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**ECOLOGY**SOLUTIONS

Part of the ES Group

MIDWAY,  
LANCOTT LANE,  
BRIGHTHAMPTON

## **Ecological Assessment**

July 2023  
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## **PLANS**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background and Proposals**

- 1.1.1. Ecology Solutions (Manchester) Limited was commissioned to undertake an Ecological Assessment of land at Midway, Lancott Lane, Brighthampton, hereafter referred to as 'the Application Site'.
- 1.1.2. The Development Proposals seek minor re-development of the Site, comprising the construction of a small extension to the existing residential dwelling (see Appendix 1).

### **1.2. Application Site Characteristics**

- 1.2.1. The Application Site is located in the village of Brighthampton, approximately 6km to the south of Witney in West Oxfordshire. The village is located in a rural, mainly agricultural setting.
- 1.2.2. The Application Site comprises a residential dwelling set in an amenity garden consisting of amenity lawns and ornamental planting.

### **1.3. Ecological Assessment**

- 1.3.1. This document assesses the ecological interest of the Application Site as a whole. The importance of the habitats present is evaluated with regard to current guidance published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.3.2. This report also sets out the existing baseline conditions for the Application Site, setting these in the correct planning policy and legal framework, and assessing any potential impacts which may occur from the Proposed Development. Appropriate mitigation, where necessary, is identified such that it will offset any negative impacts, whilst opportunities to deliver significant ecological enhancements are sought within the Application Site, in accordance with relevant planning policy.

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<sup>1</sup> CIEEM (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.

## 2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1. The methodology utilised for the survey work can be split into three areas; namely desk study, habitat survey, and faunal survey. These are discussed in more detail below.

### 2.2. Desk Study

2.2.1. In order to compile background information on the Application Site and its immediate surroundings Ecology Solutions utilised freely available data from online resources such as the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)<sup>2</sup> database and information on protected species, such as bats, from the Oxfordshire Bat Group (OBG), as well as information available from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) with regard to non-designated sites.

2.2.2. Information sourced from MAGIC and the OBG is referenced within this report, where appropriate. The Site location is detailed on Plan ECO1.

### 2.3. Habitat Survey Methodology

2.3.1. Habitat surveys were carried out during July 2023 to ascertain the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the Application Site, and to identify the main habitats and associated plant species, with notes on fauna utilising the Site where relevant (not least, opportunities for roosting bats).

2.3.2. The Application Site was surveyed based around extended UK Habitat Classification (UKHab), as recommended by Natural England (NE), whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail.

2.3.3. Using the above method, the Application Site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list compiled for each habitat identified.

2.3.4. All the species that occur in each habitat would not necessarily be detected during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent during different seasons. However, given the survey was undertaken at an optimal time of year, and noting the Application Site represents a residential property and garden, it is considered an accurate and robust assessment has been made.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk>

## 2.4. Faunal Survey

- 2.4.1. General faunal activity observed during the course of the survey, whether visually or by call, was recorded. Specific attention was paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare, notable or priority species.
- 2.4.2. **Bats.** Bat surveys were undertaken within the Application Site during July 2022 to assess the suitability of the building and trees within the Site to support roosting bats. The work was undertaken by experienced bat workers, and aimed to establish the likelihood of the presence/absence of bats.
- 2.4.3. Field surveys were undertaken with regards to best practice guidelines issued by NE (2004<sup>3</sup>), the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (2004<sup>4</sup>) and the Bat Conservation Trust (2016<sup>5</sup>).
- 2.4.4. The probability of a building/structure being used by bats as a summer roost site increases if it:
- is largely undisturbed;
  - dates from pre 20th century;
  - has a large roof void with unobstructed flying spaces;
  - has access points for bats (though is not too draughty);
  - has wooden cladding or hanging tiles; and
  - is in a rural setting and close to woodland or water.
- 2.4.5. Conversely, the probability decreases if a building/structure is of a modern or prefabricated design/construction, is in an urban setting, has small or cluttered roof voids, has few gaps at the eaves, or is a heavily disturbed premises.
- 2.4.6. The main requirements for a winter/hibernation roost site are it maintains a stable (cool) temperature and humidity. Sites commonly utilised by bats as winter roosts include trees with cavities/holes, underground sites, and parts of buildings. Whilst different species may show a preference for one of these types of roost site, none are solely dependent on a single type.
- 2.4.7. **Badgers.** A Badger *Meles meles* survey was undertaken at the Application Site in July 2023. This comprised two main elements. The first of these was a thorough search for evidence of Badger setts. For any setts encountered each sett entrance was recorded and plotted, even if the entrance appeared disused. This included recording the following information where appropriate:

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<sup>3</sup> Mitchell-Jones, A. J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (Eds.) (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

<sup>5</sup> Collins, J. (Eds.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

- The number and location of well used or very active entrances; these are clear of any debris or vegetation and are obviously in regular use and may, or may not, have been excavated recently;
- The number and location of inactive entrances; these are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance, or have plants growing in or around the edge of the entrance;
- The number of disused entrances; these have not been in use for some time, are partly or completely blocked and cannot be used without considerable clearance. If the entrance has been disused for some time all that may be visible is a depression in the ground, where the hole once was, and the remains of the spoil heap.

2.4.8. Secondly, evidence of Badger activity, such as well-worn paths and run-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, latrines, and foraging signs, was also searched for in order to build up a picture of Badger usage in the area.

### 3. ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

- 3.1. The Application Site was subject to an ecological habitat survey by Ecology Solutions in July 2023. The vegetation present enabled the habitat types to be satisfactorily identified, and an accurate assessment of the ecological interest of the habitats to be undertaken.
- 3.2. The following main habitat/vegetation types were identified within the Application Site:
- Buildings and hardstanding;
  - Amenity garden comprising:
    - Amenity lawn;
    - Ornamental hedge;
    - Ornamental pond.
- 3.3. Each habitat present is described below, with an account of their representative plant species. The habitats are further illustrated on Plan ECO2.
- 3.4. **Buildings and Hardstanding**
- 3.5. The Site includes one residential building (**B1**), which is currently occupied. It is an old stone cottage with a pitched, thatched roof and gable ends. There is wooden cladding at the top of the eastern gable end of the building, above a window. There are two loft voids within the building. The building itself is of no intrinsic ecological interest. However, it does present some potential opportunities for faunal species, as detailed below.
- 3.6. Void 1 (**V1**) forms the loft space of the eastern end of the building. The void is accessed from the living space beneath via an access hatch which is approximately 40cm x 50cm. The void is approximately 5m in length, approximately 3m wide, and approximately 1.5m in height. It comprises old wooden beams which support the thatch which sits directly onto the beams with no roof lining. The floor is constructed of wooden beams similar in composition to the roofing beams, with rigid insulation board between them. The walls of the void consist of the bare stone of the house with no insulation overlay. At the eastern gable end there is wooden cladding, the gaps between the boards allow access directly to the outside. No evidence of bats (i.e., droppings, feeding remains, or staining on beams) was evident within the loft space. The roof is pitched and contains a thick, sustained layer of cobwebs throughout the void space.
- 3.7. Void 2 (**V2**) is broadly identical in size and structure to V1 but located in the western end of the building. There is a vent pipe extending into the loft void, covered at the external end by a vent cover. The eastern end of **V2** comprises a stone chimney flue which is located roughly in the middle of the building. Two desiccated butterfly wings were observed on the floor of the loft void. As above, with **V1**, no evidence of bats was evident within the loft space. **V2** also contains thick layers of cobwebs throughout the void space.



- 3.8. Areas of hardstanding associated with **B1** range from gravel car parking to stone patios, and ornamental gravel paths. All are of negligible ecological interest.
- 3.9. **Amenity Garden**
- 3.10. The Application Site supports a small, well managed amenity garden, containing areas of mown lawn, ornamental flower beds and an ornamental hedge. These areas are of very limited ecological interest.

#### Amenity Grassland

- 3.10.1. This grassland lies directly adjacent to **B1** and is managed as an amenity lawn with a typical species composition. Sward height was approximately 5cm throughout, and it appears to be regularly mown. Species recorded included for Perennial Rye *Lolium perenne*, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Annual Meadow Grass *Poa annua* and Cock's Foot *Dactylus glomerata*. Forbes observed included for Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Shepherd's Purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, Wall Germander *Teucrium chamaedrys*, Hop Trefoil *Trifolium campestre*, Field Bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis*, and Dove's Foot Crane's Bill *Geranium molle*.
- 3.10.2. Given their size and amenity nature, these habitats are not deemed of any significant ecological interest.

#### Ornamental Hedge

- 3.10.3. An ornamental hedge is planted along the boundary fence of the garden, and comprises a mixture of native and non-native species including for Cyprus sp, Hazel *Corylus*, Dog Rose *Rosa canina*, Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Lilac *Syringa*.
- 3.10.4. This hedgerow is essentially ornamental in nature, and as such is of little intrinsic ecological value, albeit slightly elevated in the context of the Site.

#### Ornamental Pond

- 3.10.5. There is a small artificial waterbody located in the north of the garden. It is roughly oval in shape and approximately 5m x 2m at its widest point, and approximately 0.5m deep. It contains some ornamental aquatic vegetation and is well stocked with fish.
- 3.10.6. It is of very limited ecological value.

#### 4. WILDLIFE USE OF THE APPLICATION SITE

4.1. During the survey work undertaken across the Application Site, general observations have been made of any faunal use, with specific attention paid to the potential presence of protected or notable species. Moreover, specific surveys were completed for bats.

##### 4.2. **Bats**

###### Roosting (Internal/External Surveys)

- 4.2.1. As described above, the building within the Application Site was subject to internal surveys in July 2022. This involved detailed searches within the building for evidence of current and past use by bats.
- 4.2.2. No evidence of the presence of bats was recorded in the building within the Application Site. An individual account of the potential suitability of the building to support roosting bats is provided below.
- 4.2.3. **B1.** As above, no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the internal and external inspections of **B1**. Notwithstanding the absence of any evidence, it is noted the loft voids present an opportunity for roosting bats, particularly noting there are gaps in the wooden cladding in V1 which would allow for ingress to the space by bats. **B1** was deemed to be of low potential suitability to support roosting bats.
- 4.2.4. The living areas of **B1** are unsuitable to support roosting bats.
- 4.2.5. It is important to note, the Proposed Development works are not predicted to impact the loft voids (i.e. the only features with bat roosting potential) either directly or indirectly. The proposed extension is single storey and will be built below the level of the loft void (V2) at the western end of the building and, as such, will not interfere with the structure of the loft void or cause any significant short or long-term impacts.
- 4.2.6. It is proposed for one window in the western elevation of the building to be lost for the construction of the extension. However, this window does not provide any potential for bat roosting features, and its loss would not have the ability to cause harm to or impact upon roosting bats.
- 4.2.7. On the basis of the above, it is not deemed necessary to conduct further specific surveys for roosting bats, and no further consideration is given to this faunal group as part of this report.

###### Foraging

- 4.2.8. The proposals seek a small-scale extension, resulting in minor losses to ornamental habitats within a residential garden. These habitats offer no opportunities of significance for foraging and/or

commuting bats. As such, no impacts of significance have the potential to arise, and no surveys would be required.

- 4.2.9. **Background information.** The desk study undertaken with MAGIC returned a record of a Granted European Protected Species Application within 1km of the Application Site, from 2017, located approximately 500m from the Application Site. The licence related to Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* bats. The licence allowed for the destruction of a resting place.

#### 4.3. Badgers

- 4.3.1. Notwithstanding the size and amenity nature of the Application Site, a specific Badger survey was undertaken as part of the initial Phase 1 survey of the Site in July 2023. No evidence of Badger activity was recorded within the Site and, given the nature of the Site (i.e., a residential property and regularly used amenity garden), it is considered highly unlikely the Site would offer any significant opportunities for Badger populations in the wider area.
- 4.3.2. As such, no further consideration is given to Badgers as part of this report.
- 4.3.3. **Background information.** The desk study undertaken with MAGIC returned no records of Badger within or directly adjacent to the Application Site.

#### 4.4. Amphibians (Great Crested Newts [GCN])

- 4.4.1. There is a single small ornamental waterbody in the garden of the Application Site. There is another waterbody within 500m of this pond, however it is separated from the Application Site by a busy road and residential properties. These are deemed to represent significant barriers to dispersal.
- 4.4.2. Taking into account the small scale of the Proposals, the density of fish in the on Site waterbody, the small extent and low ecological value of the amenity garden to be lost to the proposed extension, the location of the off-site waterbody and its separation from the Site, the significant barriers to dispersal in the form of the residential areas and the road, as well as the absence of any amphibian records returned from the data search, it is not considered GCN *Triturus cristatus* have the potential to be present on site, nor that they would be a constraint to the proposed works on Site.
- 4.4.3. As such, no further consideration is given to GCN as part of this report.
- 4.4.4. **Background Information.** The desk study undertaken with MAGIC returned no records of amphibians within the Application Site nor within a 1km radius of the Application Site.

#### 4.5. Reptiles

- 4.5.1. There is extremely limited potential for this faunal group within the Site, considering the amenity and well managed nature of the habitats. As such it is not considered these opportunities would be significant for common reptile species, should they be present in the local area. In reaching this conclusion, it is noted extensive areas of more suitable habitat are present in the wider area.
- 4.5.2. In light of the above, it is considered there would be no merit in undertaking a specific reptile survey of the Site. In the event that incidental areas of suitable habitat are present at the time of works commencing, sensitive clearance would be more than sufficient to avoid potential impacts.
- 4.5.3. **Background Information.** The desk study undertaken with MAGIC returned no records of reptiles within or directly adjacent to the Application Site.

#### 4.6. Birds

- 4.6.1. The habitats within the Application Site are likely to offer some limited opportunities for a range of garden birds, albeit the small extent of the Application Site prevents it from supporting any significant or notable populations. In any event, all the suitable nesting habitat is to be retained as part of the Proposals.
- 4.6.2. No evidence of active nesting was recorded at the time of survey.
- 4.6.3. Bird species recorded within and passing over the Site during the habitat survey included Blackbird *Turdus merula* and Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*.

#### 4.7. Invertebrates

- 4.7.1. The Application Site supports a limited range of habitats likely to be of some value to invertebrates, including areas of grassland and mature tree lines. Nonetheless, and given the small size of the Site, there is nothing to consider the Site would be of any particular importance to notable or protected invertebrate species or assemblages.
- 4.7.2. **Background Records.** The data search received from MAGIC returned no records of invertebrates within or directly adjacent to the Application Site.

#### 4.8. Dormouse

- 4.8.1. The woody vegetation within the Site is generally highly sub-optimal for Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, being restricted in extent and mostly non-native ornamental in composition. In any event, all the woody vegetation within the Site is to be retained, with losses limited to an area of ornamental flowerbed and some amenity

grassland of no potential value to Dormouse (should they be present in the wider area).

4.8.2. On this basis, noting the very small size of the Site, that the vast majority of semi-natural habitat is to be retained as part of the Proposals, and only very minor losses to predominantly ornamental and non-native species is proposed, the Development Proposals are not deemed to have potential to result in impacts on Dormouse, should they be present in the local area. As such, it is considered of no merit to undertake a specific Dormouse survey of the Site. Noting the above, no further consideration is given to Dormice as part of this report.

4.8.3. **Background Records.** The data search received from MAGIC did not return any records of Dormouse within or adjacent to the Application Site.

#### 4.9. **Other Notable Species**

4.9.1. Given the small size of the Application Site and its amenity nature, it is unlikely to offer significant opportunities for any other protected or notable faunal species or assemblages which may be present in the wider area.

4.9.2. **Background records.** The data search received from MAGIC returned no records of other notable species within or directly adjacent to the Application Site.

## 5. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### 5.1. The Principles of Site Evaluation

- 5.1.1. The latest guidelines for ecological evaluation produced by CIEEM propose an approach which involves professional judgement, but makes use of available guidance and information, such as the distribution and status of the species or features within the locality of the project.
- 5.1.2. The methods and standards for site evaluation within the British Isles have remained those defined by Ratcliffe<sup>6</sup>. These are broadly used across the United Kingdom to rank sites, so priorities for nature conservation can be attained. For example, current Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation maintains a system of data analysis that is roughly tested against Ratcliffe's criteria.
- 5.1.3. In general terms, these criteria are size, diversity, naturalness, rarity, and fragility, while additional secondary criteria of 'typicalness', potential value, intrinsic appeal, recorded history, and the position within the ecological/geographical units are also incorporated into the ranking procedure.
- 5.1.4. Any assessment should not judge sites in isolation from others since several habitats may combine to make it worthy of importance to nature conservation.
- 5.1.5. Further, relying on the national criteria would undoubtedly distort the local variation in assessment, and therefore additional factors need to be taken into account, e.g., a woodland type with comparatively poor species diversity, common in the south of England, may be of importance at its northern limits, say in the border country.
- 5.1.6. In addition, habitats of local importance are often highlighted within a local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) BAP currently lists a number of priority species and habitats, in addition to several Conservation Target Areas (CTAs). CTAs are areas created to restore biodiversity at a landscape-scale through the maintenance, restoration, and creation of BAP priority habitats.
- 5.1.7. Levels of importance can be determined within a defined geographical context, from the immediate site or locality through to the international level.
- 5.1.8. The legislative and planning policy context are also important considerations and have been given due regard throughout this assessment.

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<sup>6</sup> Ratcliffe, D A (1977). *A Nature Conservation Review: the Selection of Sites of Biological National Importance to Nature Conservation in Britain*. Two Volumes. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

## 5.2. Habitat Evaluation

### Designated Sites

- 5.2.1. **Statutory Sites.** There are no designated sites within or adjacent to the Site, and no designated sites within 1km of the Site boundary. Given the nature of the Proposals (i.e., re-development of an existing residential property) and the separation of the Site from any designated sites in the local area, no adverse impacts are considered likely to arise. This is the case when the Proposals are considered either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 5.2.2. The Site is located outside any SSSI impact risk zones for which the proposed type of development would have the potential to give rise to 'likely impacts'.
- 5.2.3. **Non-statutory Sites.** There are no non-designated sites within or adjacent to the Site, and no non-designated sites within 1km of the Site boundary.
- 5.2.4. As for statutory sites above, given the nature of the proposals, no impacts are predicted to arise on any non-statutory sites in the wider area.

### Habitats within the Application Site

- 5.2.5. As identified in the Baseline Section above, the Application Site predominantly comprises a residential dwelling and its associated curtilage.
- 5.2.6. The residential building and areas of hardstanding are of no intrinsic ecological value, and no mitigation would be required for their loss. Equally, impacts to the amenity habitats (lawn and amenity planting) within the garden are not deemed to be of any significant ecological interest, and again would not necessitate any specific ecological mitigation.
- 5.2.7. In summary, the impacts of the Proposed Development are so minor, and the quality of habitat to be lost (amenity garden) is of such low ecological value that no further mitigation or compensation would be required.

### Fauna

- 5.2.8. As identified in the Baseline Section above, the Application Site is not assessed to be of raised potential value for any protected or notable faunal groups. As such, no specific avoidance or mitigation measures would be required to ensure a policy compliant scheme.
- 5.2.9. This notwithstanding, the below measures are identified on a precautionary basis, and in order to ensure an ecologically positive scheme can come forward.

- 5.2.10. **Bats.** The proposals for the Site will not have the potential to result in adverse impacts on foraging, commuting or roosting bats.
- 5.2.11. In the event that any scaffolding is required, or construction phase lighting necessary, these should be discussed and agreed with an ecologist in the first instance, in order to ensure that potential impacts on bats will not arise.
- 5.2.12. As an enhancement over the existing situation, it is proposed for a single, free hanging bat box to be installed within the application site. Suitable trees are present within the garden which would offer a suitable location for bat box provision. The bat box should comprise a composite feature (e.g. Woodcrete or Woodstone) due to their improved longevity. This feature should be installed at a minimum height of 12ft, with a southerly orientation.
- 5.2.13. **Birds.** Minor losses to ornamental vegetation would be of no adverse significance to local bird populations. Nonetheless, in order to avoid any potential offence, it is recommended that any woody vegetation clearance is undertaken outside of the main bird nesting season (i.e. undertaken between September - February). In the event that clearance is required between March – August, removal should be preceded by a nesting bird check, undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist. Suitable examples are included at Appendix 2.
- 5.2.14. As an enhancement over the existing situation, it is proposed for a single, free hanging bird box to be installed within the application site. As above, suitable trees are present within the garden which would offer a suitable location for bird box provision. The bird box should comprise a composite feature (e.g. Woodcrete or Woodstone) due to their improved longevity. This feature should be installed at a minimum height of 12ft, with a northerly orientation.
- 5.2.15. Suitable examples are included at Appendix 2.
- 5.2.16. **Other Species.** On a precautionary basis, it is recommended that clearance of vegetated ground is undertaken in a sensitive manner, with due regard given to the potential presence of protected and notable faunal species such as small mammals or common reptiles.
- 5.2.17. Given the very small scale of the proposals, and the sub-optimal nature of the existing ornamental habitats, a suitable methodology in this instance would comprise the hand removal of ground cover vegetation, or otherwise a two-stage cut of vegetation using hand tools. A two-stage cut should remove vegetation cover to a height of 15cm initially, and a further cut to ground level following a period for fauna to disperse. The completion of this approach, which should be completed in warm weather conditions (>10C and dry), ideally between March – October, would be sufficient to avoid potential harm to individual animals (in the unlikely scenario they are present).



## 6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.1. The planning policy framework that relates to nature conservation in Brighthampton, Oxfordshire is issued at two main administrative levels: nationally through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and at the local level through the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan, which sets out the vision for West Oxfordshire district up until 2031. It was adopted in September 2018.
- 6.2. Any proposed development will be judged in relation to the policies contained within these documents.

### 6.3. National Policy

#### National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.3.1. Guidance on national policy for biodiversity and geological conservation is provided by the NPPF, published in March 2012, revised on 24 July 2018, 19 February 2019 and again on 20 July 2021. It is noted the NPPF continues to refer to further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system provided by Circular 06/05 (DEFRA/ODPM, 2005) accompanying the now-defunct Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9).
- 6.3.2. The key element of the NPPF is there should be “*a presumption in favour of sustainable development*” (paragraphs 10 to 11). It is important to note this presumption “*does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site*” (paragraph 177). ‘Habitats Site’ has the same meaning as the term ‘European Site’ as used in the Habitats Regulations 2017.
- 6.3.3. Hence, the direction of Government policy is clear. That is, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is to apply in circumstances where there is potential for an effect on a European site, if it has been shown there will be no adverse effect on that designated site as a result of the development in prospect.
- 6.3.4. A number of policies in the NPPF are comparable to those in PPS9, including reference to minimisation of impacts to biodiversity and provision of net gains to biodiversity (paragraph 174).
- 6.3.5. The NPPF also considers the strategic approach local authorities should adopt with regards to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of green infrastructure (GI), priority habitats and ecological networks, and the recovery of priority species.
- 6.3.6. Paragraphs 179 to 181 of the NPPF comprise a number of principles local authorities should apply, including encouraging opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments; provision for

refusal of planning applications if significant harm cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated for; applying the protection given to European sites to potential Special Protected Areas (SPA), possible Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites identified (or required) as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites; and the provision for the refusal for developments resulting in the loss or deterioration of 'irreplaceable' habitats – unless there are 'wholly exceptional reasons' (for instance, infrastructure projects where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat) and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

- 6.3.7. National policy therefore implicitly recognises the importance of biodiversity and, with sensitive planning and design, development and conservation of the natural heritage can co-exist, and benefits can, in certain circumstances, be obtained.

#### 6.4. Local Policy

##### West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 (2018)

- 6.4.1. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 is a planning framework document which has been produced with the aim of ensuring new development has a positive impact on the environment. This document considers the long-term vision and objectives for West Oxfordshire and contains the policies for delivering these objectives, and outlines how they will be implemented in a cohesive manner.
- 6.4.2. This document contains five policies of relevance to ecology and biodiversity conservation, these being policies Environment and Heritage 2 **EH2**, **EH3**, **EH4**, **EH7** and **EH8**.
- 6.4.3. **Policy EH2** relates primarily to landscape character. However, it identifies the need for new developments to conserve Oxfordshire's natural environment, with specific reference made to its biodiversity and the avoidance of causing pollution, particularly noise and light.
- 6.4.4. Policy **EH3** relates to biodiversity and geodiversity. It refers to the protection afforded to statutory and non-statutory designated sites, as well as the protection of protected species and habitats. The policy also states that developments should be designed to conserve and achieve a net gain in biodiversity interest, and secure ecological networks at a landscape scale, especially within CTA's. The policy identifies that, in some situations (i.e., for major developments), applications may need to be supported by a Biodiversity Impacts Assessment Calculator (BIAC).
- 6.4.5. Policy **EH4** relates to the public realm and GI within new developments, and identifies requirements for GI design and extent. New developments should contribute to the overall GI of the local area.

- 6.4.6. Policy **EH7** relates to flood risk. It primarily concerns flood risk but identifies the importance of natural sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in new settlements.
- 6.4.7. Policy **EH8** relates to environmental protection including impacts on air quality, artificial lighting, noise, water resources, and waste.

Supplementary Planning Documents - Biodiversity and Planning in Oxfordshire

- 6.4.8. The Biodiversity and Planning SDPs provides additional guidance in relation to local biodiversity and have been produced to assist those involved in planning, particularly Design Guide 13 (Biodiversity and Protected Species). The document provides further detail and context to the adopted Local Plan, covering subject areas including statutory and non-statutory sites, priority habitats, protected and notable species, and other features of biodiversity importance.

**6.5. Discussion**

- 6.5.1. Recommendations have been put forward in this report which would allow the Development Proposals to fully safeguard the existing ecological interest of the Application Site. Based on the assessment for the potential presence of protected species, due regard to the necessary measures to enhance the Application Site for such species have been put forward in this report.
- 6.5.2. In conclusion, implementation of the measures set out in this report enable the Proposals to fully accord with planning policy for ecology and nature conservation at all administrative levels.

## 7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Ecology Solutions (Manchester) Limited was commissioned to undertake an Ecological Assessment of land at Midway, Lancott Lane, Oxfordshire referred to as 'the Application Site'.

7.2. The Development Proposals seek minor re-development of the Site, comprising the construction of an extension to the western end of the pre-existing building.

### Designated Sites

7.3. There are no designated sites within or adjacent to the Site and no designated sites within 1km of the Site boundary. No adverse impacts on any designated sites are envisaged to arise from the Proposed Developments.

### Habitats

7.4. The Application Site comprises a residential dwelling and its associated curtilage. The habitats present are of no wider ecological significance, and comprise an amenity garden and residential building which is currently occupied. Given the nature of the proposals, not mitigation would be required.

### Protected and Notable Species

7.5. Specific surveys were undertaken in respect of bats and Badgers. These have not recorded any evidence of either faunal group being present within the Application Site.

7.6. The potential presence of protected and notable species has been carefully considered as part of the Development Proposals. It is considered that due to the minor nature of the proposed impacts (loss of a small area of amenity garden with negligible ecological value) as well as the lack of direct or indirect impacts on any features with bat roosting potential (namely loft voids), that no potential impacts of significance will arise.

7.7. Precautionary working measures are nonetheless identified, alongside opportunities for enhancement.

### Summary

7.8. In summary, the Development Proposals are of such minor extent with only minor impacts envisaged to a small area of amenity garden of ornamental nature, and with preliminary ecological surveys conducted to ascertain the value of the Site for protected species, it is not considered the Proposed Developments have the potential to impact on ecology in any significant way.

7.9. In conclusion, the Development Proposals will avoid or minimise potential adverse effects, whilst ensuring modest enhancements for protected and

notable faunal species. On this basis, the Development Proposals accord with all legislation and planning policy of relevance to ecology and nature conservation.

## PLANS

## **PLAN ECO1**

Application Site Location and Ecological  
Designations



Langley's Lane Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approx. 1.9km south-east

Key:

Application Site



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ecology-solutions.co.uk

11630M: LAND AT MIDWAY,  
LANCOTT LANE, BRIGHTAMPTON

PLAN ECO1: APPLICATION SITE  
& ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS

Rev: A  
Jul 23








## **PLAN ECO2**

Ecological Features



**Key:**

-  Application Site
-  Building
-  Amenity Garden
-  Hardstanding
-  Ornamental Pond

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	+44(0)161 4703232 mcr@ecologysolutions.co.uk ecologysolutions.co.uk

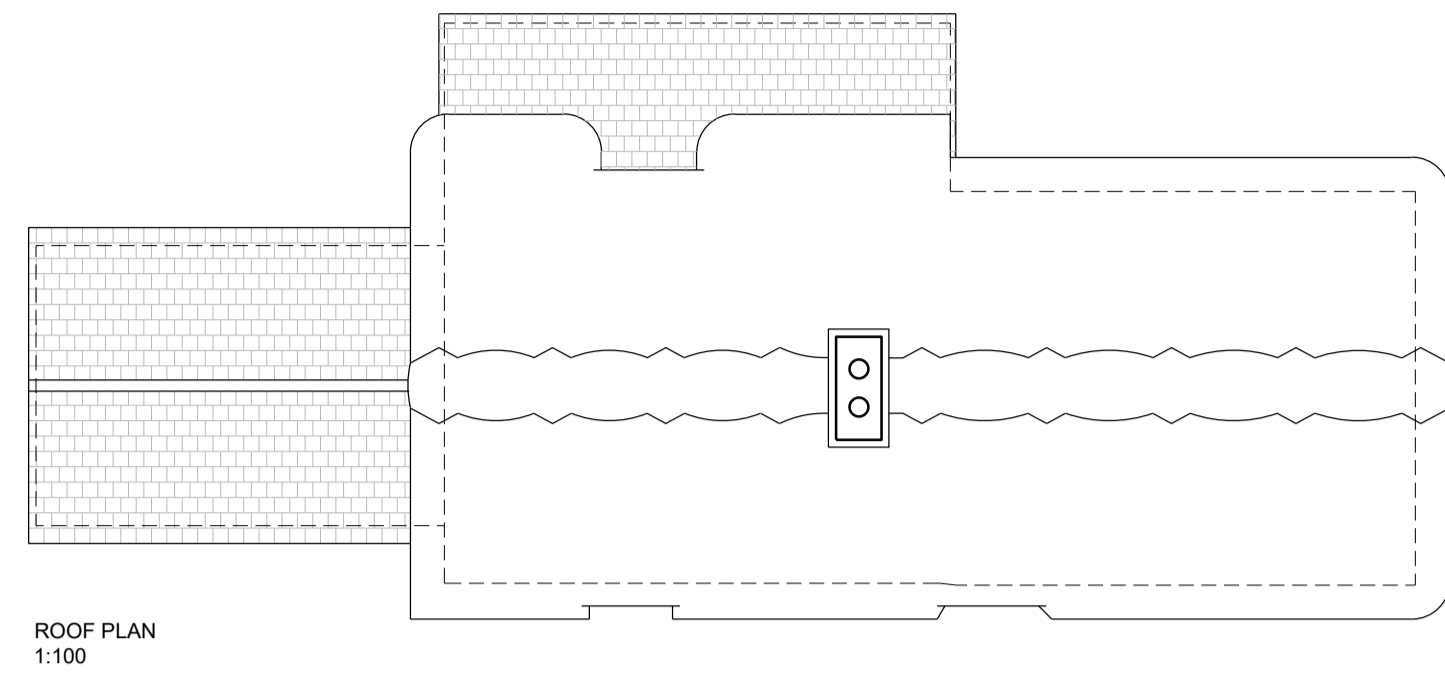
11630M: MIDWAY, LANCOTT LANE, BRIGHTAMPTON

PLAN ECO2: ECOLOGICAL FEATURES	Rev: A Jul 23
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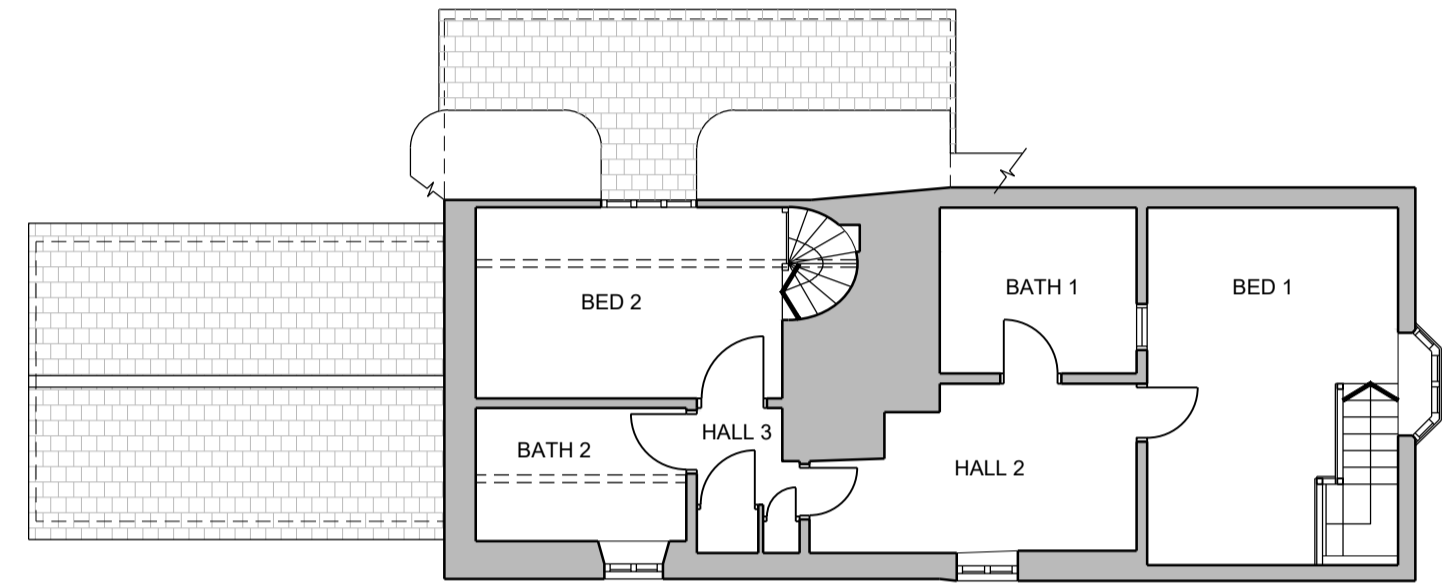
## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX 1**

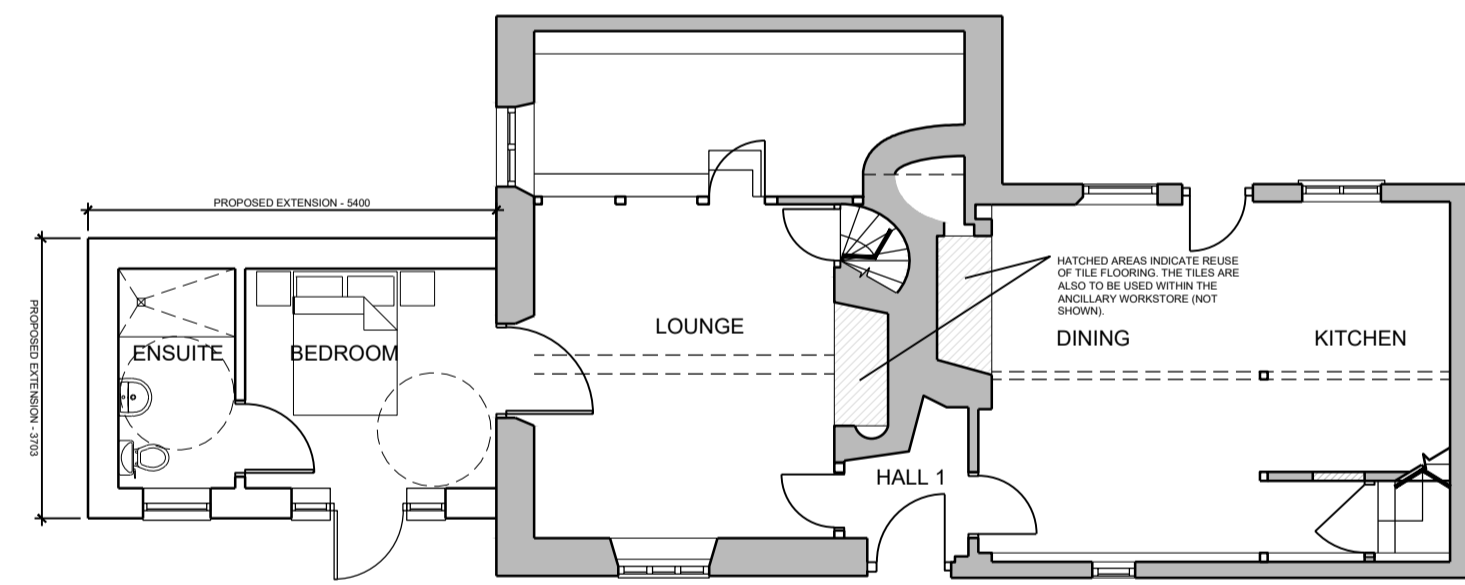
Development Proposals (extension)



ROOF PLAN  
1:100



FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
1:100



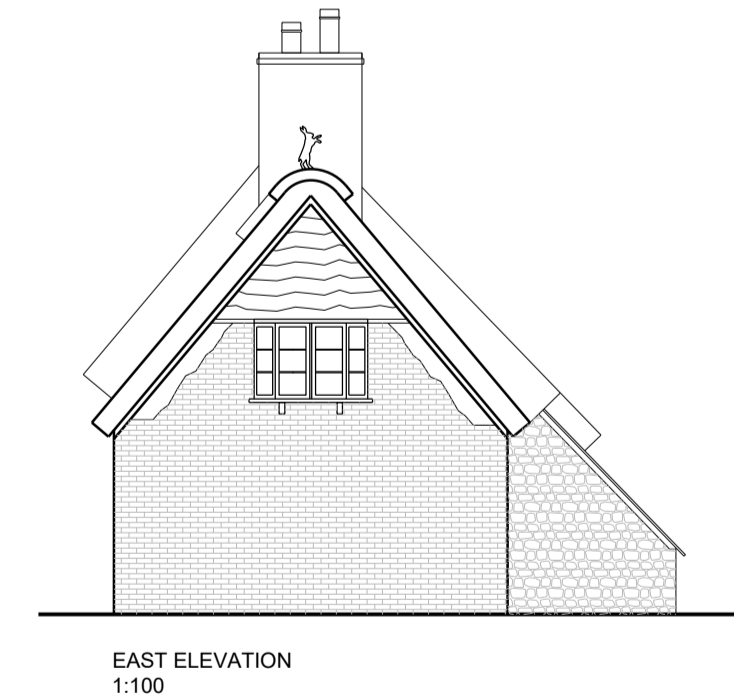
GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
1:100



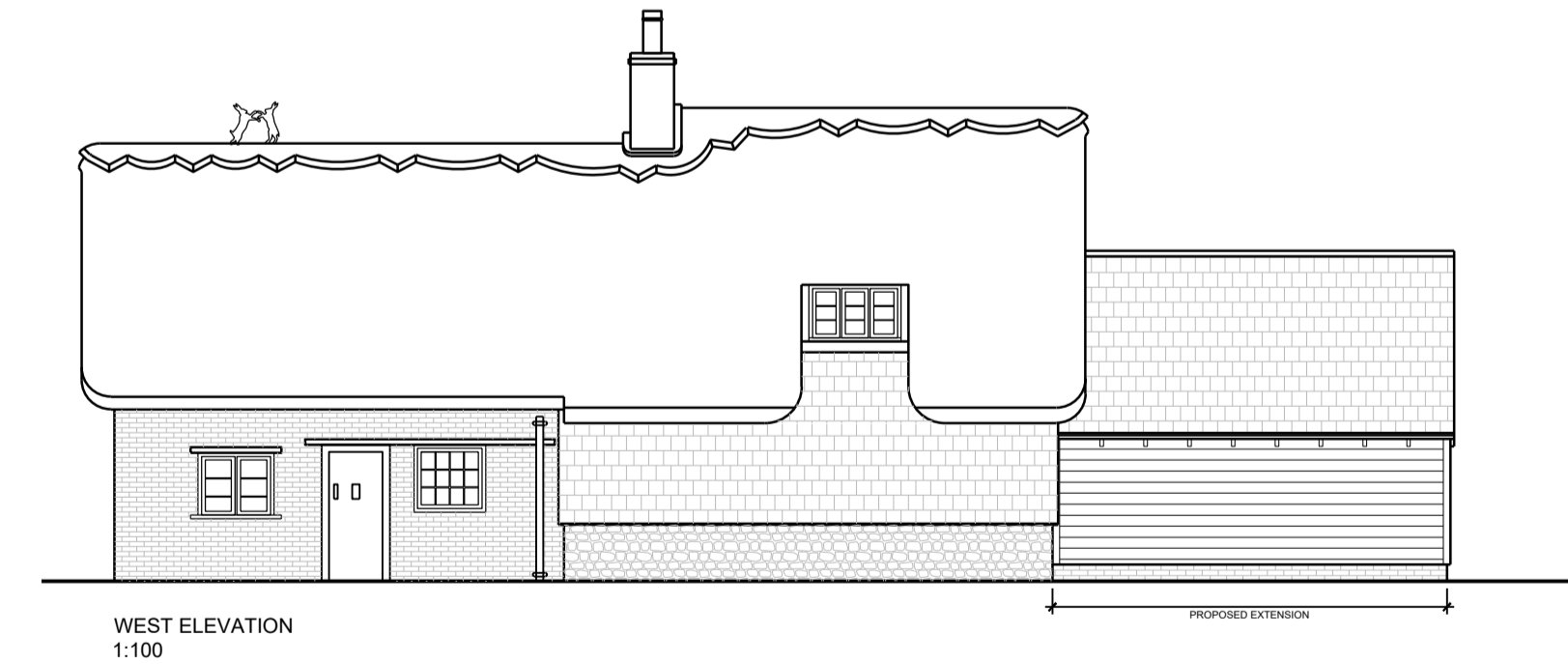
NORTH ELEVATION  
1:100



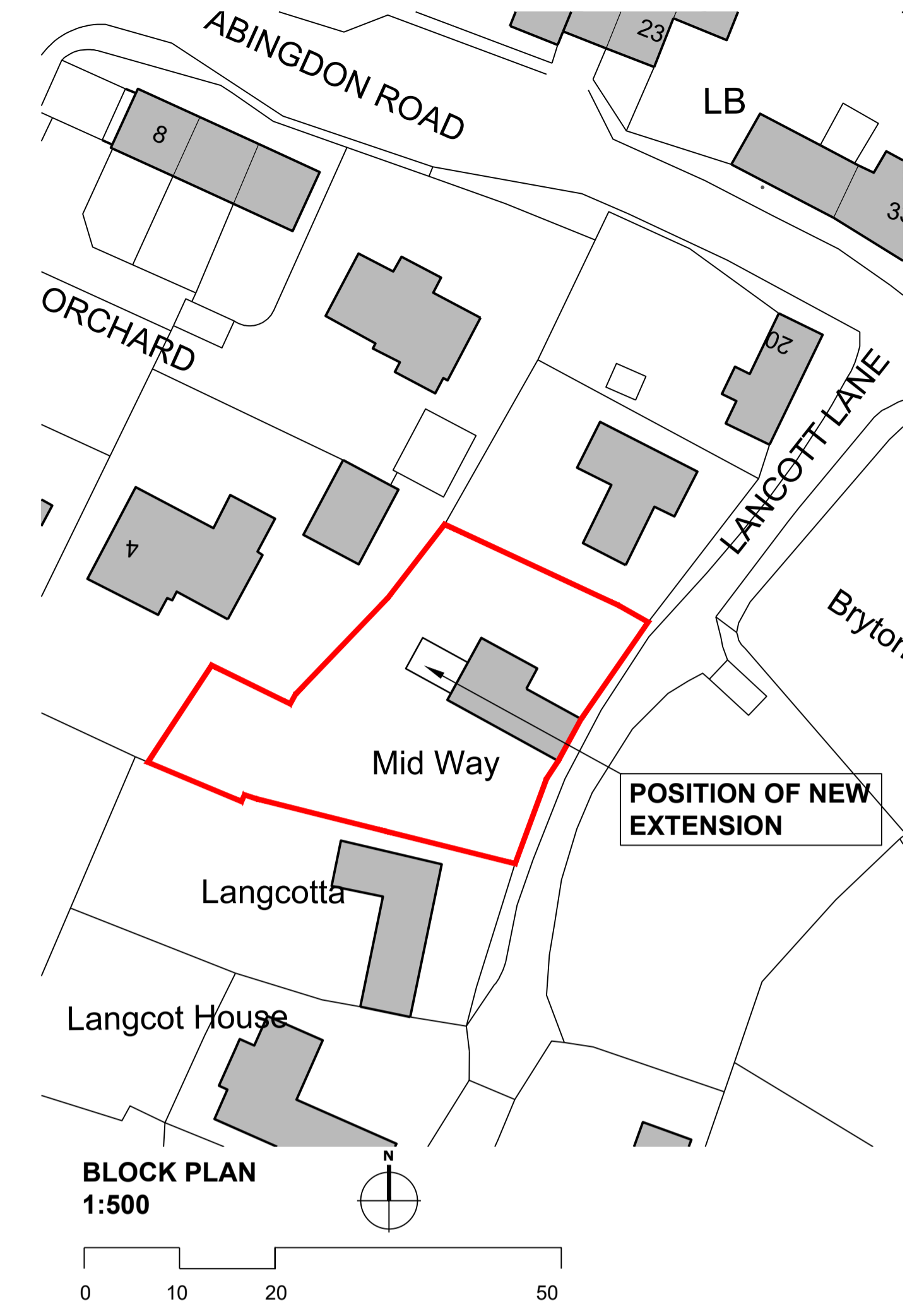
SOUTH ELEVATION  
1:100



EAST ELEVATION  
1:100



WEST ELEVATION  
1:100




BLOCK PLAN  
1:500

A Updated following the planning authority pre-planning response, 10.05.2023

Rev.	Note:	Date:

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**Client** Mr. A. Ward  
**Project** "MIDWAY", LANCOTT LANE, BRIGHTHAMPTON  
**Title** OPTION 1 - Extension Proposal

Scale 1:100 @ A1 Date March 2023 Drawn by mh Checked by mh  
Project No. E124 Drawing No. SK01 Revision A Status SKETCH

## **APPENDIX 2**

Examples of Suitable Bat and Bird Boxes

# Bat Boxes

Schwegler bat boxes are made from 'woodcrete' and have the highest rates of occupation of all types of box.

The 75% wood sawdust, clay and concrete mixture is ideal, being durable whilst allowing natural respiration and temperature stability. These boxes are rot and predator proof and extremely long lasting.

Boxes can be hung from a branch near the tree trunk or fixed using 'tree-friendly' aluminum nails.



## 1FF Bat Box

The rectangular shape makes the 1FF suitable for attaching to the sides of buildings or in sites such as bridges, though it may also be used on trees. It has a narrow crevice-like internal space to attract Pipistrelle and Noctule bats.

*Woodcrete (75% wood sawdust, concrete and clay mixture)*

*Width: 27cm*

*Height: 43cm*

*Weight: 8.3kg*

## 2FN Bat Box

A large bat box featuring a wide access slit at the base as well as an access hole on the underside. Particularly successful in attracting Noctule and Bechstein's bats.

*Woodcrete construction, 16cm diameter, height 36cm.*



## 2F Bat Box

A standard bat box, attractive to the smaller British bat species. Simple design with a narrow entrance slit on the front.

*Woodcrete construction, 16cm diameter, height 33cm.*



# Bat Boxes

## Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat Box

The Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat Box is an attractive, hardwearing bat box that will provide summer roosting space for bats in both urban and rural areas. This box is made from WoodStone, a mixture of wood fibres from fully certified FSC wood sources and concrete, and it is designed to last for years. It is breathable and maintains a consistent temperature inside, providing excellent insulation for roosting bats. The bat box also provides a rough surface which the bats can easily cling to and move around the box.

*Height: 250mm  
Width: 190mm  
Depth: 165mm*

*Weight: 4.5kg*

*Please note that this box is designed to be installed flush with a wall or a tree and should be placed at a height of at least 3m from the ground.*



## Vivara Pro Beaumaris WoodStone Bat Box

The Vivara Pro Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box comes in two sizes, midi and maxi, both of which have a rough interior to provide roosting opportunities for a range of bat species. The boxes are made from WoodStone, which has good thermal insulating properties and reduces temperature fluctuations internally. The boxes are painted black to maximise absorption of heat from the sun.

The Vivara Pro Beaumaris Woodstone Bat box is suitable for crevice-dwelling species which are commonly found roosting in buildings in the UK.

*Height: 400mm (500mm maxi)  
Width: 290mm (380mm maxi)  
Depth: 70mm (70mm maxi)*

*Weight: 5kg (8kg maxi)*

*Please note that this box is designed to be installed flush with a wall or a tree and should be placed at a height of at least 3m from the ground.*





# Bird Boxes

Schwegler bird boxes have the highest rates of occupation of all types of box. They are designed to mimic natural nest sites and provide a stable environment with the right thermal properties for chick rearing and winter roosting. Boxes are made from 'Woodcrete'. This 75% wood sawdust, clay and concrete mixture is breathable and very durable making these bird boxes extremely long lasting.



## 1B Bird Box

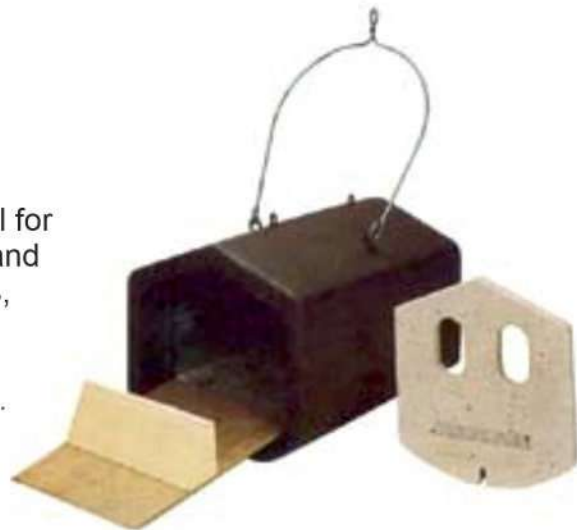
This is the most popular box for garden birds and appeals to a wide range of species. The box can be hung from a branch or nailed to the trunk of a tree with a 'tree-friendly' aluminium nail.

*Available in four colours and three entrance hole sizes. 26mm for small tits, 32mm standard size and oval, for redstarts.*

## 1N Deep Nest Box

A deeper than standard nest box which is ideal for robins, spotted flycatchers, pied wagtails, tits and sparrows. Its depth offers protection from cats, magpies, jays and martens.

*2 Entrance holes, 30 x 50mm. Nesting area 15 x 21cm.*



## 2M Bird Box

A free-hanging box offering greater protection from predators.

Supplied complete with hanger which loops and fastens around a branch.

With standard general-purpose 32mm diameter entrance hole.

Schwegler boxes have the highest occupation rates of all box types. They are carefully designed to mimic natural nest sites and provide a stable environment for chick rearing and winter roosting. They can be expected to last 25 years or more without maintenance.

# Bird Boxes



## **Vivara Pro Seville Woodstone Nest Box - 28mm Hole**

This nest box is suitable for fixing on buildings or trees and provides an insulated interior enabling consistent internal temperatures. The hole size is favoured by Tree Sparrows, Blue Tits, Coal Tits and Great Tits.

*Material: WoodStone.  
Entrance hole diameter: 32mm  
Dimensions: 210 x 190 x 305 mm  
Weight: 6kg*



## **Vivara Pro Barcelona Woodstone Nest Box - Open-fronted**

The open-fronted hole on this box is favoured by Spotted Flycatchers, Wrens, Robins and Song Thrush.

*Material: WoodStone.  
Entrance hole diameter: Open  
Dimensions: 190 x 255 x 170 mm.  
Weight: 3.55kg*



# **ECOLOGY**SOLUTIONS

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