

ECOLOGY STATEMENT

Relating to:

Outline planning permission for layout and access for 2x two storey, 3 bedroom semi-detached dwellings.

At

**Land Adjacent Mitcham Close
Reading
RG2 0AS**

For

Mapgro Developments Ltd.

Ref. 2022.037/Eco_RevC
01 March 2023

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1. Description of existing property and site

- 1.1. The existing property is located within the built-up area of Reading, where residential developments are acceptable. The 557.32m² site is located on the South-West side of Milman Road and is vacant land.
- 1.2. The site has a single point of access, for both vehicular and pedestrian access. The access point is located at the West side of the site via Mitcham Close. There are current parking provisions for 3no vehicles and access to a garage at the rear of the site.
- 1.3. The neighbouring properties are set away from the side boundaries.
- 1.4. Parking provisions are generally off-street car parking and in driveways located to the front of properties.

2. Planning

- 2.1. The building is not listed; the property is not within a Conservation Area.

The application (ref. 210661) was given outline approval on 25/07/2021, which consisted of '*outline planning permission for layout and access for 2x two storey, 3 bedroom semi-detached dwellings*'.

3. Report Objectives

- 3.1. Reading Council have requested the applicant to address Condition no. 22 as follows:

No development shall commence above foundation level until details of biodiversity enhancements, to include four swift bricks or sparrow terraces built into the walls of the new building and wildlife friendly landscape planting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The bricks shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the plans and retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To incorporate and enhance biodiversity in and around the development in accordance with policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

- 3.2. **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF2020)**

The latest version of the framework is 2021. It seeks to conserve important biodiversity. The framework promotes biodiversity conservation projects. Developers should carry out a biodiversity study and try as much as possible to prevent biodiversity loss.

3.3. This report details the enhancements, locations and our objectives:

3.3.1. To improve nature conservation value.

3.3.2. To ensure net biodiversity gain during the project implementation

4. Site Enhancements

- 4.1. The Reading Local Plan Policy E12: Biodiversity and the Green Network outline for site enhancements to provide habitat creation and management information, ensuring development contributes to enhancing local biodiversity.
- 4.2. Habitats
Post construction, lawns will be seeded with a flower rich seed mix, Emorsgate EL1 Flowering Lawn Mixture supporting species which can tolerate regular mowing.
- 4.3. Bird boxes
Overhanging eaves and gaps under roof tiling are suitable for the breeding of birds. Hedgerows, shrubs and scattered trees provide suitable nesting habitat for breeding birds. It is essential to carry out works between October and February to avoid bird breeding months. If development commences during the breeding months, workers must scout for possible nests before carrying out any work.
- 4.4. Bird boxes will be built into the walls:
 - 4.4.1. 4 x 'S' Brick boxes from Action for Swifts suitable for swifts *Apus apus* and Section 41 species house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Nests will be incorporated into the walls of buildings/structures immediately under soffits or eaves at least 5m above the ground. These can be designed to match the specification of any build, by using a custom facing brick.
- 4.5. Alternative boxes could be used, but these must be confirmed for suitability by an ecologist.
- 4.6. The boxes will not be south facing to avoid chicks overheating.
- 4.7. Native Planting
There will be short-term impacts of removing vegetation near the construction site and minimal disturbance to existing trees and shrubs. Planting native vegetation will significantly increase foraging resources on site for native wildlife.
- 4.8. Native trees, shrubs and hedging will be planted in appropriate areas on site, including along the border fences, increasing the structural diversity of the site and attract a greater number of flying insects upon which bats, birds, and other wildlife feed. New hedgerows will be planted along the road using native hedgerow species. A variety of plants will be planted which provide nectar and berries at different times of the year, ensuring continued habitat for wildlife.
- 4.9. Root balls are generally bigger, heavier, more developed and bushier than pot plants. Although it takes longer to establish, it is recommended to container-grow. The success rate for root balling is not as high compared to container-growth.

- 4.10. Where possible, trees and shrubs of local provenance will be sourced, as these have a better chance of thriving. For bio-security purposes, only UK-grown species will be planted:

- 4.10.1. *Euonymus europaeus*
- 4.10.2. *Cornus sanguinea*
- 4.10.3. Privet hedging
- 4.10.4. Low level perennials

4.11. Lawn Seed Mixture

- 4.11.1. All amenity grassland and lawn areas will be seeded with EL1 Flowering Lawn Mixture which contains slow growing grasses with a selection of wildflowers that respond well to regular short mowing. This will provide a valuable resource for bees and other insects.
- 4.11.2. The area will be seeded in spring or autumn when the conditions are ideal in terms of warmth germination. As wildflowers and grass species are perennial, they will be slow to germinate and will usually not flower in the first year.
- 4.11.3. Throughout the first year the newly sown grassland will be cut regularly to a height of 40-60mm to control annual weeds and help balance the grassland area between the faster growing grasses and slower growing wildflowers.
- 4.11.4. After the first year the lawns will be mown regularly to a height of about 25-40mm. If desired, the mowing can be paused from late June for 1-2 months to enable flowering. Cuttings are to be removed from site.

4.11 Hedgehog access

Western European hedgehog, although not spotted at the site is found in the region. Any fencing provided on the site, either on the site boundaries or between properties, will have access provided in the form of a 13cm diameter, semi-circular hole cut at 10m intervals in the base of the fence, allowing hedgehogs and other small animals free access. To reduce the likelihood of these holes being closed by future residents, at least two small signs will be put above holes in each garden to inform people of why these holes are there. Recommended signs are:

<https://shop.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/product/hedgehog-highway-sign>.

5. Appendix

5.1. Bird Box



'S' Brick boxes from Action for Swifts

Ends