

Ecological Enhancement Plan

Survey site: Borde Hill House & Garden, Borde Hill Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1XP

Client: Borde Hill

Date: 09/06/2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Mid Sussex District Council. The proposal is described as:

Visitor and community hub, outdoor learning and adventure playground, community growing area and historic botanical propagation polytunnels, new and improved access and connectivity infrastructure, wider landscaping and biodiversity enhancements and associated works.

Planning Application Number:

DM/25/3104

1.0 Introduction

This Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) has been prepared for the above-named client to outline measures to be implemented development works at the above-named site.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure the protection and mitigation of ecological receptors, adherence to best practices and industry standards, and to ensure that there is adequate supervision by licensed professionals. The EEP also outlines the management frameworks required for the planning and implementation of construction activities to comply with local and national planning policy. As such, the EEP aims to provide sufficient information to discharge condition 9 of the approved planning application.

Table 1. Ecological context of the site and details any associated planning conditions.

Site Context and Landscape History
The site is centred upon National Grid Reference TQ 3236 2610 comprising an area of approximately 24ha of woodpasture, parkland and formal gardens with some infrastructure such as car parks. Individual habitats across the wood pasture mosaic comprise grassland, scattered trees and blocks of woodland as well as a series of four waterbodies associated with Robertsmere Lake, which is fed by watercourses arising from springs ~500m to the west and ~100m to the south. There are a further two ponds within Dinosaur Wood (Dinosaur Wood) which also contains a network of watercourses, together forming part of a complex of water courses feeding waterbodies from both east and west. ~380m east of Dinosaur Wood there is connectivity via habitats around the lakes a stretch of woodland (Lulling Gill) which is defined as ghyll woodland (a Sussex/Surrey speciality). The wider landscape beyond the parkland is a predominantly pastoral one with some arable defined by small fields delineated by tree lined, pre-enclosure hedgerows. Geology and soils are complex. The car park and eastern part of the site is underlain by mudstone. Sandstone and sand underlie the parkland between the car park and Robertsmere lake, which itself is underlain by sands, silts and mudstones up to the northern pond around Dinosaur Wood, which is underlain by clays and mudstone to the east, sandstone to the west and a calcareous sandstone bed in a strip along the plateau to the far eastern edge. The overlying soils are slightly acid loamy and clayey ones with impeded drainage and moderate fertility, suited to a wide range of woodland and pasture types
Ecological Background Information
Detailed using desk study and site survey.
The site had a ECIA undertaken by Arbtech Ltd on the 10th of September 2024. A BNG report followed on from this, as well as a HMMP. Habitats identified at the site include-

- Other Broadleaved Woodland
- Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland
- Acid Grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Other mixed woodland
- Introduced shrub
- Gorse scrub
- Artificial, unsealed surface
- Other developed land
- Other standing water
- Hedgerow with trees
- Hedgerow
- Line of trees
- Scattered trees
- River/stream

This does not include habitats identified outside of the development boundary, in the wider site landscape.

Value for protected species on the site includes the following-

- **Birds-** A breeding bird survey was carried out by Arbtech (Arbtech, 2024). The potential loss of understorey vegetation and trees, and the addition of increased human presence is likely to be the most significant impact of the scheme on breeding birds. This would be a higher impact on species that are nesting in the denser lower undergrowth, rather than those nesting in tree-top areas. The site also has suitability for common nesting birds.
- **Badgers-** No impacts are anticipated on badger setts as a result of the proposed development, However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.
- **Bats-** The proposed development will not result in any significant losses of foraging or commuting habitat. However new lighting included within and around the eco lodge and along the pathway to it could impact upon foraging and commuting bats, particularly if light sensitive species are present. None of the listed trees will be removed as part of the works and any tree removal required will only concern small alder and willow trees around the lake with negligible bat habitat value.
- **Reptiles-** The proposals will only lead to minor losses of any habitat and are likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.
- **Amphibians-** The small scale of the works does not require large scale vegetation clearance and it is anticipated that any risks to GCN and common amphibians can be managed via precautionary measures.

- **Terrestrial mammals-** There will be no significant loss of small terrestrial mammal habitat during construction, however construction activities could result in the death or unnecessary suffering of small mammals if present, the latter of which constitutes an offence under the Wild Mammals (Protection) act 1996.

Aims and Objectives

This report aims to identify key stakeholder requirements, ensure compliance by all stakeholders with all relevant legislation, and to provide ecological and biodiversity enhancement measures for the site and include a management strategy in order to achieve long-term success and improvements.

Work Schedules and Ecological Presence

Work schedules will be developed to ensure activities with specific timing requirements are carried out in a manner that minimises harm to ecological receptors. These schedules will be provided to all relevant personnel and contractors involved in the project.

Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW)

A qualified and suitably experienced ecologist will be present on-site during critical phases of construction activities, namely turf stripping. Their role will be to oversee and monitor compliance with the CEMP, provide guidance, and take immediate action to prevent any harm to ecological receptors. Should protected species be identified during vegetation clearance, works will be halted whilst a suitably licensed ecologist and/or Natural England is contacted.

Persons Responsible and Lines of Communication

A Development Biodiversity Champion is selected for the construction phase of the development. The Biodiversity Champion will be someone with significant influence during construction, such as the contract, site or project manager. They are responsible for ensuring all actions outlined in the approved CEMP are implemented including the provision of a toolbox talk prior to works commencing. Any queries with regards to the mitigation prescriptions will be addressed to the project ecologist and communication will be retained between the Development Biodiversity Champion and the 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 ECoW of the commencement of construction works and provides updates where necessary. The ECoW will provide ecological expertise and guidance throughout.

1.0 Habitat Creation and Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

Table 3 shows habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement measures for the site.

Table 2. Ecological/Biodiversity enhancement and management measures

Ecological/Biodiversity enhancement and management measures	This table includes any measure required to obtain or comply with planning permission, conditions, or other consent and to comply with legislation.
Works	Specification
Bat Boxes	Overview: A total of six bat boxes will be installed at each site, comprising external bat boxes onto retained mature retained trees. These will be installed as integrated. These can also be included during construction as intergrade bat boxes within the walls. The proposed locations are shown on the plans provided in Appendix 2. Details of the bat boxes recommended for the sites are as follows: <i>External bat boxes to be installed onto retained trees</i> • The recommended external bat boxes will be constructed of woodcrete/ woodstone. Boxes of this construction are known to require minimal maintenance and have a lifespan of 25 years plus. • 6 No. Vivara Pro Low Profile Woodstone Bat Boxes (or similar) (see Figure 1) will be installed onto retained mature trees. This bat box type is suitable to support a range of species including noctules <i>Nyctalus noctula</i> and soprano pipistrelles <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>. • The bat boxes will be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing a southern elevation with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light and facing vegetated habitats.



Figure 1 Vivara Pro Low Profile Woodstone Bat Box (image credit: <https://www.nhbs.com/equipment?qtview=194583>)

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.

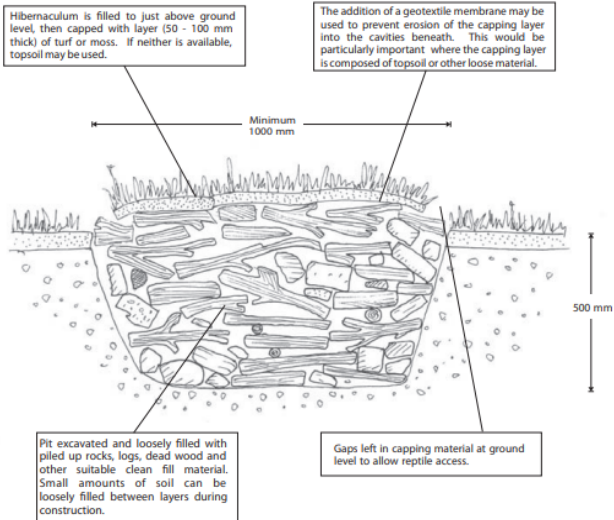
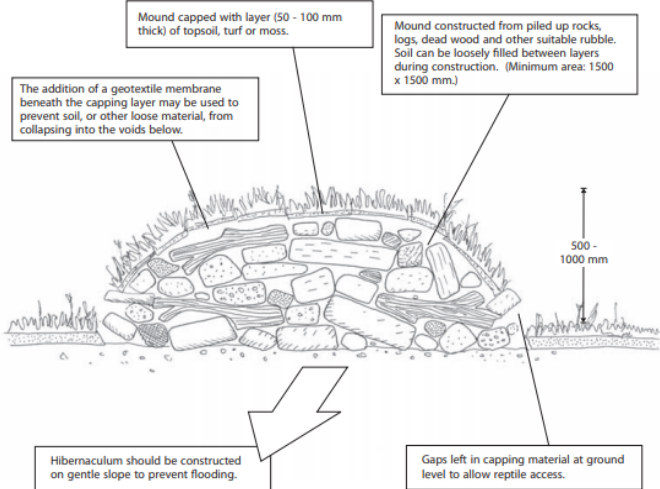
Bird Boxes

A total of five bird boxes will be installed on site. These will be installed onto mature trees onsite. The proposed locations are shown on the plans provided in **Appendix 2**. Details of the bird boxes recommended for the sites are as follows:

General installation guidance

- Ensure all the packaging is removed prior to installation
- Ensure the bird box is installed in the correct orientation
- Ensure the bird boxes are installed outward facing, with the entrance being free from obstruction

	• Installed bird boxes per manufacturer guidance (if available) • Once installed the biodiversity champion will inspect the bird box to ensure correct installation. In the case a bird box has been installed incorrectly, it will be removed and reinstalled. 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. • 5x Woodstone Nest Boxes (or a similar alternative brand) with 28mm entrance holes are proposed on the trees, as shown in Figure 15. • Woodstone Nest Boxes will be positioned approximately 1.5-3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Box positions will not be facing south as a result. • Due to the height of the building and the surrounding of trees, swift boxes are not recommended for this site due to the high volume of obstacles which would deterre swifts from this area. A photograph of a Woodstone Nest Box. It is a small, rectangular box with a green, gabled roof and a white front panel. A circular entrance hole is visible in the center of the white panel. The box is mounted on a tree trunk. Figure 15(left) Woodstone Nest Box – source arkwildlife.co.uk 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
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	years outside of the typical nesting bird season (March to September inclusive) following installation. External bird boxes must be replaced if they are damaged, removed, or have fallen from their recommended location. Internal bird boxes will not be blocked or removed.
Reptile/amphibian hibernacula	Three Hibernacula will be created using natural materials such as logs, stone, vegetation arising and earth. This can be done using material from the site clearance. This will continue to provide enhanced refuge and over-wintering opportunities at the site for reptiles. Examples of two suitable designs are demonstrated in Figure 3. These can be installed within meadow areas. Full details on this are provided in the Reptile Mitigation and Enhancement plan (Arbtech Ltd 2024) Hibernaculum on free-draining ground Where ground conditions allow, the hibernaculum should be incorporated into a shallow pit. This design is more likely to remain frost-free, and will be less obtrusive and thus unlikely to be subject to interference.  Hibernaculum is filled to just above ground level, then capped with layer (50 - 100 mm thick) of turf or moss. If neither is available, topsoil may be used. The addition of a geotextile membrane may be used to prevent erosion of the capping layer into the cavities beneath. This would be particularly important where the capping layer is composed of topsoil or other loose material. Minimum 1000 mm 500 mm Pit excavated and loosely filled with piled up rocks, logs, dead wood and other suitable clean fill material. Small amounts of soil can be loosely filled between layers during construction. Gaps left in capping material at ground level to allow reptile access. Hibernaculum on impermeable ground Where ground conditions are impermeable, then an 'above-ground' or mounded design should be utilised in order to prevent the hibernaculum from flooding. This design should also be used if it is not possible to excavate a pit for any other reason.  Mound capped with layer (50 - 100 mm thick) of topsoil, turf or moss. The addition of a geotextile membrane beneath the capping layer may be used to prevent soil, or other loose material, from collapsing into the voids below. Mound constructed from piled up rocks, logs, dead wood and other suitable rubble. Soil can be loosely filled between layers during construction. (Minimum area: 1500 x 1500 mm.) 500 - 1000 mm Hibernaculum should be constructed on gentle slope to prevent flooding. Gaps left in capping material at ground level to allow reptile access. Figure 3- A representation of a man-made hibernaculum. Appropriate signage indicating presence or the hibernacula feature will be implemented to prevent removal, or accidental damage.
Hedgehog access points	Access points

	Access will be continued to be provided for hedgehogs on the site. This will include the installation of hedgehog access points within the fencing around the site. Gaps in the fencing will be a minimum 15 x 15cm. A hedgehog highway plaque will be installed over these gaps to indicate the reasoning and to prevent these being accidentally being fixed or blocked off, as demonstrated in figure 3. This will also include gaps between the newly added fence for the dog field, which will provide safe movement across the site. Location of suitable gaps are noted in the map in appendix 2. This will also provide movement access for smaller fauna such as reptiles. Refugia created as part of the reptile mitigation plan would also benefit hedgehogs in providing hibernation opportunities. Figure 3- Hedgehog highway plaque- Source- www.Wildcare.co.uk
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Compliance and Reporting

The EEP requires stakeholders to comply fully with the pre-construction and construction-related elements of any mitigation strategies agreed with the Local Planning Authority and Natural England under any license requirements. Construction activities will therefore be conducted strictly in accordance with the approved EEP. Regular inspections and monitoring will be undertaken to ensure compliance with the plan's requirements.

Any deviations or incidents that may affect ecological receptors will be immediately reported to the designated ecologist / Natural England. Updates to the EEP will be relayed to the Local Planning Authority.

The EEP will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary throughout the construction phase to address changing site conditions and evolving ecological considerations.

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Appendix 1: Site Landscape master plan

Ecological Enhancement Plan



Ecological Enhancement Plan





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Validity

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion

Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Final	1	Georgina Rennie BSc (Hons), MSc. Consultant Ecologist . CL17 Bat Survey Licence	09/06/2026