



**Project:** Ecological Evidence Note following from 25\_PRA\_06\_69 and 26\_BAT2\_03\_114  
**Site:** L'ortolan, Church Lane, Shinfield, Reading, RG2 9BY  
**Client:** [REDACTED] Hussain  
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**Date:** 20/07/26

## 1. Introduction

1.1 ROAVR Group has been instructed by [REDACTED] Hussain to prepare an Ecological Technical Note in relation to the proposed development at L'Ortolan, Church Lane, Shinfield, Reading, RG2 9BY.

1.2 This Technical Note has been prepared to provide an ecological review of the latest landscape and planting proposals and to respond, as far as reasonably possible using the currently available ecological evidence, to comments issued by the Ecology Officer at Wokingham Borough Council.

1.3 The proposed development comprises alterations and extensions to the existing main building and annex, construction of a detached garage, associated demolition works, alterations to parking and access arrangements, and extensive hard and soft landscaping.

1.4 This Technical Note should be read alongside the following documents.

- The Preliminary Roost Assessment and Daytime Bat Walkover Report, reference 25\_PRA\_06\_69, dated November 2025.
- The Nocturnal Emergence Bat Report, reference 26\_BAT2\_03\_114, dated June 2026.
- The Wokingham Borough Council Ecology Officer memorandum for application 252252, dated 20 January 2026.
- The Arboricultural Impact Assessment, reference 25\_5837\_06\_70, dated July 2025.
- 1519.P.DRAFT L'Ortolan Planting Proposals

1.5 This Technical Note is not a replacement for a full Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. It is based on the ecological information collected during the previous bat-focused assessment, the subsequent nocturnal emergence surveys, the available landscape

proposals, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and the Council Ecology Officer's comments.

1.6 No updated whole-site UK Habitat Classification survey, habitat condition assessment, comprehensive Local Environmental Records Centre search or statutory biodiversity metric calculation has been undertaken for the purposes of this Technical Note.

## **2. Site context**

2.1 The application site comprises the main building known as L'Ortolan, an annex building, associated outbuildings, hardstanding, parking areas and established residential gardens.

2.2 The site contains a combination of modified grassland, ornamental planting, shrubs, hedgerows, scattered mature trees and a small ornamental pond. Existing boundary trees, hedges and adjoining residential gardens provide habitat connectivity through the local area.

2.3 The Preliminary Roost Assessment identified the garden as providing moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats. The assessment also identified five trees containing or potentially containing features suitable for roosting bats. The northern and adjoining vegetated boundaries were described as contributing to local ecological connectivity.

2.4 The Council Ecology Officer has identified the northern boundary and associated vegetation as an ecologically significant linear feature and has raised concerns regarding tree removal, vegetation clearance, external lighting and increased evening recreational use. The Ecology Officer has also referred to a known maternity bat roost approximately 30m north-west of the site.

2.5 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment recorded 29 arboricultural features, comprising 26 individual trees, two groups and one hedge. The tree stock includes a mixture of early-mature and mature native and ornamental trees of varying quality.

## **3. Previous ecological assessment**

3.1 A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken on 14 July 2025.

3.2 Building B1 was assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats.

3.3 Building B2 was assessed as having moderate suitability for roosting bats due to features including slipped or lifted roof tiles, missing cladding beneath the eaves and potential gaps at the ridge and verge.

3.4 The site was assessed as providing moderate to high suitability for foraging and commuting bats due to the presence of mature trees, hedgerows, shrubs, modified grassland, a small pond and connectivity with adjoining residential gardens.

3.5 Five trees were identified during the Preliminary Roost Assessment as supporting potential roosting features suitable for bats. These were recorded within the PRA as T1-T5.

3.6 The ecological tree references have now been cross-referenced against the tree schedule, photographs and plans contained within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

*Table 1. Cross-reference of trees supporting potential roosting features*

| PRA Ref. | AIA Ref. | Species                                                     | PRFs                                                                                                                           | Latest landscape status | Ecological Requirement                                                                                    |
|----------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T1       | T1       | Coast redwood ( <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i> )               | Peeling bark providing sheltered crevices                                                                                      | Retained                | Retain and protect. Avoid lighting of the stem, crown and identified potential roosting features.         |
| T2       | T2       | Weeping willow ( <i>Salix x chrysocoma</i> )                | Pruning wound potentially extending into the sapwood.                                                                          | Retained                | Retain and protect. No pruning or works affecting the identified feature without prior ecological review. |
| T3       | T3       | Atlantic cedar ( <i>Cedrus libani atlantica</i> ) 'Glaucua' | Large cedar considered likely to contain concealed potential roosting features due to its age, size and structural complexity. | Retained                | Retain and protect. Avoid lighting of the crown and stem.                                                 |

|    |     |                                                                                         |                                                             |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T4 | T13 | Recorded as Black Locust in PRA but is in fact a Hawthorn ( <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> ) | Potential roosting feature associated with a lateral branch | Retained | Retain and protect. No pruning, ivy removal, crown works or other works affecting the previously identified potential roosting feature should take place without prior ecological review. Avoid artificial illumination of the stem, crown and adjacent vegetated corridor. |
| T5 | T11 | Honey locust ( <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> )                                           | Locust-type tree with trunk decay, fissures and holes.      | Retained | Retain and protect. No pruning or works affecting the cavity or structurally defective union without prior ecological review.                                                                                                                                               |

3.7 The latest landscape proposal retains AIA T1, T2, T3, T11 and T13. The latest planting proposal therefore appears to retain all five trees previously identified during the Preliminary Roost Assessment as supporting, or potentially supporting, bat roosting features.

#### 4. Updated bat survey findings

4.1 Two nocturnal emergence surveys were completed at Building B2 on 13/05/26 and 08/06/26.

4.2 No bats were observed emerging from or re-entering Building B2 during either survey.

4.3 Review of the night vision footage found no evidence of bats emerging from or re-entering the building.

4.4 Common pipistrelle and noctule bats were recorded commuting and foraging within and around the site.

4.5 Common pipistrelle activity was associated with the garden vegetation and trees. Noctule activity comprised brief commuting passes across the site.

4.6 The survey results provide reasonable evidence that no observable summer bat roost was present within Building B2 at the time of survey.

4.7 On the basis of these results, a European Protected Species mitigation licence is not currently considered necessary for the proposed works to Building B2.

4.8 This conclusion applies to Building B2 and does not remove the need to consider effects on foraging and commuting bats, tree roosting features, the nearby maternity roost or retained habitat corridors.

4.9 As bats may occasionally use apparently unsuitable features and may change roost locations, a precautionary procedure should be followed during roof works. If a bat or evidence of bats is discovered, works in the affected area must cease immediately and advice must be obtained from a suitably qualified ecologist.

## **5. Review of the revised landscape proposals**

5.1 The latest landscaping proposals retain substantial areas of existing garden vegetation, including mature trees, hedgerows and shrub planting.

5.2 The plan also proposes additional planting along the northern boundary, bulb planting beneath retained trees and installation of two bat boxes.

5.3 All trees identified during the Preliminary Roost Assessment as supporting potential roosting features are retained under the latest landscape proposal.

5.4 Retention of AIA T1, T2, T3, T11 and T13 is supported. These trees contribute to the site's ecological function by providing actual or potential roosting opportunities, structural habitat, shelter and connectivity for bats and other wildlife.

5.5 The latest landscape proposal also includes an outdoor kitchen, East Terrace, West Terrace, games area, fire pit, additional paths, changes to the forecourt and parking arrangement, and removal of other trees not identified as supporting PRFs.

5.6 The detailed Planting Proposals, drawing 1519.P.03, include a 35-metre mixed native hedge comprising hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). A total of 140 plants are proposed in double staggered rows. This planting is supported because it will provide a structurally diverse linear habitat with seasonal blossom, fruit, cover and nesting

opportunities. Once established, it should strengthen habitat connectivity along the northern part of the site and provide additional shelter and foraging opportunities for bats, birds, hedgehogs and invertebrates.

5.7 The proposed native hedge must supplement retained vegetation rather than replace established shrubs, hedges or tree-line habitat. Existing vegetation should be retained within and adjacent to the planting corridor wherever practicable. Any gaps should be planted and managed to create a continuous, dense and unlit vegetated feature.

5.8 The planting proposal includes nine new trees comprising one field maple (*Acer campestre*), one rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), one sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), two Juneberry (*Amelanchier lamarckii*), one Yoshino cherry (*Prunus × yedoensis*) and three pleached hornbeams (*Carpinus betulus*). The field maple and rowan are native species with clear ecological value. The Juneberry, Yoshino cherry and sweetgum provide supplementary seasonal blossom, fruit or associated invertebrate resources. The pleached hornbeams will provide screening and structural continuity, although they should not be managed so intensively that their ecological function is materially reduced.

5.9 The proposed mixed shrub and herbaceous planting includes species capable of providing nectar, pollen, shelter and seasonal structure. These include lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*), Japanese anemone (*Anemone × hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert'), Korean feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis brachytricha*), peach-leaved bellflower (*Campanula persicifolia*), bigroot geranium (*Geranium macrorrhizum* 'White Ness'), cranesbill (*Geranium* 'Rozanne'), hybrid hellebore (*Helleborus × hybridus* 'Harvington White'), stinking hellebore (*Helleborus foetidus*), catmint (*Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low'), soft shield fern (*Polystichum setiferum* 'Herrenhausen'), Balkan clary (*Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna'), giant feather grass (*Stipa gigantea*) and lesser periwinkle (*Vinca minor* 'Atropurpurea').

5.10 The climber planting includes evergreen clematis (*Clematis armandii*), clematis (*Clematis* 'Étoile Violette') and star jasmine (*Trachelospermum jasminoides*). These species will provide additional vertical vegetation, shelter and flowering resources, although their value will depend on their positioning and management. Climbers should not be allowed to obstruct bat box entrances or damage retained trees supporting potential roosting features.

5.11 The shrub planting includes dogwood (*Cornus* 'Midwinter Fire'), panicle hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* 'Limelight'), English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia* 'Hidcote'), mock orange (*Philadelphus* 'Belle Étoile'), rose (*Rosa* 'Emily Brontë'), sweet box (*Sarcococca confusa*) and laurustinus (*Viburnum tinus* 'French White'). This mixture will provide ornamental structure and flowering resources across different seasons. English lavender, mock orange, rose, sweet box and laurustinus are particularly useful as supplementary nectar or pollen sources for invertebrates.

5.12 Bulb planting comprises early crocus (*Crocus tommasinianus*), snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) and dwarf daffodil (*Narcissus* 'Tête-à-tête'). The snowdrop and crocus will provide early-season floral resources when comparatively few other plants are in flower. The planting is therefore supported as part of a wider, seasonally varied landscape scheme.

5.13 The Planting Proposals retain a 23-metre single-species yew hedge comprising 46 yew plants (*Taxus baccata*). Yew can provide evergreen cover, nesting opportunities and berries once mature. However, a single-species hedge is less botanically diverse than the proposed native hedge. The yew hedge should not result in avoidable clearance of established mixed shrub planting. Where existing shrubs are present, they should be retained and incorporated into the design, or the proposed hedge should be repositioned. This is necessary to address the Ecology Officer's concern that replacement of mixed vegetation with single-species yew planting had not been ecologically justified.

## **6. Outdoor kitchen and recreational areas**

6.1 The Ecology Officer has raised particular concerns regarding the outdoor kitchen due to its proximity to Building B2, retained vegetation and the known maternity roost to the north-west.

6.2 The concerns relate principally to increased evening use, lighting, noise and disturbance rather than to the physical structure alone.

6.3 The negative emergence surveys reduce the risk of direct disturbance to a roost within Building B2.

6.4 The emergence survey results do not demonstrate that lighting and evening activity would have no effect on bats using the garden or commuting between nearby roosting and foraging habitat.

6.5 Retention of the outdoor kitchen may be ecologically acceptable where the design prevents illumination of retained trees, hedges, building eaves and boundary vegetation.

6.6 The final design should avoid high-level lighting, upward light spill, decorative lighting within vegetation and continuous illumination.

6.7 Any necessary lighting should be limited to the minimum required for safety.

6.8 Luminaires should be warm in colour temperature, fully shielded and directed below the horizontal.

6.9 Controls should comprise short-duration timers or motion sensors with appropriately restricted sensitivity.

6.10 The northern boundary, western garden vegetation and routes between Building B2 and adjoining vegetation should not be illuminated.

6.11 No lighting should be attached to bat boxes or directed towards their entrances.

6.12 The outdoor kitchen, fire pit and games area should be designed to retain existing vegetation between the recreational spaces and the site boundaries.

6.13 Additional native or wildlife-beneficial planting should be used to provide screening and maintain habitat continuity.

## **7. Trees and hedgerows**

7.1 Retention of mature trees and structurally diverse vegetation is the preferred ecological approach.

7.2 The retention of AIA T1, T2, T3, T11 and T13 is welcomed and should be secured through the approved landscape plan.

7.3 No pruning, crown reduction, ivy stripping or other works affecting the potential roosting features within retained trees should take place without prior ecological review.

7.4 Existing mixed shrub and hedge planting should be retained wherever practicable.

7.5 New planting should maintain the structure and continuity of the northern and western habitat corridors and should not be used to justify avoidable loss of established vegetation.

## **8. Birds**

8.1 Trees, hedges, shrubs and garden vegetation may support nesting birds.

8.2 Vegetation removal should preferably be completed outside the main nesting bird period, conventionally March to August inclusive.

8.3 Where clearance during that period cannot be avoided, a nesting bird inspection should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than 48 hours before works commence.

8.4 If an active nest is identified, an appropriate exclusion area must be established and retained until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

8.5 The size of the exclusion area will depend on the species, nest location and nature of the proposed works.

## **9. Other fauna**

9.1 The previous assessment described the ornamental pond as heavily shaded, overgrown and of negligible suitability for amphibians.

9.2 No specific evidence of great crested newts or other protected amphibians was recorded during the survey.

9.3 Garden vegetation, hedgerows and undisturbed margins may nevertheless be used by common amphibians, reptiles, hedgehogs and other terrestrial fauna.

9.4 Vegetation clearance should proceed progressively and towards retained habitat rather than trapping animals against buildings or hardstanding.

9.5 Open excavations should be covered overnight or provided with a suitable escape ramp.

9.6 Chemicals and fuels should be stored securely and spill response materials should be available during construction.

9.7 Any replacement fencing should retain suitable permeability for terrestrial fauna where this is compatible with the purpose of the boundary treatment.

## **10. Habitat retention and enhancement**

10.1 The development should retain the existing northern and western vegetated corridors and avoid fragmentation by new lighting, fencing or extensive hardstanding.

10.2 The proposed mixed native planting along the northern boundary is supported in principle, provided it supplements rather than replaces existing established vegetation.

10.3 The proposed two bat boxes should be installed on suitable retained mature trees in locations agreed by the project ecologist.

10.4 Bat boxes should be positioned at an appropriate height, with clear access and away from artificial lighting.

10.5 No bat box should be installed on a tree where installation would damage an identified potential roosting feature.

10.6 The development should also include bird nesting features.

10.7 The number, type and location of bird features should be confirmed following review of the final architectural and landscape proposals.

10.8 Integrated swift bricks, house sparrow terraces or general-purpose bird boxes may be appropriate depending on the building design and local context.

10.9 New planting should include a mixture of native and wildlife-beneficial species providing nectar, pollen, fruit, seeds and structural cover across different seasons.

10.10 The use of peat-based compost, pesticides and herbicides should be avoided or minimised within the landscape management specification.

10.11 Native hedge plants and replacement trees should be maintained for a minimum establishment period of five years, with failed plants replaced during the next appropriate planting season. Hedge management should avoid the main nesting bird period and should allow the hedge to develop a dense, continuous structure. Flowering and fruiting should be encouraged by avoiding repeated cutting of the entire hedge to the same height and width each year.

10.12 Herbaceous borders should be managed without routine pesticide or herbicide use. Dead stems and seed heads should, where compatible with the formal landscape design, be retained through winter and cut back in late winter or early spring. This will maintain overwintering habitat and food resources for invertebrates and birds. Peat-free growing media should be specified.

10.13 The mixed native hedge should be allowed to establish as a continuous feature and should not be fragmented by lighting columns, access gates or ornamental gaps. Any replacement boundary fencing associated with the hedge should retain suitable permeability for hedgehogs and other terrestrial fauna, where compatible with security requirements.

10.14 The proposed planting should not obstruct access to the two bat boxes. Bat boxes should be installed on suitable retained mature trees or incorporated into the built development at locations agreed with the project ecologist. Planting beneath or around bat boxes should maintain a clear flight path to the entrance while providing connectivity with adjacent trees and hedges.

## **11. Construction safeguards**

11.1 Before site clearance or construction begins, retained ecological features should be clearly identified on the approved plans and protected on site.

11.2 The appointed contractor should receive an ecological briefing covering bats, nesting birds, tree protection, lighting restrictions, pollution prevention and procedures to follow if wildlife is encountered.

11.3 Construction should normally be undertaken during daylight hours where works are close to retained boundary vegetation.

11.4 Temporary construction lighting should not illuminate trees, hedges, bat boxes or adjoining gardens.

11.5 Materials, plant, waste and chemicals should not be stored within retained habitat areas or tree root protection areas.

11.6 Works within tree root protection areas should follow the approved Arboricultural Method Statement.

11.7 Any departure from the approved landscape or tree retention plans should be reviewed by the project ecologist and arboriculturist before implementation.

11.8 If a bat is discovered during works, all activity in the affected area must cease immediately. The bat must not be handled unless by an appropriately licensed person and advice must be obtained from a suitably qualified ecologist.

## **12. Response to the Council Ecology Officer**

12.1 Building B2 has now been subject to two nocturnal emergence surveys.

12.2 No bat roost was identified and a Natural England bat mitigation licence is not currently required for the proposed building works.

12.3 The five trees identified during the PRA as supporting potential roosting features have now been cross-referenced against the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

12.4 PRA T1, T2 and T3 correspond with AIA T1, T2 and T3 and are retained under the latest landscape proposals.

12.5 PRA T5 is considered to correspond with AIA T11 and PRA T4 is considered to correspond with AIA T1.

12.6 AIA T11 and T13 are retained and should be protected throughout the development.

12.7 The latest landscape proposals therefore retain five of the five trees identified as supporting potential roosting features.

12.8 Subject to appropriate protection and lighting controls, this represents substantial retention of the site's existing tree-based bat roosting resource.

12.9 The northern and western vegetation corridors should remain continuous and unlit.

12.10 The outdoor kitchen and associated recreational spaces should be subject to a bat-sensitive lighting strategy.

12.11 Existing mixed shrub and hedge habitats should be retained wherever practicable.

12.12 The final landscape plan should show retained ecological corridors, tree protection measures, bat box locations and wildlife-beneficial planting.

## **13. Limitations**

13.1 This Technical Note has been prepared using the existing Preliminary Roost Assessment, nocturnal emergence survey results, the available Landscape Masterplan, the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and the Council Ecology Officer's memorandum.

13.2 No updated whole-site habitat survey has been completed specifically for this Technical Note.

13.3 No UK Habitat Classification condition assessment or statutory biodiversity metric calculation has been undertaken.

13.4 The earlier ecological desk study did not include a comprehensive data search from the relevant Local Environmental Records Centre.

13.5 The available information regarding the nearby maternity bat roost has been taken from the Council Ecology Officer's memorandum.

13.6 The Arboricultural Impact Assessment was prepared against an earlier landscape concept drawing. This Technical Note uses the AIA only to identify and describe the surveyed trees and does not rely on it as confirmation that the latest landscape proposals have been fully assessed arboriculturally.

13.7 This assessment assumes that the current site conditions and proposed development remain materially consistent with the information reviewed.

13.8 Material changes to the proposals may require further ecological assessment.

## **14. Conclusion**

14.1 The completed nocturnal emergence surveys found no evidence that Building B2 supported a bat roost at the time of survey.

14.2 The proposed building works are therefore unlikely to result in the loss or disturbance of a building bat roost, provided a precautionary working method is followed.

14.3 Five trees were identified during the PRA as supporting potential roosting features.

14.4 All of these trees, corresponding with AIA T1, T2, T3, T11 and T13 are retained under the latest landscape proposals.

14.5 Subject to retention and protection of AIA T1, T2, T3, T11 and T13, maintenance of dark habitat corridors and implementation of the ecological safeguards set out within this Technical Note, the revised development would retain the majority of the identified tree-based bat roosting resource.

14.6 The site will continue to provide locally valuable habitat for foraging and commuting bats and other wildlife through its mature trees, hedges, shrubs, grassland and connections with adjoining gardens.

14.7 The proposed native hedge, new tree planting, mixed shrubs, herbaceous planting, climbers and bulbs will provide additional habitat structure and seasonal food resources. These measures will strengthen the ecological value of the landscape scheme, provided existing vegetation is retained and the planting is successfully established and managed.

14.8 The revised landscape and planting proposals have the potential to be ecologically acceptable where existing vegetation is retained, the northern and western corridors remain continuous and dark, the five PRA trees are retained and protected, and the proposed native hedge, trees, shrub planting, herbaceous planting, climbers and bulbs are implemented and maintained in accordance with an approved landscape management specification.