

SCALE AT A3:
NTS

DATE:
September 2025

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t 01491 838175 e consult@hda-enviro.co.uk w www.hda-enviro.co.uk

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