

Ecological Enhancement Plan

Survey site:

Premier Inn Reading Gateway, Gateway Proctor End South, Reading RG2 0GG

Client:

Whitbread Group PLC

Report date:

15th June 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Reading Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

External alterations to the existing hotel and Sui Generis (Drinking Establishment with expanded food provision) building to provide additional hotel bedrooms, reconfigured ancillary hotel restaurant and all associated works

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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.

(BS 42020, 2013)

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1.0 Introduction

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Whitbread Group PLC to produce an Ecological Enhancement Plan for Premier inn Reading Gateway, Gateway Proctor End South, Reading RG2 0GG (hereafter referred to as “the site”).

A planning application for external alterations to the existing hotel and Sui Generis (Drinking Establishment with expanded food provision) building to provide additional hotel bedrooms, reconfigured ancillary hotel restaurant and all associated works (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”) was granted approval, with conditions, by Reading Borough Council in November 2024 (PL/24/1329). This plan has been produced to inform the discharge of 5, which states:

Details of biodiversity enhancements, to include bird and bat boxes, tiles or bricks on and around the development, and native and wildlife friendly landscaping shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation of any part of the development hereby approved. The approved enhancements shall be carried out prior to first occupation of the buildings.

REASON: To incorporate biodiversity in and around developments in accordance with policy EN12 of the Reading borough Local Plan 2019, and paragraph 186 of the NPPF.

A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

The aim of this plan is to outline mitigation measures required to minimise impacts on biodiversity as well as to outline habitat creation and enhancement opportunities and long-term management which will ensure that a net gain in biodiversity is achieved and maintained on the site, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

This plan has been informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment which was completed by Arbtech Consulting Ltd in August 2024 (Arbtech, 2024).

2.0 Site Context and Survey Information

2.1 Site Location and Landscape Context

The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 71450 69218 and has an area of approximately 0.14ha. The site comprises one building (B1), located within a retail park which has large areas of developed land; sealed surface, introduced shrubs and small scattered trees. The site is located on the southern side of the town of Reading with both retail and industrial units to the north and east. The surrounding landscape is comprised of the M4 motorway to the south, residential dwellings within the town of Reading to the north and the village of Shinfield to the east and arable fields to the south-west. Water bodies can be found nearby, such as Laguna Park (lake) located ~1.6km to the east. Such features likely enhance the area for a variety of species, including bats, amphibians and reptiles. A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

2.2 Ecological Information

Table 1 summarises the survey findings for the site and outlines any potential impacts as a result of the proposed development along with recommendations and biodiversity enhancement opportunities, as detailed in Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment (Arbtech, 2024).

Table 1: Summary of baseline survey information, potential impacts, recommendations and biodiversity enhancement opportunities for the site (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment, Arbtech, 2024)

Habitats	
Summary of Survey Findings	u1b5 – Building There is one building (B1) onsite. B1 is a detached part five-storey, part six-storey building with a flat roof clad in lead flashing and shingles. The building is in excellent condition and will only be affected internally.
Foreseen Impacts	On-site habitats The proposed development will only result in internal changes to the building. No habitats externally will be affected. This is likely to have a minimal to no impact on biodiversity due to the low ecological value of these habitats.
Recommendations	On-site habitats None.
Bats	
Summary of Survey Findings	EPSL data There are eight EPSLs within a 2km radius of site, with the closest record located 525m east for the destruction of a breeding site and resting place for common pipistrelles.

	Roosting habitat Only internal changes are proposed for B1 and there are no trees onsite. No evidence of roosting bats was identified on or within B1. B1 is a detached part five-storey, part six-storey building with a flat roof clad in lead flashing and shingles. The building is in excellent condition. The flat roof is in very good condition with no gaps in which bats could roost. The doors and windows are metal framed and appear in excellent condition with no suitable bat roosting sites. The brickwork around the building is partially rendered and partially clad with metal panelling, both of which appear in excellent condition with no gaps or cracks in which crevice-dwelling bats could roost. There are metal soffits around the building which are in good condition. The parapet walls are also in good condition with no cracks or gaps in which bats could roost. There is no loft space within the building.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Roosting habitat [Buildings] Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within this building and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats in this location as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Roosting habitat [Buildings] In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice. Suggested biodiversity enhancements The installation of one bat box at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. The bat boxes will be incorporated onto the fabric of the building.
Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Buildings No evidence of nesting birds was identified on or within B1. B1 is deemed to provide negligible habitat value for nesting birds due to a lack of suitable nesting sites or access points.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Buildings No impacts are anticipated on nesting birds as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Buildings/trees Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged.

	Suggested biodiversity enhancements The installation of a minimum of two bird boxes on retained buildings will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box, Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace, Woodstone Nest Box or a similar alternative brand.
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3.0 Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP)

Table 2: Mitigation Measures

Works	Specification
Persons Responsible and Lines of Communication	It is recommended that a Development Biodiversity Champion is selected for the construction phase of the development. The Biodiversity Champion should be someone with significant influence during construction, such as the contract or project manager. Any queries with regards to the mitigation prescriptions should be addressed to the project ecologist and communication should be retained between the Development Biodiversity Champion and project ecologist or a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) throughout the construction phase of the development where necessary to ensure the mitigation is applied and impacts to adjacent ecological receptors are effectively minimised. The project ecologist's contact details are located on the title page of this report. It is recommended that the Biodiversity Champion informs the project ecologist or ECoW of the commencement of construction works and provides updates where necessary.
Timing of Works	Construction activities will be restricted to the normal working day (7am-7pm).
Lighting	A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will include the following measures: • Use narrow spectrum light sources to lower the range of species affected by lighting. • Use light sources that emit minimal ultra-violet light. • Avoid white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to reduce insect attraction and where white light sources are required in order to manage the blue shortwave length content they should be of a warm / neutral colour temperature <4,200 kelvin. • Not use bare bulbs and any light pointing upwards. The spread of light will be kept in line with or below the horizontal. • Light spill will be reduced via the use of low-level lighting used in conjunction with hoods, cowls, louvers and shields. Lights will also be directional to ensure that light is directed to the intended areas only. • External lighting will be on PIR sensors that are sensitive to large objects only (so that they are not triggered by passing bats) and will be set to the shortest time duration to reduce the amount of time the lights are on.

	Wall lights and security lights will be 'dimnable' and set to the lowest light intensity settings. There are several products on the market that allow the control of the light intensity and the duration that the lights are on. All lighting on the developed site will make use of the most up to date technology available.
Birds	Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged.

4.0 Provision of New Landscaping and Species-Specific Enhancements

Table 3: Provision of New Landscaping and Species-Specific Enhancements

Works	Specification
Landscaping	The proposed plans will not include any changes to the surrounding habitats of the site. The plans only include works to the building and therefore, no landscaping will be undertaken.
Management Term	The management prescriptions outlined within this table must be implemented over a period of at least 30 years.
Bat Boxes	One bat box is recommended to be installed on the retained building. Bat boxes specification: - The recommended bat boxes will be constructed of woodcrete/ woodstone. Boxes of this construction are designed to require no maintenance and have a lifespan of 25 years plus. 1x Beaumaris Bat Box (or similar alternative brand) is recommended on the building, as shown in Figure 1. - Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south, southeast, or southwest aspect with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.



Figure 1: Beaumaris Bat Box (image credit <https://www.nhbs.com/beaumaris-woodstone-bat-box>)

Recommended Management:

The proposed bat boxes are designed to require no management or maintenance. Furthermore, preventing physical disturbance of bat boxes will increase the chances of occupation by roosting bats. However, it is recommended that the bat boxes are inspected annually for the first five years outside of the typical active season for bats (May to September inclusive) following installation. Bat boxes must be replaced if they are damaged, removed, or have fallen from their recommended location.

Bird Boxes

Two bird boxes are recommended to be installed on site, onto the façade of the converted building.

Bird box specification:

- The recommended bird boxes will be constructed of woodcrete/ woodstone. Boxes of this construction are designed to require no maintenance and a lifespan of 25 years plus.
- 2x Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box (or a similar alternative brand) is proposed on the building, as shown in **Figure 2**.
- Woodstone Nest Boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight.
- Vivara Pro WoodStone Swift Nest Boxes should be positioned at the eaves of the building.

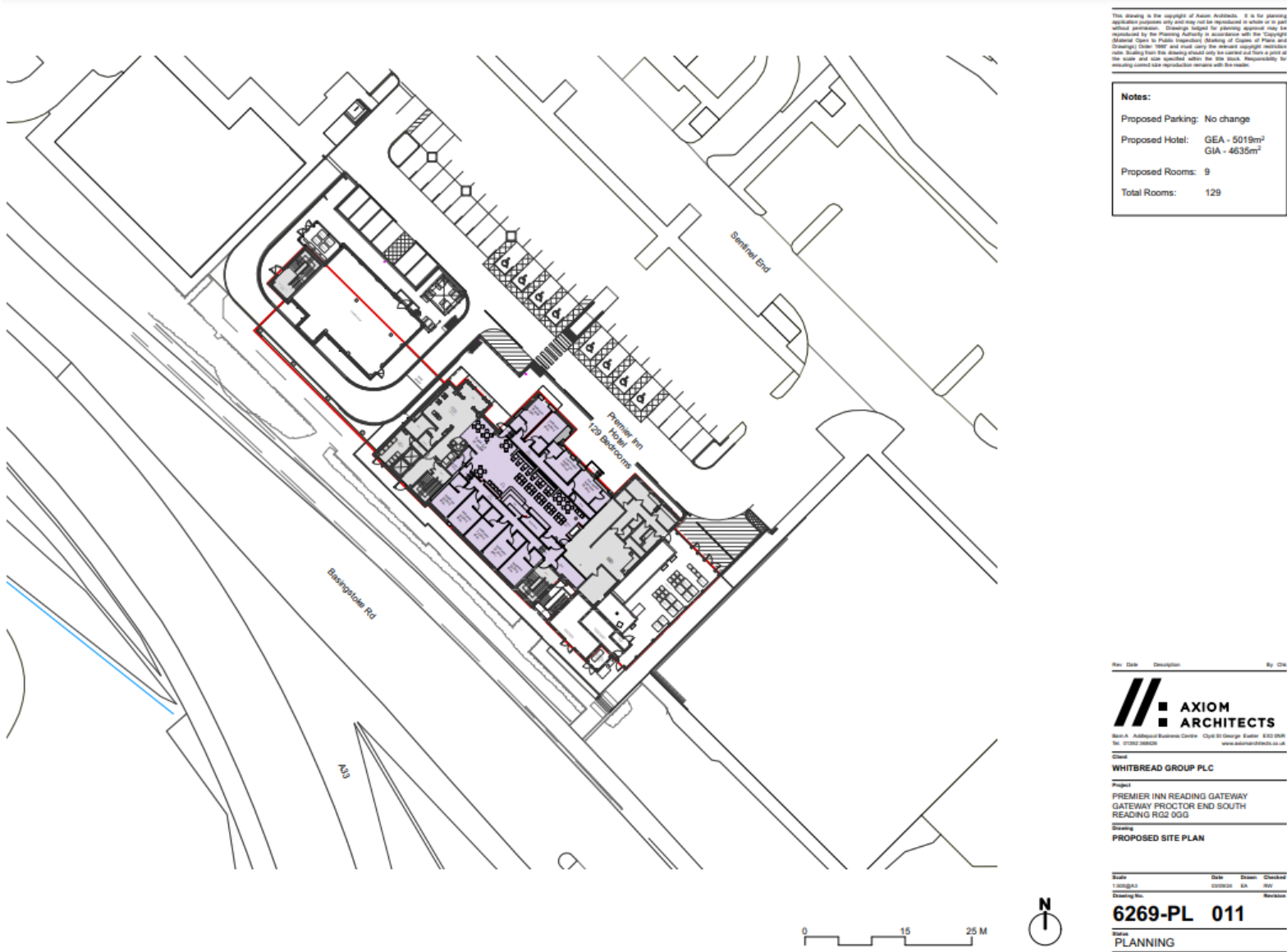


Figure 2: Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box (image credit: <https://www.nhbs.com/> WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box)

Recommended Management:

The proposed bird boxes are designed to require no management or maintenance. Furthermore, preventing physical disturbance of bird boxes will increase the chances of occupation by nesting birds. However, it is recommended that the bird boxes are inspected annually for the first five years outside of the typical nesting bird season (March to September inclusive) following installation. Bird boxes must be replaced if they are damaged, removed, or have fallen from their recommended location.

Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Species-Specific Enhancements Plan

