

HOGWOOD FARM, FINCHAMPSTEAD
DETAILED BAT MITIGATION STRATEGY – PARCEL 6

Prepared for Vistry Thames Valley

by

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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 6 of the development of approximately 110ha of land at Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead. The Parcel 6 development area comprises approximately 5.2ha of land, hereinafter referred to as 'the site'. The site centre is located by National Grid Reference SU767642. The study was commissioned by Vistry Thames Valley in January 2025.

1.1.2 The Parcel 6 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 part of a former agricultural field dominated by modified grassland with a large area of bare ground in the centre associated with a construction track and material storage. The Parcel 6 site is bounded by areas of woodland, including ancient and aged woodland, in addition to native hedgerows with dry ditches. The Parcel 6 site is bordered to the south and east by the existing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (delivered as part of the wider Hogwood Farm development); to the north by residential dwellings associated with a previous development phase; and to the west by a future development parcel which currently comprises tall ruderal vegetation and hardstanding. The location and boundary of the Parcel 6 site is shown in *Appendix A*.

1.1.3 The Parcel 6 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 wider site are comprised of areas of hardstanding and construction/disturbed ground bordered by mature treelines and woodland. The south-eastern areas of the wider 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 wider 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 wider site include drainage ditches and small streams associated with the field boundaries and several ponds in poor condition are located across the wider 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 6 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 6 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).

1.4.2 In recognition of the potential of the Parcel 6 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 2022-2024 to assess the suitability of buildings and trees within the site and wider site to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats. 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 6 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 6 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 6 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 6 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 6 development, this Detailed Bat Mitigation Strategy for Parcel 6 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 6 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 6 site (as part of a survey of approximately 58.5ha of the wider site) was subject to a Phase 1 bat scoping survey by Fiona Muir of HDA on the 1st and 7th April, 4th May and 29th July 2022 (HDA, 2023). All buildings and trees within the site and wider site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and classified according to their potential. No buildings are located within the Parcel 6 site.

Phase 1 tree survey

2.2.2 All trees within and adjacent to the Parcel 6 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).

2.2.3 In accordance with current best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016), trees were placed into one of five categories. Categorisation was based on the nature, size, location and quality of features present in each tree:

- Negligible suitability - Trees with no or negligible features for roosting bats;
- Low suitability - Trees of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential;
- Moderate suitability - Trees with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats but are unlikely to support roost types of high conservation status;
- High suitability - Trees with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time; or
- Known or confirmed bat roost.

2.3 Phase 2 bat roost surveys

2.3.1 All trees within and bordering the Parcel 6 site identified as having moderate or higher potential to support roosting bats during the Phase 1 bat scoping survey, are 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 are located within the Parcel 6 site. Subsequently, no Phase 2 surveys in the form of emergence/re-entry surveys or aerial inspections are required to inform the proposed development of the Parcel 6 site.

2.4 Phase 2 bat activity survey

Bat activity transects

2.4.1 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 2022. Due to the size of the survey area, the survey area was divided into two survey area transects of which the Parcel 6 site was located within Transect 1. Surveyors carrying hand-held bat detectors walked transects of the site and 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.

Table 1: Details of bat activity surveys of Transect 1 (within which the Parcel 6 site is located)

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
14/07/2022	21.15	21.15 - 23.15	5% cloud cover, Beaufort Scale = 1, dry, 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 6 site and wider site. Two programmable electronic bat detectors¹ 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

¹ Anabat Express with remote microphone and 'Analook' software.

in the Ecology Chapter of the Environmental Assessment submitted in support of the 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 All surveys followed best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016) 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. 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

Trees

3.1.1 All trees identified as having potential to support roosting bats within and bordering the Parcel 6 site are described in *Table 3* below and their locations are given in *Appendix A*.

Table 3: Results of Phase 1 bat scoping tree survey

Tree ref*	Species	Findings	Bat Roost Potential
353	Ash	Upwards facing cavity on northern aspect.	Low
355	Ash	Upward facing cavity on south-eastern aspect	Low
356	Pedunculate Oak	Heavily Ivy clad with deadwood. No suitable features identified from ground level, but suitable roosting features could be concealed.	Low
357	Ash	Heavily Ivy clad with deadwood. No suitable features identified from ground level, but suitable roosting features could be concealed.	Low
364	Field Maple	Hollow stem with opening at base, with dense Ivy covering trunk.	Moderate
367	Pedunculate Oak	Missing branch leaving split wood and deadwood in canopy, but no obvious features recorded.	Low
368	Oak	Trunk clad with old dead Ivy. Multiple branches with deadwood and small cracks.	Low
372	Oak	Deadwood in crown and peeling bark.	Low
J	Dead tree	Dead tree with limited features of bat potential including a branch with a crack.	Low
R	Wild Service Tree	Cavity at base of trunk and dense Ivy coverage.	Moderate
S	Oak	Some Ivy coverage with dead branches within crown. No suitable features identified from ground level, but suitable roosting features could be concealed.	Low
T	Dead tree	Dead tree with long hollow split along trunk, lifted bark and Woodpecker holes.	High
U	Dead tree	Crown lost, trunk has mature, dead Ivy coverage, with some small plates of lifted bark and a small cavity. No further suitable features identified from ground level, but suitable roosting features could be concealed.	Low
V	Ash	Hollow trunk.	Moderate

Tree ref*	Species	Findings	Bat Roost Potential
AB	Maple	Possible trunk cavity.	Low
AC	Dead tree	Large and small trunk cavities on eastern aspect.	Moderate
WB	Woodland	Woodland strip supporting Oak, Wild Service Tree, Ash and Poplar trees ranging from 'Negligible' to 'High' bat roosting potential. In addition to individual trees marked, mature Oak trees are present along the southern woodland boundary.	Negligible to High
W118	Woodland strip	Woodland strip ranging from 'Negligible' to 'High' bat roost potential.	Negligible to High

* Tree reference numbers relate to those used for the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (RPS, 2025) except where additional information has been required to identify individual trees.

3.1.2 All other trees within and immediately adjacent to the Parcel 6 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 6 site identified as having moderate or higher potential to support roosting bats 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.

3.3 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 Parcel 6 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 6 site has been provided in *Appendix B*. Four species were recorded during the transect surveys of this area: Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule and Brown Long-eared bat. A summary of each species recorded, their activity and an estimation of numbers using the Parcel 6 site and wider site during any one survey is provided in *Table 4* below.

Table 4: 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 Pipistrelle activity was recorded along the hedgerow along the northern site boundary. Common Pipistrelles were also recorded on a less frequent basis scattered across the site and wider site, associated with the hedgerows and woodlands bordering the grassland and arable fields. It is expected that up to 2 Common Pipistrelle bats could have been using the Parcel 6 site at any one time for foraging and commuting and that the Parcel 6 site forms part of a much larger foraging range for a low number of individuals of this species.	2
Soprano Pipistrelle	Soprano Pipistrelle was recorded on one occasion within the site in association with the hedgerow along the northern site boundary, but 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 460m to the east of the Parcel 6 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 6 site at any one time during the survey and that the Parcel 6 site forms part of a much larger foraging range for a low number of individuals of this species.	1
Noctule	Noctule was recorded on one occasion within the site in association with the woodland belt along the southern boundary of the site. 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 east of the Parcel 6 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 6 site at any one time during the survey and that the Parcel 6 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 one occasion within the site in association with the woodland belt along the eastern boundary of the site. It is likely that no more than 1 Brown Long-eared bat was using the Parcel 6 site at any one time during the survey and that the Parcel 6 site 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

**This is an approximation of the number of bats of any one species estimated to have been using the Parcel 6 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 site and 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 5*. 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 5: Summary of bat activity recorded by the automated detector

Location	Activity summary
A	The automated detector at Location A recorded bat activity along the woodland belt aligned east-west in the east of the wider site, approximately 490m to the east of the Parcel 6 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 20m to the west of the Parcel 6 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).

Location	Activity summary
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 690m to the east of the Parcel 6 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).
D	The automated detector at Location D recorded bat activity along a woodland margin located in the centre of the wider site, approximately 300m to the east of the Parcel 6 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 65m to the north-east of the Parcel 6 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 840m to the south-east of the Parcel 6 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 6 site, the suite of bat surveys identified eight trees/woodlands with moderate or higher potential to support roosting bats (Trees 363, 364, AC, R, T and V and woodland group WB and W118) and ten trees with low potential to support roosting bats (Trees 353, 355, 356, 357, 367, 368, 372, J, S and U). It will be possible to retain all the trees/woodlands 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 6 site following works.

4.2 Foraging and commuting activity

- 4.2.1 Four bat species have been recorded within or in close proximity to the Parcel 6 site for foraging and commuting, with varying levels of activity observed throughout the surveys. The plan in *Appendix B* provides an overview of bat activity recorded during the transect surveys.
- 4.2.2 The majority of activity recorded within the Parcel 6 site related to Common Pipistrelle, with up to 2 individual bats of this species considered to be using the site at any one time. The majority of Common Pipistrelle activity was associated with the hedgerow bordering

the northern site boundary. Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared bat and Noctule were also recorded on an occasional basis foraging along the hedgerow and woodland belts bordering the site.

4.2.3 During the automated detector surveys, *Myotis* sp. bat were also recorded and it is anticipated that this species group may use the site on an occasional basis as a small part of a much wider foraging territory for individuals of this species group.

4.2.4 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 6 site is therefore considered to be of no more than low local interest for foraging bats.

4.2.5 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 6 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 6 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 6 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 within the Parcel 6 site will be retained. No further survey of these trees are therefore required in support of the Parcel 6 development works. Due to the presence of opportunities for roosting bats within several 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. Trees with moderate or higher potential to support roosting bats 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.
2. Trees with moderate or higher potential to support roosting bats, 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.
3. 'Low' potential trees 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 6* (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):
- 18 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); and
 - 7 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 6 – Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan* provided in *Appendix C*.
- 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 6 site (and wider site) to support roosting bats.
- 5.3 Foraging and commuting bats**
- 5.3.1 The Parcel 6 site is considered as a whole to be of no more than low local importance for foraging bats. The site comprises a moderate proportion of foraging habitat for low numbers of Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule and Brown Long-eared bat and provides foraging habitat for low numbers of at least one other species group on a more occasional or infrequent basis.
- 5.3.2 A number of the bat species identified within the site and 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 6 – Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan* in *Appendix C* show the retention of the woodland belts and hedgerow bordering the site. Proposals include the strengthening of the woodland edge

habitats associated with the site boundaries. 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 modified grassland. 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 6 development planting scheme includes the use of pollen and nectar rich species within the formal planting schemes, enhancement of woodland edge habitats, new hedgerow, shrub and tree planting and inclusion of areas of rough, wet and meadow grassland, scrub and wetland habitats within areas of open space in order to maximise opportunities for foraging and commuting bats following development (Detailed Landscape Proposals for Public Open Space: Finchampstead Parcel 6 (Pegasus Group, 2026)).

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) an Illustrative Lighting Parameters Plan (HDA, 2018) has been prepared that identifies Lighting Exclusion Zones and Lighting Restriction Zones. The woodlands located beyond the eastern, southern and western site boundaries and the hedgerow along the northern site boundary of the Parcel 6 site are located within Lighting Exclusion Zones, with the adjacent habitats located within Lighting Restriction Zones and the remainder of the Parcel 6 site to be sensitively designed.

5.3.5 *Lighting Exclusion Zones (woodlands beyond the eastern, southern and western site boundaries and the hedgerow along the northern site boundary)*

Within the Lighting Exclusion Zone, unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority:

- No new external lighting will be installed;
- All existing external lighting will be removed; and
- Light will be of no more than 0.75 lux at ground level from new luminaires.

5.3.6 *Lighting Restriction Zones (Habitats bordering the woodlands beyond the eastern, southern and western site boundaries and the hedgerow along the northern 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;
- Lighting Restriction Zones adjacent to woodland will be at least 15m; and
- Lighting Restriction Zones adjacent to the hedgerow will be at least 5m.

Within the Lighting Restriction Zone 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.

5.3.7 *Sensitive Lighting Zone (remainder of site)*

Within the remainder of the Parcel 6 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)².
- 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.

² 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).

- 5.3.8 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 6 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 new buildings and retained 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 sensitive lighting design and planting and habitat creation works. The development area is currently dominated by former farmland and 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
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APPENDIX A

Bat Roost Survey Summary Plan – Parcel 6



- KEY**
- Wider site boundary
 - Parcel 6 site boundary
 - Tree/building subject to emergence/ re-entry survey in 2020 by HDA
 - Tree/building subject to emergence/ re-entry survey in 2020 by Stantec

- BUILDINGS**
- Negligible bat roost potential

- TREES**
- Confirmed bat roost recorded by Stantec in 2020
 - High bat roosting potential
 - Moderate bat roosting potential
 - Low bat roosting potential

The highest bat roosting potential recorded are shown for the groups(G)/ woodlands(W).

All other trees/tree groups within the survey area are regarded as having 'Negligible' potential to support roosting bats.

Roosting categories relate to roost potential in accordance with the BCT 2016 guidelines.

CLIENT:
Vistry Thames Valley

PROJECT:
Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead

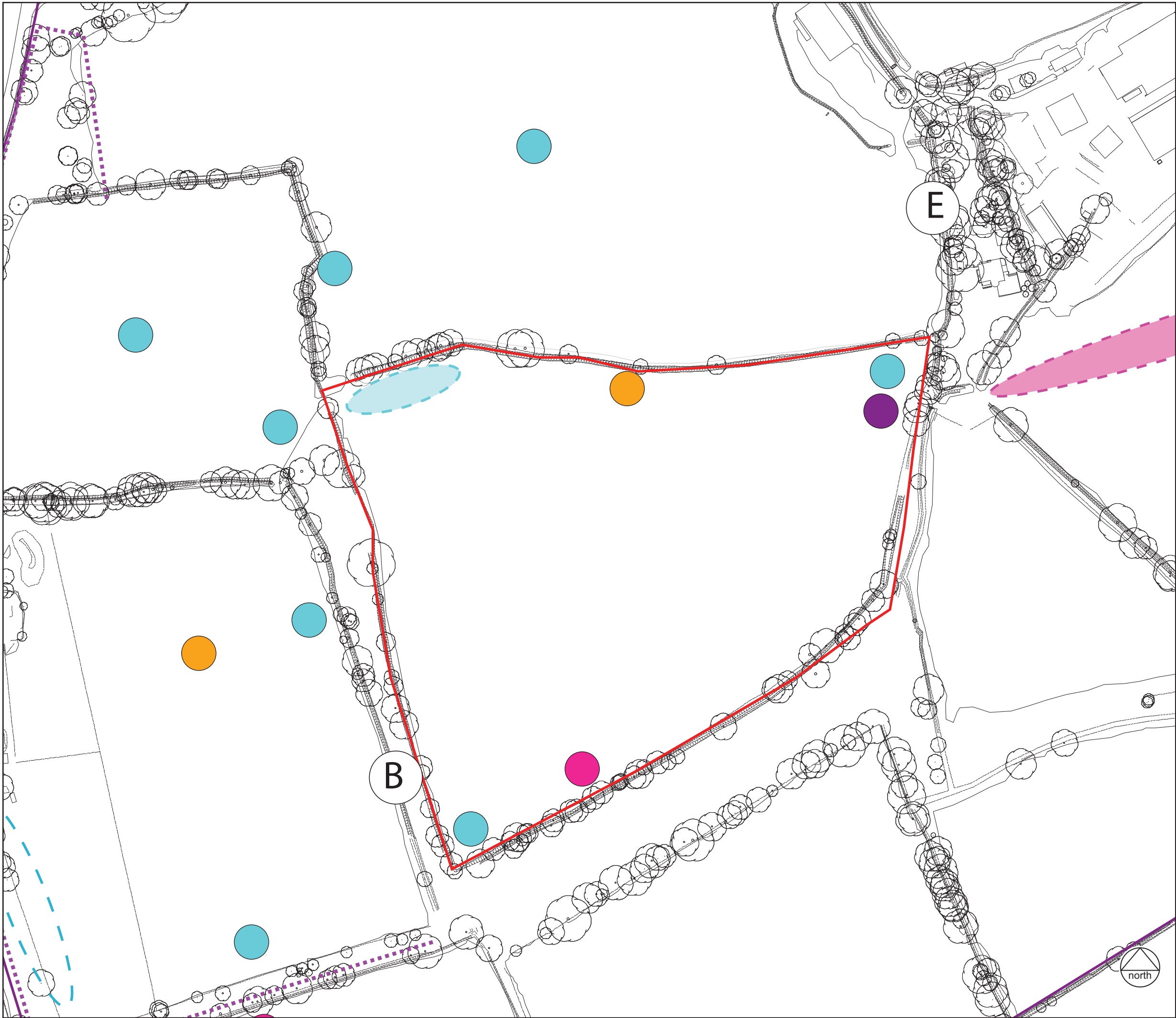
TITLE:
Bat Roost Survey Summary Plan: Parcel 6

SCALE AT A3: NTS DATE: June 2025

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APPENDIX B

Bat Activity Survey Summary Plan – Parcel 6



KEY

- Site boundary
- Wider site boundary
- Automated detector location

Bat foraging and commuting activity

Soprano Pipistrelle

- Single bat pass

Noctule

- Single bat pass
- Moderate bat foraging

Common Pipistrelle

- Single bat pass
- Moderate bat foraging

Brown Long-eared bat

- Single bat pass

CLIENT:
Vistry Thames Valley

PROJECT:
Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead

TITLE:
Bat Activity Survey Summary Plan: Parcel 6

SCALE AT A3:
Not to scale

DATE:
June 2025

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APPENDIX C

Parcel 6 – Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan



- KEY**
- Parcel 6 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 buildings and retained trees (indicative)

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

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PROJECT:
Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead
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