

HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PLAN

8 Ardler Road, Caversham, Berkshire, RG4 5AE

Introduction and Context

Background

Following the submission of planning application P25/SI703/FUL, planning permission was conditionally granted. The decision notice details pre-commencement planning conditions that relate to ecology. Specifically, the following conditions apply;

No development shall commence on site (including demolition or preparatory works) until details of a habitat enhancement scheme are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme is to include a programme for implementation and ongoing maintenance. The habitat enhancement scheme shall thereafter be implemented and adhered to in accordance with agreed programme.

The Site

The site is located in Reading in Berkshire, centred on National grid reference number SU 72030 74677

The site covers approximately 0.045ha and is characterized by a single-story dwelling with associated garage and garden.

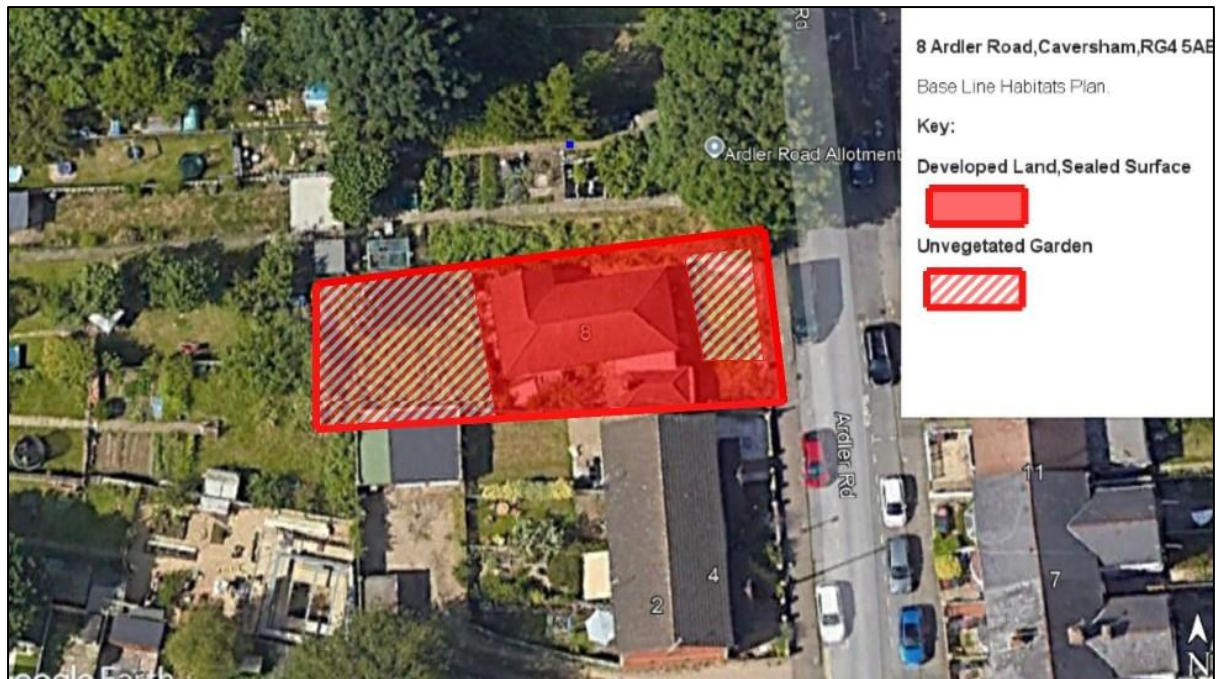
The site located within the suburb of Lower Caversham, surrounded by urban development. Directly to the north lies an allotment, while the river Thames lies 498m to the south.

Scope of report

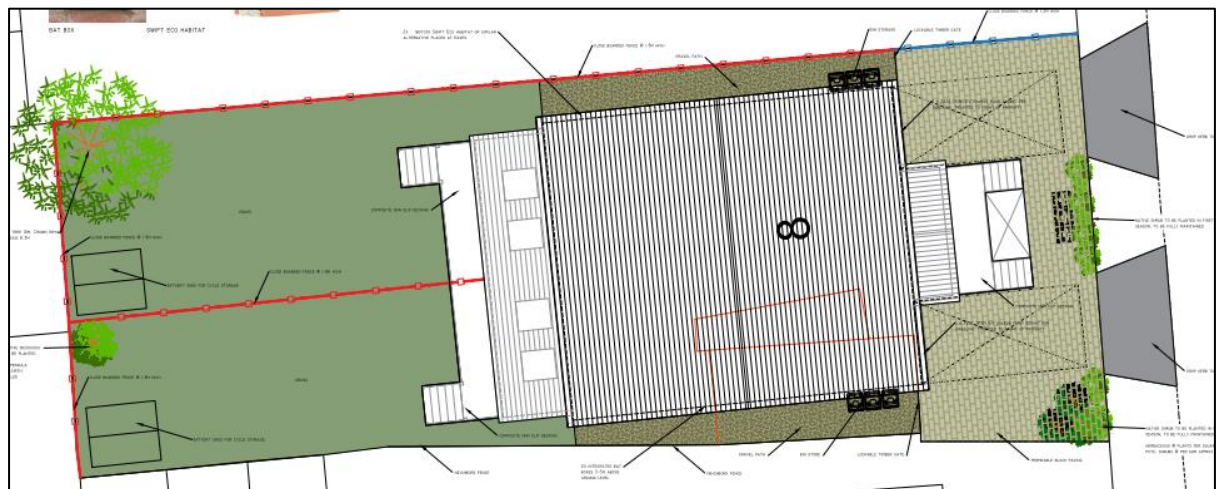
Ecological Baseline Conditions relevant to this report

The baseline ecological conditions of relevance to this report were determined through a site walkover on the 7/11/2023 and a bat survey by Vesper Conservation and Ecology Ltd. A BNG metric was produced to accompany the application

The walkover classified the following baseline habitats: developed land – sealed surface, vegetated garden and one medium urban tree. Figure 1 below.



The Landscape Plan by Kyle Seeley Associates (External Landscaping and boundary Treatment.pdf) was used as a guide for the post-development habitats and shows that a small area of vegetated garden (15m²) will be lost to the increased footprint of the replacement dwelling (see **Figure 2** below). However, the biodiversity metric tool demonstrates that no net loss of biodiversity and a small BNG can be achieved by planting a small tree in the garden.



Bats

The buildings and the trees on site were assessed for their suitability for supporting roosting bats on 11 th December 2019 during the initial field survey. None of the buildings were found to support any Potential Bat Roosting Features and were therefore assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats.

Birds

The site provides limited potential nesting opportunities for common bird species due to lack of garden vegetation. The single tree may provide opportunity given proximity of suitable habitats located in the allotment to the north of the site. No active bird nests were identified during the

survey; however, works undertaken in close proximity to these features could result in disturbance should nesting birds be present.

Enhancement Strategy

Wildlife Enhancement Plan

Persons Responsible and Lines of Communication

Overview:

In order to ensure ecological enhancement prescriptions are effectively applied during development works, it is required to ensure persons responsible, and lines of communication are clearly set out and maintained throughout the proposed development.

Mitigation:

An onsite representative will be selected for the construction phase. This will be someone with significant influence during construction, such as the contract or project manager and will be responsible for ensuring all actions outlined in this plan are implemented.

Enhancements:

Provision of Bat Boxes

Two Schwegler Enclosed Bat Box (or similar design) (Figure 1) will be built into the gable of the building. (see Appendix 1 for locations)

The bat box will be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light and facing in a south or south-westerly direction towards existing vegetation. The recommended bat box will be constructed of woodcrete/ woodstone. A box of this construction is known to require minimal maintenance and have a lifespan of 25 years plus

Figure 1: The double crevice bat box (image credit: <https://www.wildcare.co.uk/>)



Recommended management:

The proposed bat box is designed to require no management or maintenance. Furthermore, preventing physical disturbance to the bat box will increase the chances of occupation by roosting bats. However, it is recommended that the bat box is inspected annually for the first five years outside of the

typical active season for bats (May to September inclusive) following installation. The bat box must be replaced if it is damaged, removed, or have fallen from its recommended location.

Provision of Bird Boxes

A total of 2no. bird boxes will be erected on the site. The approximate bird box installation locations are shown on the plan in **Appendix 3**. Details of the bird boxes to be installed are as follows:

- 2no. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box (as shown in **Figure 2**) to be incorporated into the fabric of the building

These bird box types are suitable to support a wide range of species likely to be present in the local area and may represent Species of Principal

The bird boxes will be positioned approximately 3-5m above ground level facing a northern/eastern direction where they will be sheltered from strong sunlight.

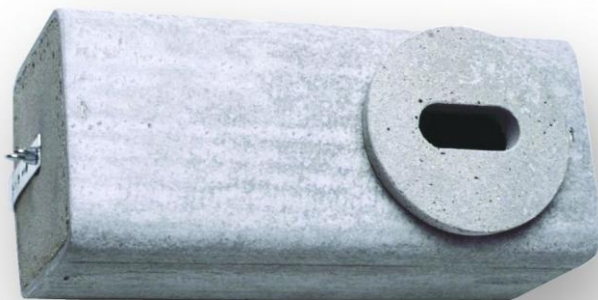


Figure 2: The Schwegler 17 Swift Box

Recommended Management:

It is recommended that the bird boxes are inspected annually between December-January for at least the first five years following completion of the development. Any old nesting material will be removed and the boxes interiors should be cleaned using boiling water, avoiding the use of chemical disinfectants. The boxes will be visually inspected by the Post-Development representative for signs of damage. The boxes will be replaced if they appear damaged, have been removed, or have fallen from their proposed location. Any maintenance or replacement works required will take place outside of the typical breeding bird season when birds are most likely to use the boxes for nesting,

which is between March and September inclusive, i.e. remediation works must take place between October and February where necessary.

Hedgehog Openings

Hedgehog openings will be integrated within garden boundaries to ensure and promote unhindered transition through the rear gardens of the development. Holes within close board fencing or brick walls will measure 13 by 13 centimeters at ground level for hedgehog and other small mammals to pass through (see Appendix I for locations of hedgehog openings).

the initial aftercare and long-term maintenance of the planted tree will be covered by the regular upkeep of the garden by the householder.