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**Wildlife Trust
Consultancies**

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy: The Pound, Higham



Norfolk Wildlife Services
Bewick House
22 Thorpe Road
Norwich, NR1 1RY
Tel: 01603 625540
office@norfolkwildlifeservices.co.uk
www.norfolkwildlifeservices.co.uk
Company Registration No: 3957786

VAT No. 876 3225 06





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Client	Harry & Emma Hall
Site address	The Pound, Hadleigh Road, Higham, Suffolk, CO7 6LH
Report scope	Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy
Report reference	2021.302
Author	Seth Lambiase MCIEEM

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Table of Contents

1. Background	2
1.1. Review of site potential and constraints	2
1.2. Planning consent conditions	2
2. Method Statement	4
2.1. Purpose and objectives	4
2.2. Enhancement measures	4
2.3. Timetable for implementation.....	4
2.4. Persons responsible	4

1. Background

1.1. Review of site potential and constraints

The Pound is a Grade II listed building with a 16-17th century core, 19th century wing and 20th century alterations. The house is large, two-storey and of brick construction with a plain tile roof. The property covers about 5.4ha. There are well-planted and managed garden areas (lawns, shrubbery and flowerbeds) to the front and back of the house, and mature broad-leaved woodland a short distance from both ends. The Pound is in the village of Higham, within the Stour Valley and the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The River Brett flows less than 0.5km west of the house.

- The reroofing works required for The Pound are expected to disturb and alter bat roosts affecting ≤ 3 common pipistrelle, ≤ 6 soprano pipistrelle and one brown long-eared bat. The breeding roost potential is low given the smaller pipistrelle numbers recorded, but the possibility is not entirely dismissed with confidence, and therefore there will be mitigation with respect to the timing of the tile stripping.
- Minor negative impacts on local hedgehog, reptile (slow-worm and grass snake) and common toad populations were considered possible during the construction phase of the development, but the long-term impact from the works is expected to be neutral.
- Works to the house could conceivably result in nest disturbance/destruction affecting a very small number of a common bird species, should works occur within the breeding season (from the beginning of March to the end August).

1.2. Planning consent conditions

The consent for the extension and refurbishments work is conditional on a number of measures, one of which (Condition 6 shown below) is for the submission to Babergh District Council of a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (BES) concerning the construction and operational phases of the development.

6. PRIOR TO SLAB LEVEL: BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY

A Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority following the recommendations made within the Ecological Impact Assessment (Norfolk Wildlife Services, April 2021).

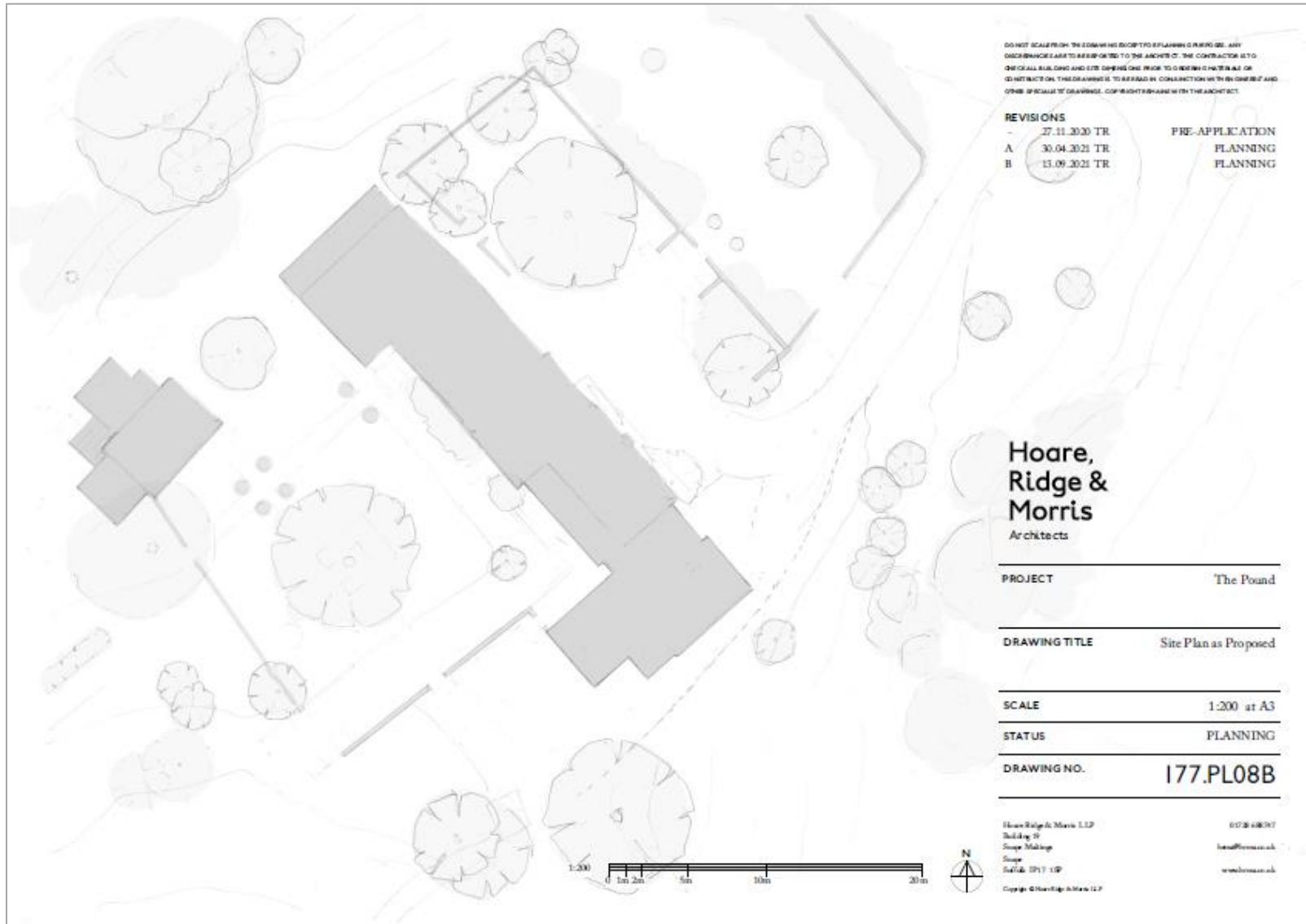
The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

- a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
- b) detailed designs to achieve stated objectives;
- c) locations of proposed enhancement measures by appropriate maps and plans;
- d) persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures;
- e) details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance.

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in that manner thereafter.

Reason: To enhance Protected and Priority Species/habitats and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under the s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species).

Figure 1: The Pound consented development site plan



2. Method Statement

2.1. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this BES is to set-out measures to be included in the new development that provide biodiversity opportunities in addition to the baseline condition existing prior to any works. The measures taken to mitigate and compensate the predicted impacts to ecological receptors are not covered by the BES; these measures are covered by the planning consent conditions 4 and 5.

2.2. Enhancement measures

2.2.1. Habitats

The mature, well-planted garden area around the house, the surrounding woodland and the grassland and ponds to the southwest, are all high-quality habitats for wildlife. It is not feasible to consider enhancing these habitats, certainly not on a level of effort proportionate to the scale of works planned for the house extension and refurbishment.

2.2.2. Bats

The roof of the house will be re-lined using F1 roofing felt, and re-tiled using (perhaps mostly re-using) plain clay tiles. This is expected to compensate the impacted bats with like-for-like roosting opportunities at the end of the project. Also, the barns north of the house have not been surveyed for roosting bats, but they are judged to offer at least moderate roosting potential, and they will remain undisturbed. In total, The Pound site is considered to have good bat roosting opportunities.

Two additional bat roost boxes will be installed on trees within the property (see Figure 2). The model of bat box to be used is tentatively specified as the Greenwood's Ecohabitats Single Crevice Bat Box (<https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/shop>), but may change to another roost box model of similar design and styro/wood-crete type material as model availability can be an issue. These boxes will serve as translocation boxes for any bat encountered during the works, and will be left in place permanently as an enhancement measure.

2.2.3. Birds

The placement of two bird nest boxes (e.g. 1B Schwegler Bird Box – 32mm hole or Vivara Pro Seville WoodStone Nest Box – 28-32mm hole) on a selected trees (Figure 2) will contribute towards a modest net gain for biodiversity from the proposed development.

One barn owl nest box for buildings (e.g. The Barn Owl Trust model - <https://www.barnowltrust.org.uk/product-category/nestboxes/>) will be fitted inside the barns northeast of the house (Figure 2).

2.3. Timetable for implementation

The anticipated start date for the roost and nest box placement is April 2023.

2.4. Persons responsible

2.4.1. Developer

The property owner and developer will ultimately be responsible for compliance with this BES.

2.4.2. Consultant ecologist

The consultant ecologist (also the Registered Consultant for the bat mitigation licence) will be responsible for ensuring/confirming that the relevant contractors have been informed of the

One nest box (Vivara Pro Seville WoodStone Nest Box or equivalent) will be mounted in one of the mature trees at the entrance to the site access.

2.5. Aftercare and long-term maintenance

The bat boxes are open-bottomed and should be effectively self-cleansing. The bird nest boxes should be cleaned out annually within the period from October to January, when they are highly unlikely to be in use.

If/when there is evidence to suggest that the barn owl box may be in use, the Suffolk Community Barn Owl Project should be contacted to arrange annual checking during the breeding season.

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Figure 4: Roosting bat and nesting bird enhancement measures

