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ECOLOGY

BIODIVERSITY PLAN

OLD VICARAGE, DIMBLES ROAD,
ALTON, STAFFORDSHIRE

MAY 2021

Commissioned By
Mr K Bradshaw

Project Name	Land to rear of Old Vicarage, Dimbles Lane, Alton		
Project Number	C113		
Document Name	Biodiversity Plan		
Version	Date of Issue	Prepared By	Reviewed By
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01	13/05/21	Eleanor Weir	Dave Allen

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background & Objectives

Eyebright Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by Mr K Bradshaw, to prepare a Biodiversity Plan for construction of a new detached dwelling on land adjacent to Old Vicarage, Dimbles Lane, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4BL (SK072420).

Proposed Works and Planning Condition

The site has planning permission (SMD/2016/0427) from Staffordshire Moorlands for the construction of a new detached dwelling. Condition 10 of the planning consent stipulates that a Biodiversity Plan is required for the new development:

Condition 10: “No development shall take place until the biodiversity design enhancements detailed below have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall comprise:

- a) Creation of bird nesting features for swift, and house sparrow within the new building. Each species shall be provided for according to best practice designs.
- b) Erection of at least one integrated bat roosting opportunity in the new building following best practice guidance.
- c) Details of garden planting that will attract insects and increase the biodiversity value of the garden associated with the new dwelling.
- d) Details of proposed external lighting design to include lamp specifications, positions, numbers and heights and measures to limit use of lights when not required and to prevent light spill onto vegetation and adjacent land and to avoid harm to bat activity and other wildlife
- d) Persons responsible for implementing the proposed works.
- e) Details of timetable for implementation and initial aftercare and long-term maintenance.
- f) Details of monitoring and remedial measures.

The biodiversity enhancements shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development and all features shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason:- To safeguard the established ecological interests of the site.”

Aims of Biodiversity Plan

This Biodiversity Plan aims to provide a scheme of mitigation and management measures to be followed pre, during and post-construction, to ensure compliance with the planning condition and current legislation, and to protect and enhance the existing ecology and biodiversity on site.

2.0 RELEVANT POLICY & LEGISLATION

2.1 Habitat Regulations

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any wild animal listed in Schedule 2. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, even if the animal is not present at the time. In UK, European Protected Species that may be relevant to this site include:

- All species of bats
- Great crested newt

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) sites are also designated under the Habitats Directive, due to the presence of habitats and/or species which are important for conservation at a European level.

2.2 Wildlife & Countryside Act

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive), making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (with certain exceptions) and disturb any bird species listed under Schedule 1 to the Act, or its dependent young while it is nesting;
- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act; intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any wild animal listed under Schedule 5 to the Act; intentionally or recklessly disturb certain Schedule 5 animal species while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection;
- Pick or uproot any wild plant listed under Schedule 8 of the Act.
- Plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any invasive plant listed under Schedule 9 of the Act.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are also designated under this Act.

2.3 Protection of Badgers Act

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it illegal to kill, injure or take a badger or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett or obstructing access to it.

2.4 Hedgerow Regulations

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (as amended) makes it illegal to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows without Local Planning Authority permission (either through planning or a Hedgerow Removal Notice). Hedgerows that are at least 20 metres long, more than 30 years old and contain certain botanical species need to be assessed for 'importance' using a number of criteria set out in the Regulations.

2.5 Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act

The NERC Act 2006 places a duty on authorities to have due regard for biodiversity and nature conservation during the course of their operations.

2.6 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF 2012 replaces Planning Policy Statements (e.g. PPS9) and sets out current government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation. Planners are required to set criteria based policies against which proposals for development which may affect legally protected species will be judged. The NPPF promotes sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity with emphasis on maintaining ecological networks at a landscape level.

2.7 Biodiversity and Biodiversity Action Plans

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services is the current government strategy for maintaining and increasing biodiversity in UK. As a response to this, Local Biodiversity Action Plans set targets which aim to conserve priority species and habitats relevant to each county.

5.0 DETAILED MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

The following sections give details of mitigation and management measures which should be implemented before, during and after construction. This is summarised in Section 6 with appropriate timings. Locations of mitigation and enhancement measures are shown in Appendix 1, Figures 1 – 2.

5.1 Bats

Pre-demolition Inspection

Unfortunately, the pig shed which was present during the preliminary ecological survey in 2016 (Eyebright Ecology, 2016) collapsed during the winter of 2020, before any endoscope checks could be carried out (as per Planning Condition 12). Although the pig shed was not known to support roosting bats, the loss of potential roosting habitat will be compensated for by the inclusion of two permanent integrated bat boxes into the walls of the house (See below)

During Construction

Two Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box C (large, smooth cream) are proposed, near the apex of the south facing and north facing external gable wall of the new house, as per Figure 1. The boxes will be built into the wall itself, with the external face of the box being level with the surrounding stonework. Provision of a north and south facing roosting feature gives a range of different roosting conditions through the year. An example of the Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box C box is shown here: <https://www.nhbs.com/ibstock-enclosed-bat-box-c>

Post Construction

External lighting will be restricted to a downward pointing, low level, motion timed security light near the front door on the east side of the house. There will be no lighting on the north or south wall, near the bat boxes on trees or in the garden to minimise detrimental effects on bats and other nocturnal wildlife.

The bat boxes are long-lasting, self-cleaning and should require little maintenance. If any checks or repairs are required of the boxes in future, a licensed bat worker should check them for presence of roosting bats first. In future when the house is lived in, further advice and if required, a volunteer bat worker, can be arranged by calling The Bat Conservation Trust on 0345 1300 228 (www.bats.org.uk).

5.2 Birds

During Construction

An Ibstock swift box (<https://www.nhbs.com/search?q=swift+box&qtview=187692>) (in buff colour, to blend in with stonework) will be built into the wall under the eaves of the house on the north face (See Figure 2). This will ensure it does not receive too much sun during hot periods which can be dangerous for chicks and ensure there is plenty of flight access into the box.

An integrated Habibat terraced sparrow box (<http://www.habibat.co.uk/category/bird-boxes/habibat-terraced-sparrow-box>) (smooth, buff brick or custom stone finish to blend in to the wall) will be built into the wall, under the eaves of the house on the north side (see Figure 2). This will provide three nesting chambers for house sparrows to nest in future.

5.3 Landscaping for Wildlife

Gardens can contribute significantly to biodiversity by attracting a range of invertebrates (bees, butterflies, hoverflies, beetles, spiders etc) which in turn, attracts birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

The best biodiverse gardens include a range of habitat structures and planting densities, are managed as minimally as possible (or at least have 'wild edges'), include a wide range of nectar-rich perennial plants which flower throughout the season (including some early and late flowering species), and other shrubs and trees which include fruit, flowers, berries, nuts and seeds which are attractive to birds and small mammals. Creating a few features such as small log piles or a rockery which can be planted with alpine or creeping plants, helps to provide winter habitat for hibernating invertebrates as well as a basking, sheltering and foraging resource for different groups of insects.

Lawns typically have a low species diversity but can easily become more valuable to wildlife by cutting some areas less frequently, allowing native flowers to flower and set seed, and minimising fertiliser and herbicide use.

A number of flower borders are planned, and a range of perennial and native nectar-rich flowering plants and shrubs will be included in the planting scheme, to encourage beneficial insects such as bees, butterflies, hoverflies and moths. At least four different species from each of the following groups will be planted throughout the borders to ensure a continual nectar source through the year.

Early Spring Flowering (Jan – April)

- Lungwort *Pulmonaria officinalis*
- Winter flowering bell heather *Erica carnea*
- English bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*
- Primrose *Primula vulgaris*
- Grape hyacinth *Muscari neglectum*
- Hellebore / Lenten Rose *Helleborus x hybridus*
- Snowdrop *Galanthus*
- Crocus *Crocus*
- Winter aconite *Aconitum hyemale*
- Flowering currant *Ribes sanguineum*
- Guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*
- Hazel *Corylus avellana*

Summer Flowering (May to September)

- Apple *Malus domestica*
- Foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*
- Mullein *Verbascum* sp.
- Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*
- Columbine *Aquilegia vulgaris*
- Perennial cornflower *Centaurea montana*
- Hardy geranium *Geranium phaeum* (N.B. many varieties of hardy geranium are good for pollinators, some form distinct clumps and others are rhizomatous and spread more vigorously)
- Catmint *Nepeta* sp.
- Lavender *Lavandula angustifolia*
- Rosemary *Rosmarinus officinalis*
- Scabious *Scabiosa*
- Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*
- Ceanothus *Ceanothus concha*
- Elder *Sambucus nigra* (ornamental varieties also beneficial)
- Hebe *Hebe* sp (choose flowering variety)
- Lupin *Lupinus perennis*

Autumn / Winter Flowering (Late August to December)

- Japanese anemone *Anemone* sp.
- Cone flower *Echinacea purpurea*
- Black eyed Susan *Rudbeckia* sp.
- Ice plant *Sedum* sp.
- Heather *Calluna vulgaris*
- Butterfly bush *Buddleia*
- Winter flowering honeysuckle *Lonicera fragrantissima*
- Witch hazel *Hamamelis*
- Oregon grape *Mahonia aquifolium*
- Winter jasmine *Jasminum nudiflorum*
- Ivy *Hedera helix*
- Crimson flag *Hesperantha coccinea*
- Sneezeweed *Helenium* sp.

5.4 Implementation and Management

The client and home owner Karl Bradshaw will be responsible for ensuring the mitigation is implemented and for the long-term care and management of the garden. No specific monitoring is

planned but the following provides further details on long-term management of the mitigation measures implemented.

Bats

Maintenance, cleaning and repair of the bat boxes is unlikely to be required in future, but advice should be sought from The Bat Conservation Trust (<https://www.bats.org.uk/> 0345 1300228) if any work such as painting, drilling or scaffolding is planned near to the bat boxes in future. A volunteer will help to assess whether bats are in occupation prior to the works commencing, and provide free advice on how to undertake the work sensitively.

Birds

The bird boxes will be naturally cleared out by birds when they build nests each year, but additional deep cleaning / maintenance can be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season (i.e. boxes can be cleaned out between September and February).

Garden landscaping

Planting will take place before or on completion of construction.

When first planted, care should be taken to cover the soil at the base with a compost mulch to keep down weeds, reduce water loss and to help feed the plants. Weeds should be hoed on a regular basis, and the plants should be watered well at the time of planting and during dry periods.

If any plants or shrubs die in the first three years, they will be replanted with a similar species or a replacement option from the list in Section 5.3.

6.0 SUMMARY OF MITIGATION & TIMING

The following table provides an overview of the mitigation detailed in the previous section, and the appropriate timing of implementation.

Table 1: Mitigation & Management Measures Before, During and Post-construction.

Species	Mitigation & Management Measures	Before Construction	During Construction	Post Construction
Bats	1bstock Enclosed Bat box C x 2 installed in north and south facing walls of house		Incorporated into walls whilst building house	
	External lighting restricted to front (east) elevation next to front door. Lighting will be a motion timed light, low level and downward pointing. There will be no lighting on the north or south sides.			Lighting installed when build completed and ready to move in.
Birds	Integrated 1bstock swift box built into eaves on north side, as per Figure 1.		Built into walls near eaves level	

Species	Mitigation & Management Measures	Before Construction	During Construction	Post Construction
	Integrated Habitat house sparrow nest box built at eaves height on north side, as per Figure 1		Built into walls near eaves level	
Planting	Borders planted at end of construction with a variety of flowering species which attract beneficial insects such as bees, butterflies, moths and flies.			Borders planted with range of insect-friendly varieties flowering through year If any plants die within 3 years they will be replanted with the same or similar

APPENDIX 1: MITIGATION AND MANAGEMENT PLANS

Figure 1: Mitigation and Enhancement Layout

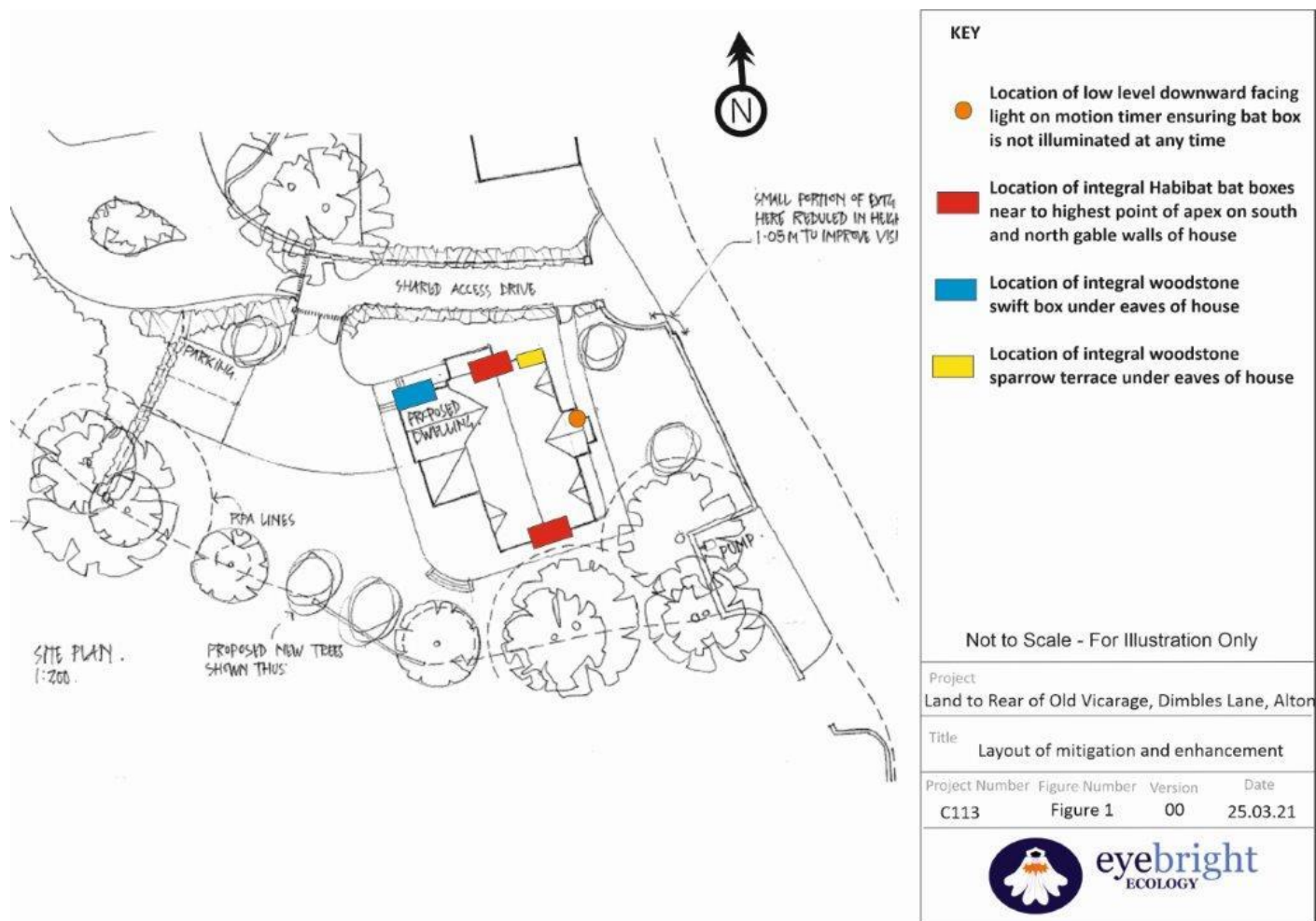


Figure 2: Bat and Bird Box Positioning

