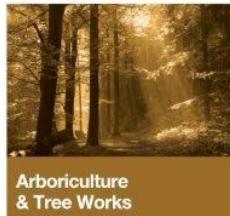




Landscape
Architecture



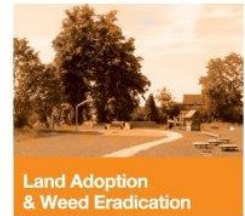
Landscape
Planning



Arboriculture
& Tree Works



Ecology
& Habitat Management



Land Adoption
& Weed Eradication

James Blake Associates Ltd

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

of

Former Battle Hospital, Portman Road, Reading

On behalf of

Bellway Homes Ltd (Thames Valley)

November 2018

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The Black Barn, Hall Road, Lavenham, Suffolk CO10 9QX
tel: **01787 248216** fax: **01787 247264** email: jamesblake@jba-landmarc.com

Chairman: James Blake BA (Hons) Dip LA (Hons) CMLI

Company Secretary: Louise Blake BSc PGCE

Directors: Elzbieta Zebrowska MSc Eng LArch MScEnvSc CMLI : Kevin Slezacek DipArb MArborA

Associate Directors: Vivienne Jackson : Jenny Beck BA (Hons) : Marie Lowe

www.jba-landmarc.com

Registration no. 08169866 VAT no. 512 4127 91

Revision	Purpose	Originated	Checked	Authorised	Date
		SR	GP	JBA	November 2018
Job Number: JBA 18/325		 JAMES BLAKE A S S O C I A T E S Title: Biodiversity Enhancement Plan of Former Battle Hospital, Portman Road, Reading			

Disclaimer

James Blake Associates Ltd have made every effort to meet the client's brief. However, no survey ensures complete and absolute assessment of the changeable natural environment. The findings in this report were based on evidence from thorough survey: It is important to remember that evidence can be limited, hard to detect or concealed by site use and disturbance. When it is stated that no evidence was found or was evident at that point in time, it does not mean that species are not present or could not be present at a later date: The survey was required because habitats are suitable for a given protected species, and such species could colonise areas following completion of the survey.

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Background

James Blake Associates Ltd. was commissioned by Bellway Homes Ltd (Thames Valley) to provide a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan for the former Battle Hospital, Portman Road, Reading.

This Biodiversity Enhancement Plan is requested to accompany a planning application to develop the site as per the following condition;

“No development shall take place (excepting demolition) until full details of Biodiversity Enhancements to include bird and bat boxes/bricks and other measures outlined in submitted Ecological Report ref.ECO5108 and a timetable for their provision has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Biodiversity Enhancements shall be provided in full in accordance with the approved details and approved timetable.”

There is a general biodiversity duty in the National Framework (NPPF) 2018, placing responsibility on Local Planning Authorities to aim to conserve, enhance and encourage biodiversity in and around development. Section 40 of the NERC Act requires every public body in the exercising of its functions to ‘have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of these functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity’. Biodiversity, as covered by the section 40 duty, includes all biodiversity, not just the habitats and species of principal importance. However, there is an expectation that public bodies would refer to the S41 list when complying with the Section 40 duty.

Provided the following recommended ecological enhancements are followed, the development will result in a net gain in biodiversity for the site.

Recommendations and Enhancements

Based on habitats recorded within the *Ecological Appraisal* (Aspect Ecology, 2018), the following recommendations have been made in order to enhance the biodiversity on site. See Appendix A for biodiversity enhancement plan.

Bats

All UK bat species are protected under European and UK law (Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), and some are species of principal importance (SPI) in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Two bat boxes on proposed buildings within the site would provide additional roosting opportunities.

Bat boxes will be located facing south-east to south-west, close to connecting vegetation and high on the buildings (above 5m). Schwegler bat boxes are recognised as being suitable for roosting bats and long lasting. 1FR or 2FR Schwegler Bat Tubes for pipistrelle species would be suitable on this site.

Birds

Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended), and some birds are also priority species under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Two house sparrow boxes on the proposed new buildings on site will provide additional nesting opportunities for this Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) red listed species adapted to urban settings. House sparrow boxes will be north-west to north-east facing and located at the eaves. 1SP Schwegler sparrow terraces available from NHBS Wildlife Supplies are recommended, although other products are suitable.

Two black redstart house bricks on the new buildings will provide additional nesting opportunities on site. These bricks will be north-west to north-east facing and located at the eaves. 1HS Schwegler Brick Box available from NHBS Wildlife Supplies is recommended.

All bird boxes/bricks will be 5m or more apart. Boxes/bricks should be located out of direct sunlight and close to, but not restricted by, vegetation.

Vegetation

New planting of trees and shrubs will be incorporated on the northern and western boundary of the site which will provide a 'green link' across the site. The 'green link' will provide new habitat for a range of species such as birds, bats and invertebrates. Suitable plant species would include; blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hawthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), crab apple (*Malus sylvestris*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

A SuDS feature is proposed to the northern boundary of the site which will be wet grass seeded. This area will provide new habitats for invertebrate species and birds.

Deadwood or logs arising from possible vegetation clearance works should be retained and buried on site within the green space area. This will provide new habitat for invertebrate species such as stag beetle which is a Priority Species.

References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, third edition. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Aspect Ecology (2018) Ecology Appraisal of Former Battle Hospital, Portman Road, Reading. On behalf of Bellway Homes Ltd (Thames Valley).

Appendix A: Biological Enhancement Plan

