

**LAND TO THE REAR OF 51-65 WENSLEY ROAD,
READING, BERKSHIRE**

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Final Document (Revision 1)

March 2022

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ECOSA Quality Assurance Record

This report has been produced with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2018 (CIEEM, 2018)

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**LAND TO THE REAR OF 51-65 WENSLEY ROAD,
READING, BERKSHIRE**

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ecological Survey & Assessment Limited (ECOSA) have been appointed by Glenman to produce a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for the development of a parcel of land to the rear of 51-65 Wensley Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 6DJ (hereafter referred to as the site).

ECOSA have undertaken a range of ecological survey works in relation to bats and birds at the larger Wensley Road housing development which received planning permission in 2020 and is currently under construction (Reading Borough Council Application Number 200122) (ECOSA, 2021a; ECOSA, 2021b; ECOSA, 2021c).

A new planning application was submitted for the development of a small parcel of land to the rear of 51-65 Wensley Road (approximately 590 metres north-east of the larger development site) for additional parking provision (Planning Application Reference 210258). Planning was granted in April 2021 with conditions. Condition 13 relates to ecology:

“Prior to the first use of any garage hereby approved, details of biodiversity enhancement, to include bird and bat boxes, tiles or bricks on and around the new buildings and native and wildlife friendly landscaping (including gaps at the bases of fences to allow hedgehogs to traverse through the gardens), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the council. The biodiversity enhancements shall thereafter be installed as approved prior to the first use of any garage hereby approved.”

The purpose of this Biodiversity Enhancement Plan is to state how the parcel of land will be enhanced for biodiversity in the long-term and will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to discharge planning condition 13.

1.2 The Site

The site is located in Reading, Berkshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 7066 7229 (see **Map 1**).

The site covers approximately 0.1 hectares and comprises a vacant parcel of land which is predominantly hardstanding and unmanaged vegetation and an access track from Wensley Road. Immediately north lies the residential properties 51-65 Wensley Road, while further residential houses and gardens lie to the east, west and south.

The wider landscape to the north is dominated by urban development while agricultural fields lie to the south. The M4 is approximately three kilometres south of the site, while the River Kennet and Holy Brook are within 790 metres and 310 metres east and south, respectively.

1.3 Aims and Scope of Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

The overarching objective of the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan is to retain and enhance the long-term ecological value of the site. The aims of this document are to:

- Increase roosting opportunities for bats at the site;
- Increase availability of foraging and nesting resources for birds at the site;
- Create permeability across the site for hedgehog; and
- Increase overall diversity of native plant species.

The biodiversity enhancement measures for the site are provided within Section 2.0, with habitat specific enhancement measures detailed in Paragraph 2.2 and species specific enhancement measures detailed in Paragraph 2.3.

The main habitat types which are the focus of this Biodiversity Enhancement Plan are trees and introduced shrub, while the specific species discussed are bats, birds and hedgehog.

1.4 Site Proposals

The proposals entail the resurfacing of the site, construction of two rows of garages, one providing spaces for two cars and the other providing spaces for six cars, four unenclosed parking bays, the installation of timber fencing around the perimeter and new lighting.

The Biodiversity Enhancement Plan is based on the Proposed Planting Plan produced by HTA Design (Drawing number RBC-CGR_HTA-L_XX_DR_1902) dated 7th February 2022 (**Appendix 1**).

1.5 Field Survey

In order to inform the biodiversity enhancement measures required within the site, a field survey was undertaken on 17th June 2021 by Helen Butt, Senior Ecologist of ECOSA. The weather conditions were dry, with approximately 75% cloud cover, an ambient temperature of 16°C and a gentle breeze.

The field survey broadly followed standard Phase 1 habitat survey methodology (JNCC, 2010) and included a search for evidence of, and an assessment of the site's suitability to support protected and notable species as recommended by CIEEM (CIEEM, 2017). The survey covered all accessible areas of the site, including boundary features.

2.0 BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

2.1 Introduction

This section provides details on the Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for the site to ensure that the scheme delivers an enhancement for biodiversity in the long-term. The ecological enhancement measures are shown on **Map 2**. The Proposed Planting Plan (**Appendix 1**) should be referred to for full details and landscaping and the planting schedule.

2.2 Habitats

2.2.1 Scattered Trees

There are two scattered trees present on site comprising a semi-mature sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and a semi-mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. These will be retained as part of the proposals.

Two new trees will also be planted within the site comprising two whitebeam *Sorbus aria*. New trees will have a girth of 18-20 centimetres and a height of between four and five metres. For planting, tree pits will be between 350 and 400 millimetres deep filled with approved BS Standard 3882 topsoil.

If either of the new trees fail within the first year, they will be replaced with matching species. Light pruning in the first five years will encourage good growth. Management will be undertaken during the winter months (December to February) to avoid harm to nesting birds. This will be completed using hand tools.

2.2.2 Introduced Shrub

There will be four new areas of low-level planting on site comprising a mixture of shrubs, herbaceous planting and grasses with a range of flowering plants and berry yielding species to benefit invertebrates and birds. The following shrubs, herbaceous species and grasses will be included in the scheme:

Shrubs

- Shrubby veronica *Hebe 'Rakaienses'*
- Butcher's broom *Ruscus aculeatus*

Herbaceous Planting

- Big blue lilyturf *Liriope muscari*
- Scaly male fern *Dryopteris affinis*

Grasses

- Greater woodrush *Luzula sylvatica*
- Tufted hair grass *Deschampsia cespitosa 'Goldtau'*

Shrubs will be planted at a density of six per square metre while herbaceous plants will be planted at a density of seven per square metre. Greater woodrush will be planted at a density of seven per square metre and tufted hair grass will be planted at a density of five per square metre.

Shrub planting pits will be 300 millimetres deep filled with approved BS Standard 8601 topsoil. For grasses planting, existing soil will be retained within the Root Protection Area (RPA) of the semi-mature sycamore in the south-eastern corner of the site and the ash along the southern boundary. Monitoring of new planting will be carried out by landscape contractors to ensure planting success (refer to **Appendix 1**).

2.3 Protected Species

2.3.1 Bats

New tree planting and new low-level planting will enhance the site for bats by providing an additional foraging resource. Low level planting will include a mixture flowering plants and shrubs which will encourage invertebrate prey.

A single new bat box such as Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box (or similar design) will be installed within a retained tree on site (**Figure 1**). This will provide an additional roosting opportunity for bats at the site. The bat box will be installed within the retained sycamore tree (see **Map 2**) at a height of approximately four metres as this will be positioned away from any external lighting and will not be illuminated.



Figure 1: Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box

2.4 Birds

New tree planting will provide additional habitat suitable for nesting birds while new low-level planting will provide birds with additional foraging resource, particularly those shrubs that are berry yielding. A total of three new artificial nest boxes will also be installed on the external walls of the new garages. These will comprise house sparrow terraces (**Figure 2**) to provide additional nesting opportunities for a range of bird

species on site. House sparrow terraces will be installed beneath the eaves of the new garage buildings (see **Map 2** for locations).



Figure 2: Example of House Sparrow Terrace

2.5 Hedgehog

Three new hedgehog holes will be created within boundary fencing to the north. Holes will be positioned at the base of the fence and will measure 13 by 13 centimetres to allow the site to be permeable to hedgehog in the long-term. These holes could be demarcated with Hedgehog Highway signage (or similar) to prevent holes being filled in or blocked in the future (**Figure 3**). Where the ground level of the site is higher than the surrounding land to the north, small wooden ramps overlaid with chicken wire (or similar design) will be installed up to the newly created holes and attached securely to the wooden fencing, so that they can be accessed by hedgehog (see **Map 2** for locations).



Figure 3: Example of hedgehog highway sign

3.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM, 2017. *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. 2nd ed. Winchester: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

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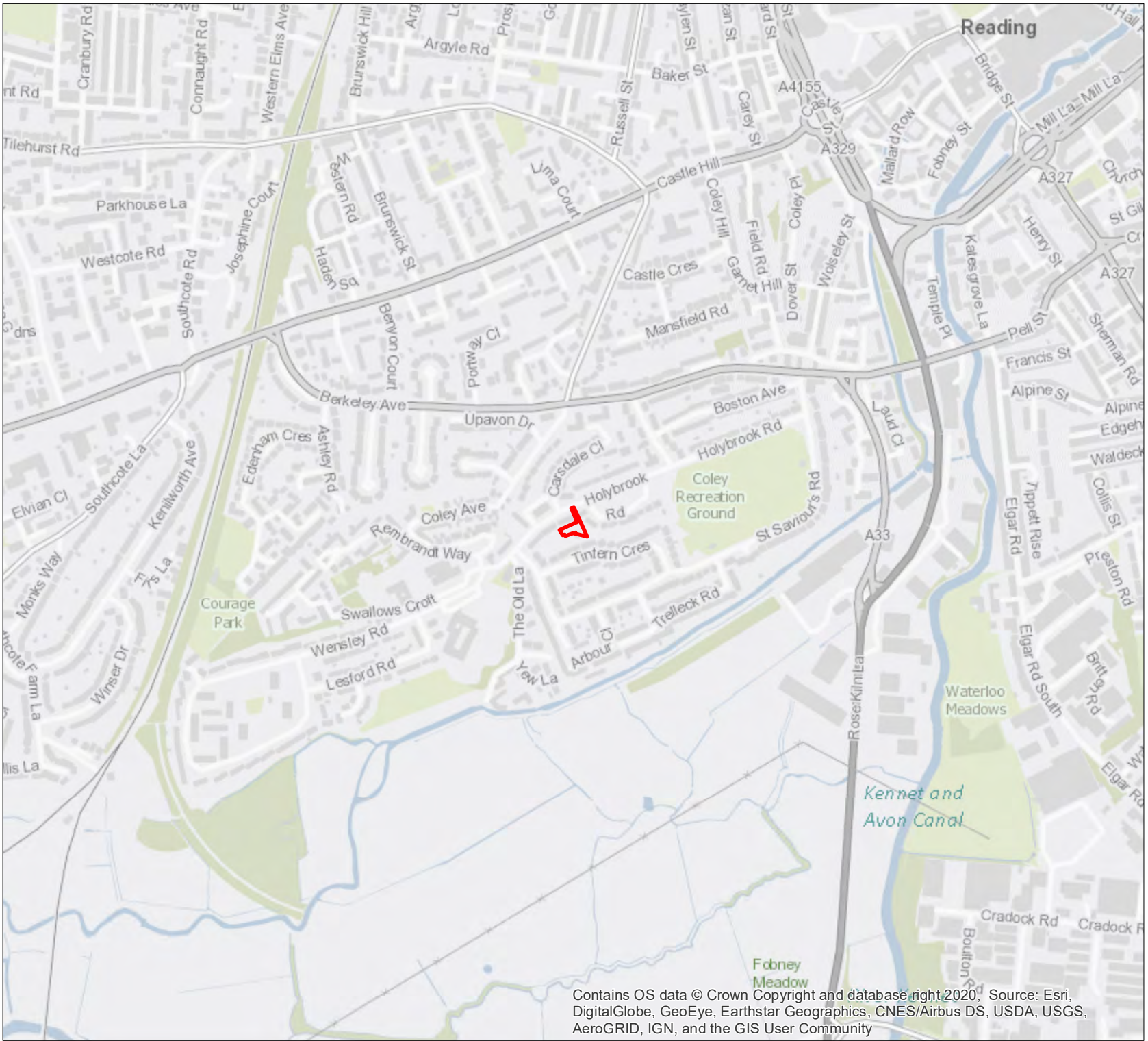
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Map 1 Site Location



**LAND AT WENSLEY ROAD
(GARAGE SITE), READING,
BERKSHIRE**

MITIGATION / MANAGEMENT PLAN

Map 1 - Site Location Plan

Client:	Glenman Corporation Limited
Date:	February 2022
Status:	Final

KEY

 Site Boundary



Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 100 200 400 Metres

Prepared by: EV	Date: 240222
Last amended by: N/A	Date: N/A

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Map 2 Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

LAND TO THE REAR OF 51-65 WENSLEY ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Map 2 - Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

Client:	Glenman
Date:	March 2022
Status:	Final

KEY

	Site Boundary
	Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box (or similar design)
	House Sparrow Terrace
	Hedgehog Hole and Ramp

Basemap reproduced from Proposed Planting Plan produced by HTA (Drawing No. RBC-CGR_HTA-L_XX_DR_1902 Rev. A) dated 9th March 2022.

Prepared by: HB	Date: March 2022
Last amended by:	Date:

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New tree planting to comprise two new whitebeam trees

- 65 Wensley Road

New low-level planting to comprise shrubs, herbaceous species and grasses.

SOR ARI

HEB RAK
RUS ACU
DRY AFF

SOR ARI

HEB RAK
RUS ACU
DRY AFF

HEB RAK
RUS ACU
DRY AFF

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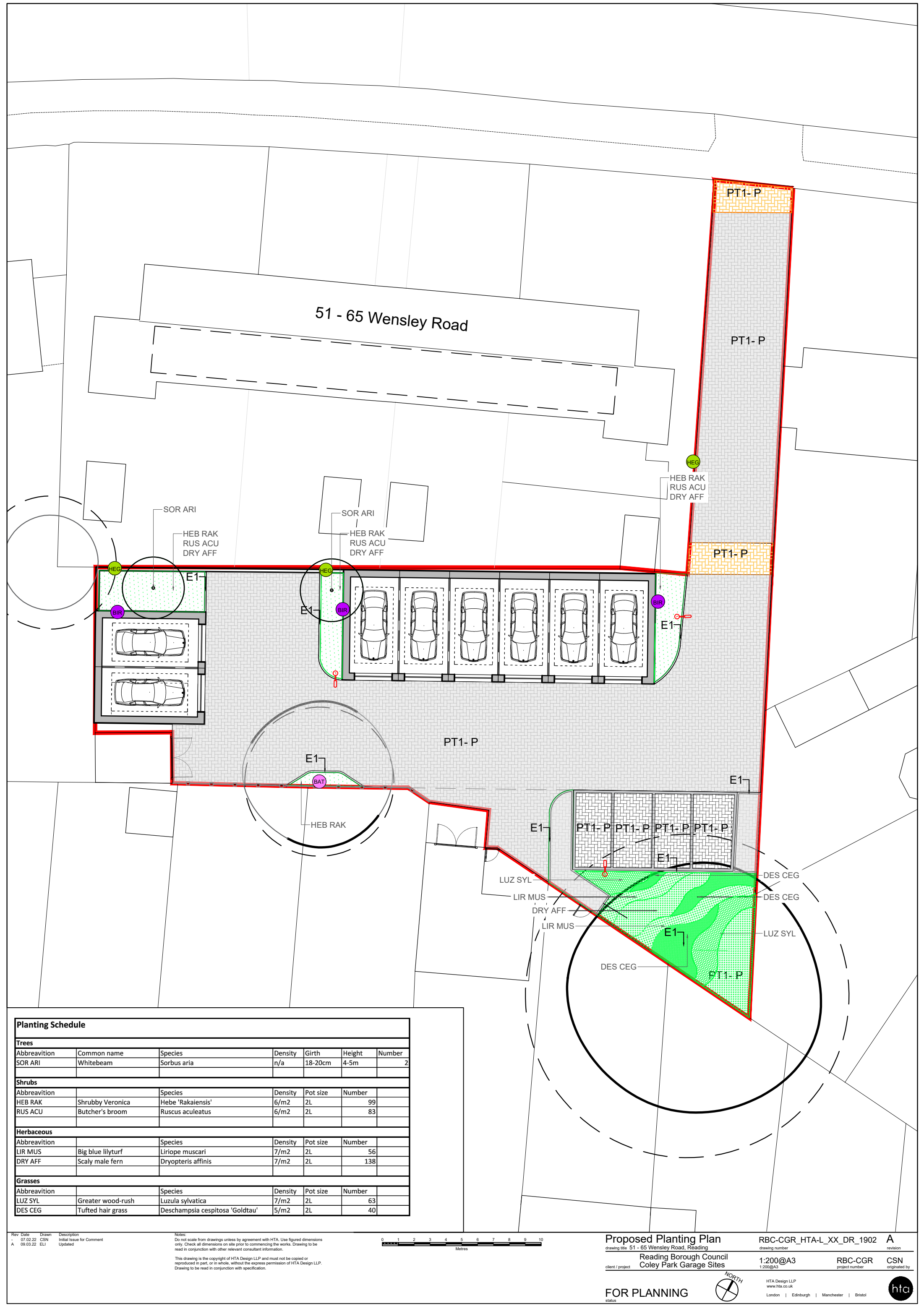
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Planting Schedule						
Trees						
Abbreviation	Common name	Species	Density	Girth	Height	Number
SOR ARI	Whitebeam	Sorbus aria	n/a	18-20cm	4-5m	2
Shrubs						
Abbreviation	Common name	Species	Density	Pot size	Number	
HEB RAK	Shrubby Veronica	Hebe 'Rakalensis'	6/m2	2L		99
RUS ACU	Butcher's broom	Ruscus aculeatus	6/m2	2L		83

Abbreviation	Common name	Species	Density	Pot size	Number	
HEB RAK	Shrubby Veronica	Hebe 'Rakalensis'	6/m2	2L		99
RUS ACU	Butcher's broom	Ruscus aculeatus	6/m2	2L		83

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RUS ACU	Butcher's broom	Ruscus aculeatus	6/m2	2L		83

Appendix 1 Proposed Planting Plan



Planting Schedule

Trees						
Abbreviation	Common name	Species	Density	Girth	Height	Number
SOR ARI	Whitebeam	Sorbus aria	n/a	18-20cm	4-5m	2
Shrubs						
Abbreviation	Common name	Species	Density	Pot size	Number	
HEB RAK	Shrubby Veronica	Hebe 'Rakaiensis'	6/m2	2L		99
RUS ACU	Butcher's broom	Ruscus aculeatus	6/m2	2L		83
Herbaceous						
Abbreviation	Common name	Species	Density	Pot size	Number	
LIR MUS	Big blue lilyturf	Liriope muscari	7/m2	2L		56
DRY AFF	Scaly male fern	Dryopteris affinis	7/m2	2L		138
Grasses						
Abbreviation	Common name	Species	Density	Pot size	Number	
LUZ SYL	Greater wood-rush	Luzula sylvatica	7/m2	2L		63
DES CEG	Tufted hair grass	Deschampsia cespitosa 'Goldtau'	5/m2	2L		40

Rev Date Drawn Description
A 09.03.22 CSN Initial Issue for Comment
Updated

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Proposed Planting Plan

drawing title 51 - 65 Wensley Road, Reading
Reading Borough Council
Coley Park Garage Sites

client / project

FOR PLANNING
status

RBC-CGR_HTA-L_XX_DR_1902
drawing number

1:200@A3
1:200@A3

RBC-CGR
project number

A
revision

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