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Caverswall Park Farm, Caverswall: Bird and Bat Mitigation Strategy (SMD/2016/0540)

Background Information & Proposals

RPS Planning and Development Ltd (RPS) was instructed by Wood Goldstraw Yorath, on behalf of Mrs Julie Everist Young, to assist in the discharge of ecological planning conditions relating to an approved residential planning application at Caverswall Park Farm, Stoke-on-Trent (Application Ref: SMD/2016/0540 – Staffordshire Moorlands District Council).

The proposals comprise the conversion and extension of existing stables and barns into residential units and the re-development was granted subject to a number of conditions and this document has been structured to discharge the following ecological conditions imposed by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council:

Condition 8; No development shall take place until the biodiversity enhancements detailed below have been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall comprise:

a) *Creation of integral in built bird nesting structures for swift (five nest sites situated in close proximity), house martin (four nest sites) and house sparrow (three nest sites) within the new buildings. Designs shall be provided according to current best practice.*
b) *Erection of at least three integrated bat roosting opportunities in the new building following best practice guidance.*
c) *Persons responsible for implementing the proposed works.*
d) *Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance*
e) *Details of monitoring enhancements*

Condition 9; Prior to the commencement of development, a lighting design strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This must show how and where any external lighting will be installed, and technical specifications, so that it can be demonstrated that there will be no disturbance to commuting bat, breeding birds or to designed bat roosting and bird nesting structures. No external lighting shall be installed at the site except in complete accordance with the approved lighting design strategy.

Mitigation Strategy

Condition 8.a)

The following bird nest boxes will be installed at suitable locations within the developed site – these locations are provided at the end of this document in Drawing *OXF10606_01*. It should be noted that these locations are indicative only and the final location of each should be confirmed by an on-site ecologist. Where possible, all bird boxes should be orientated to face north to north-east to direct away from prevailing winds; thus increasing their suitability for nesting birds.

Species	Nest Box Specification	Number of Nest Boxes to be Installed	Positioning
Swift	Schwegler Lightweight Swift Box Type 1A	5	Underneath eaves, minimum 5m above ground level
House martin	Single Slide Out House Martin Nest	4	Underneath eaves on single storey or double storey areas
House sparrow	Type 24 Schwegler Brick Nest Box	3	Underneath eaves or on gable ends of walls, minimum 5m above ground level

Condition 8.b)

The following bat roost features will be installed at suitable locations within the developed site – these locations are stated in the table below and illustrated in Drawing *OXF10606_01* at the end of this document.

Target Species	Specification	Number	Positioning
Pipistrellus sp. and other crevice-dwelling species	Bat Access Tile Set – available from NHBS	3	On southern elevation of proposed car ports of Unit 5 at different heights

The roof space of the car ports which will contain these features will be lined with bitumastic felting, not breathable membrane, to ensure roosting bats do not become entangled or trapped in the fibres.

The successful installation of the bird nest boxes and bat roost boxes required as part of Conditions 8a and 8b will be confirmed in writing, with photographic evidence, by a suitably experienced ecologist and submitted to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

Condition 8.c)

The client and developer, Mrs Julie Everist Young and Mr Bob Young will be responsible for implementing the proposed bat and bird boxes and their signature to confirm that they will be

responsible for the successful implementation of the mitigation features is provided below. This will also be confirmed in writing by an on-site ecologist.

Signature: …….. Dated: …….

Signature: …….. Dated: …….

Condition 8.d)

Due to the integrated nature of the bird boxes required by condition, the annual 'clean' of the bird boxes during the winter months to remove old nesting material will not be possible as this would require removing the brickwork of the building. The bird species targeted in this report tend to re-use previous nest sites so are likely to remove old nesting material themselves before nesting. Should any feature fall into disrepair and no longer be suitable for bird or bat use, it will be the responsibility of the new property owner to ensure these features are replaced on a like-for-like basis as soon as feasible.

The house martin boxes which have been specified, however, are designed to allow for cleaning so this should be done annually every winter (i.e. October – February) when they will not be in use for nesting. Old nest material/egg shells should be removed and disposed of. It will be the responsibility of the new property owners to conduct this annual maintenance.

It should be noted that the bat boxes must not be inspected/cleaned or otherwise interfered with by any persons who do not possess the relevant licence(s) from Natural England; i.e. a bat licensed ecologist. Any persons who interfere with these features may inadvertently disturb roosting bats, which would be an offence under current EU and national legislation.

Condition 8.e)

The monitoring of these enhancement features will comprise annual checks for two years following the completion of the development during the peak nesting/roosting season of birds and bats (i.e. May to August).

The survey on the new bat roost features will comprise a single dusk emergence survey to establish their occupancy by roosting bats; this survey will be conducted by a sufficient number of experienced ecologists in optimal season (May – August).

The monitoring of the bird nest boxes will comprise a single visit in July (i.e. the middle of the nesting season) and a suitably experienced ecologist will inspect the boxes (either from a distance or by closer inspection as deemed appropriate) for evidence of current or previous nesting activity.

The results of the monitoring surveys will then be submitted annually to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in writing.

Condition 9)

The granted landscape proposals indicate the introduction of 6 new LED lights which will be wall-mounted mains-operated and will be active from dusk until dawn – the location of these features is highlighted in drawing *OXF10606_01* at the end of this report. These LED lights will have less light spill than conventional lights (Stone, E.L[1]) and have negligible UV radiation so are considered to be a good option for this development. This lighting design also indicates that the north-eastern boundary of the site would remain completely unlit throughout the construction and operational phase of the proposed works, thus retaining the value of this boundary to foraging and commuting bats which were recorded in this area during the previous surveys at the site[2]. The position of the LED lights will result in areas of hard standing and amenity grassland being lit, however. These habitats are considered to be sub-optimal for bats, so the overall impact on foraging/commuting bats through the new lighting design is considered to be negligible.

The location of the new bat roost features has been selected to ensure that they will be sufficiently distant from the proposed LED lighting and will remain unlit during the construction and operational phase of the proposed works.

If there are any queries or comments relating to this document please contact RPS for clarification or further information.

Yours sincerely,



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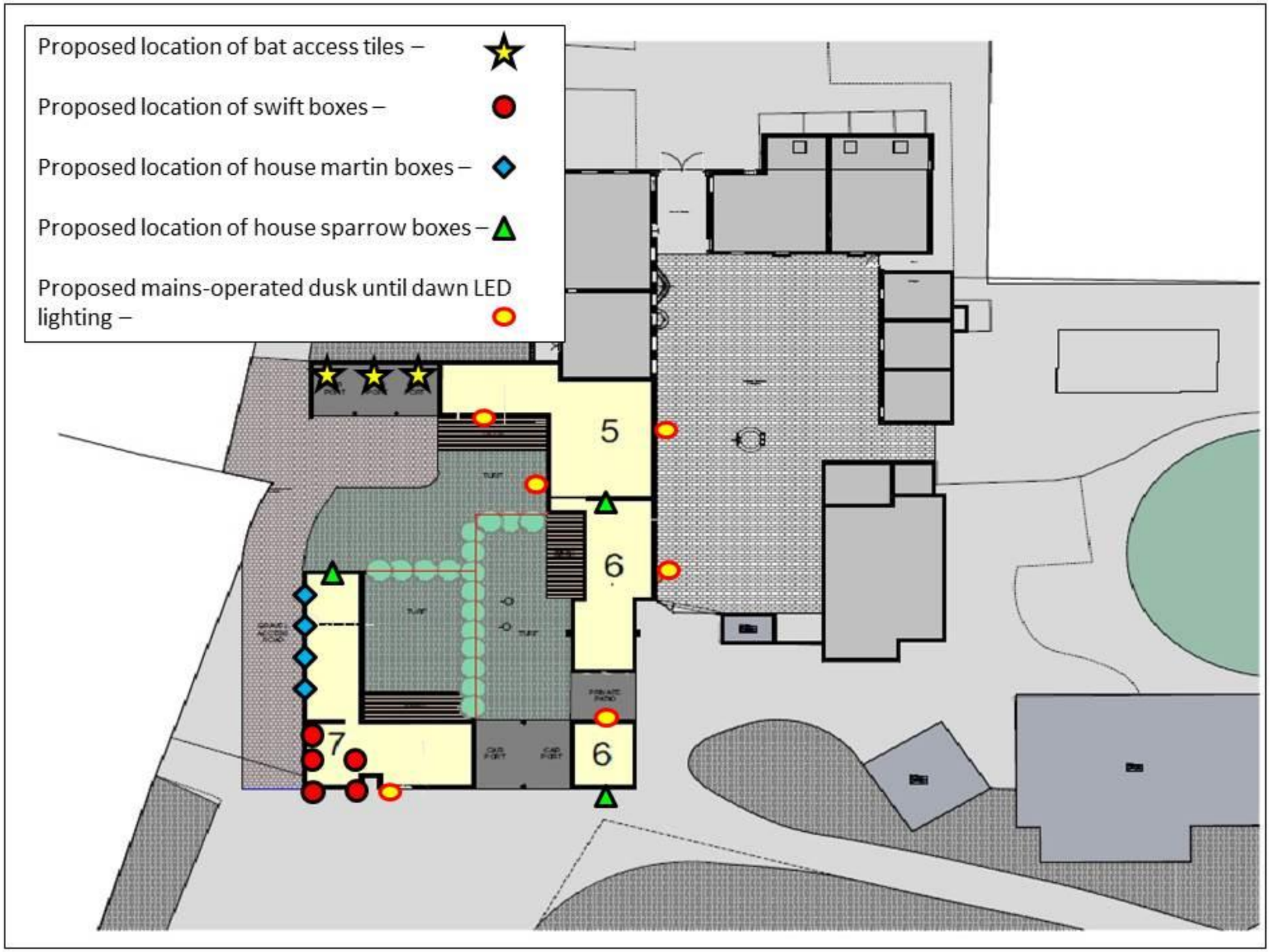
Senior Ecologist

[1] Stone, E.L., 2013. Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation
[2] Solum Environmental Ltd –Bat Survey Report, Caverswall Park Farm – ref *SE0738-01/I/02/JD*

Drawing *OXF10606_01* – Bat and Bird Mitigation Plan



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