

**Chelmer House
The Drive
Watling Lane
Thaxted
Essex
CM6 2UY**

**Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy
UTT/23/2392/FUL Condition 6**

On behalf of:

**WvH Planning Ltd
Elmwood
High Park Avenue
East Horsley
Surrey
KT24 5DD**

Prepared by:

Essex Mammal Surveys

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Summary

In May 2021, as part of a planning proposal involving a residential property and two outbuildings at Chelmer House, The Drive, Watling Lane, Thaxted, Essex CM6 2UY, a site visit was conducted to determine whether the site had the potential to be occupied by protected species, which would be affected if any proposed development were to go ahead. At that time, the survey found no evidence of protected species at the site, and the report concluded that: *'therefore it is considered that the planning proposal for this site will not have a detrimental effect on the local bat population or on protected species.'*

However, an opportunity exists to enhance the site for protected species, a requirement which the Local Planning Authority has also conditioned.

Condition 6 of the consent states *'Prior to slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority following the recommendations made within the Ecological Survey and Assessment (Essex Mammal Surveys, May 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), in accordance with Policy GEN7 of the adopted Uttlesford Local Plan (2005).'

Background

Consent has been granted for the **Application to vary condition (approved plans) attached to planning application UTT/21/2287/FUL (added under UTT/23/2482/NMA) for the erection of 1 no. dwelling and integrated two car garage on land adjacent to existing dwelling, demolition of existing garage and associated landscaping to relocate parking for host dwelling at Chelmer House The Drive Watling Lane Thaxted Essex CM6 2UY**



Photo 1: The proposal site

a) Objectives

The survey found no evidence of protected species at the site. However, it is proposed that:

- 2:** Two bird nesting boxes to be sited on trees or buildings at the site.
- 3:** A Hedgehog nesting box to be located along hedged boundary.
- 4:** Two solitary bee hives to be erected at the site.

b) Detailed designs



Photo 2: Two Schwegler bird nesting boxes to be erected at the site

Schwegler 2M nest box. One of the boxes to have a 26mm hole, the other, 32mm. All WoodcretePLUS™ nest boxes are built to last for at least 25 years against damage by weather, rot or natural predators.

The nest boxes should be sited on the northern or eastern side of a tree, fence or building and cleaned out in the autumn or winter after use. If, during cleaning, a box is found to be damaged and its expected lifespan reduced, it should be replaced. Boxes should be placed around 2m off the ground.

It is recommended that the existing gaps along the site boundaries are retained to allow hedgehogs and common toads to forage across the site as, potentially, at present. However, if solid boundary fences are to be introduced, see below:

Hedgehogs travel around **one mile** every night through our parks and gardens in their quest to find enough food and a mate. If you have an enclosed garden this can prevent hedgehogs from dispersing throughout their territory. It is now known that one of the main reasons why hedgehogs are declining in Britain is because our fences and walls are becoming more and more secure, reducing the amount of land available to them. Developers can make their life a little easier by removing the barriers within their control – for example, by making holes in or under our garden fences and walls for them to pass through.

A gap 13cm by 13cm is sufficient for any hedgehog to pass through. This will be too small for nearly all pets.



Photo 3: Hedgehog pathway at base of fence

Alternatively:

- Remove a brick from the bottom of the wall
- Cut a small hole in your fence if there are no gaps
- Dig a channel underneath your wall, fence or gate



Photo 4: Igloo Hedgehog nesting box. It may be best to line a woven box to avoid any possible tangling of spines



Photo 5: Solitary beehive

A solitary beehive may be made from durable FSC timber (several designs are available) and provides valuable habitat for bees in modern gardens. It is designed specifically to attract non-swarming bees like the Red Mason Bee, Leafcutter Bee and other solitary bees which are naturally attracted to holes in wood.

Attracting solitary bees to the garden is not only safe, but beneficial to pollination of flowers, fruit and vegetables.

Siting: Site in a visible warm place ideally oriented to face between southeast and south and to catch some sun. It is helpful to have soil nearby, and food sources such as flowers, orchards and fruit. The hive should be around 1.5m off the ground.

Solitary beehives should be cleaned out any time **from October to February** as it will be quite obvious which tubes are in use and which are not. The ones where you can see mud or leaves covering the end of the hole are in use and you should leave these ones alone. However, to avoid potential predation of overwintering cocoons by woodpeckers etc, it is recommended that fine gauze (available at garden centres) be suspended over the front of the hive.

c) Location

See annotated site plan, Appendix 1.

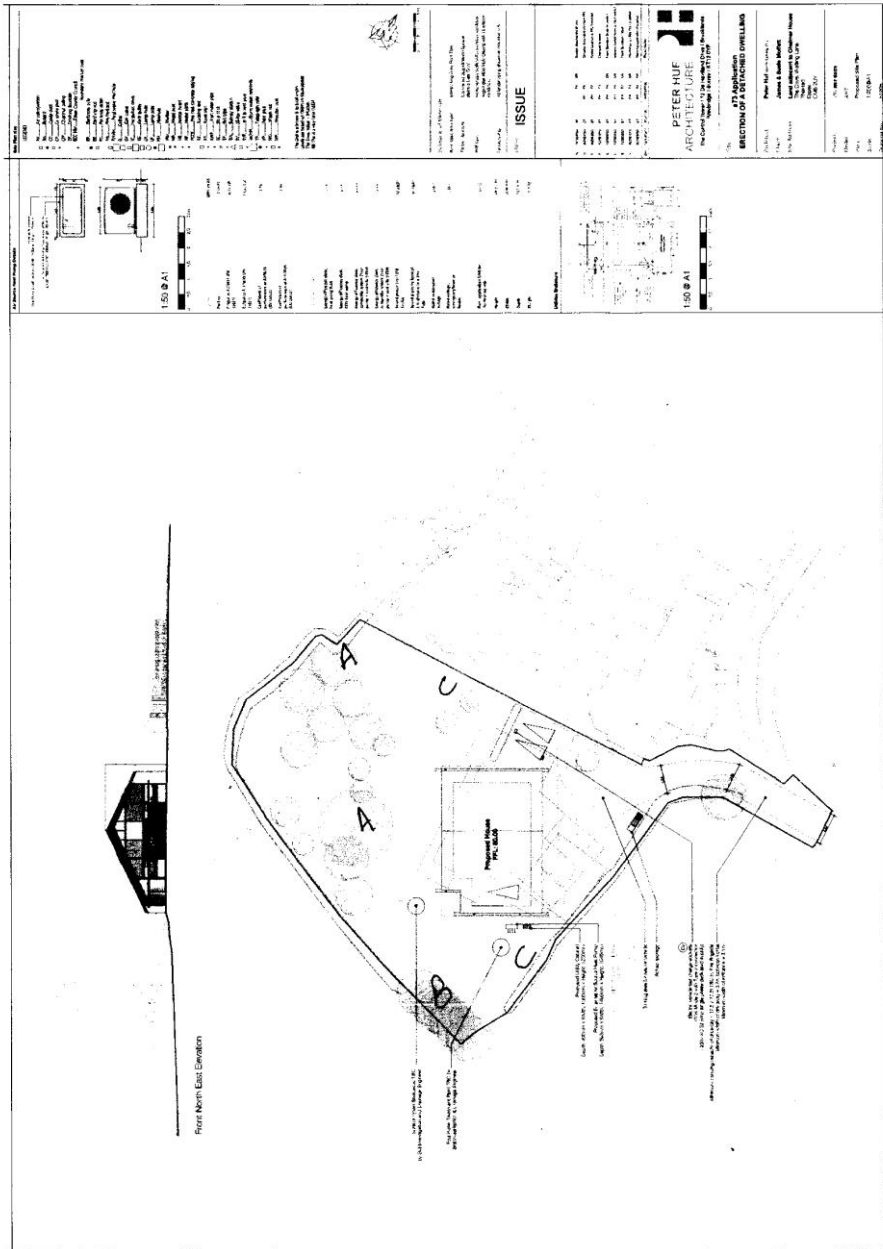
d) Persons responsible

The architect and/or ecologist will be responsible for overseeing compliance during site visits.

e) Aftercare

Woodcrete boxes have been chosen because of their durability, having been designed to last for 25 years. It is anticipated that they will be in place for at least that period.

Essex Mammal Surveys were requested to compile a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy to comply with a condition of the planning consent relating to Chelmer House, Thaxted. The identification of protected species is vital in the proposed development of a site to comply with existing legislation and also allows any work that may otherwise be detrimental to bats to be appropriately scheduled. John Dobson, a bat worker and trainer licensed by Natural England (Licence No. 2015-15258-CLS-CLS) and author of *Mammals of Essex* (Essex Field Club, 2014), compiled this document on 23rd February 2024. John Dobson has been elected a Fellow of the British Naturalists' Association and received the David Bellamy Award for natural history in 2015.



AA Bird nesting boxes
 B Hedgehog nesting box
 CC Solitary beehives

Appendix 1: Site Plan showing proposed location of enhancements