

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

Survey site:

Rose Cottage, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1XT

Report date:

22nd March

Project:

The proposal is described as:

Conversion of vacant adjoined barn into nursery space at ground floor level, alterations to ground floor layout and an increase of child numbers to 70 children.

[Mid Sussex District Council: **DM/24/2733**]

Scope of Report:

This report is relevant to condition 4 of the above-named application.

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Guidelines

This assessment has been designed to meet:

- British Standard 42020 (2013) 'Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development'.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.

(BS 42020, 2013)

In consequence of the scale and intensity of the proposed development, this plan-led report is considered adequate and proportionate. It communicates all relevant information necessary to determine a planning application or support the recommendations for further surveys.

Contents

1.0 Introduction and Context 4

 1.1 Background 4

 1.2 Project Description 4

 1.3 Site Context 4

 1.4 Scope of This Report 4

2.0 Ecological Mitigation, Enhancement and Management Plan..... 6

3.0 Bibliography..... 8

Appendix 1: Proposed Enhancement Plan 10

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was commissioned to produce a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy (BES) for the proposed development at Rose Cottage, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 1XT (hereafter referred to as “the site”).

The site has been subject to the following previous assessments of relevance to this report:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arbtech, 2024);
- Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Survey Report (Arbtech, 2025).

1.2 Project Description

The planning application pertaining to the site (Mid Sussex District Council reference: DM/24/2733) describes the development as: *Conversion of vacant adjoined barn into nursery space at ground floor level, alterations to ground floor layout and an increase of child numbers to 70 children* (hereafter referred to as the proposed development).

A proposed development plan is provided in **Appendix 1**.

1.3 Site Context

The site is located in Haywards Heath at National Grid Reference TQ 32565 26680 and has an area of approximately 0.2ha comprising one building (a working nursery), hard standing, a patch of coniferous woodland dominated by spruce trees and a small area of astroturf. There is a trainline ~200m east and Ardingly Reservoir is 2.5km north of the site. The site is surrounded by pockets of woodland and grass fields. Six bat roosts are present within the building; a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSL) will be required before the proposed works to the building can legally proceed.

1.4 Scope of This Report

Following the submission of the planning application, the proposed development was approved. The Decision Notice included planning conditions; of relevance to this report, planning condition 4 which states:

Prior to any works above slab level, a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy for protected, Priority and threatened species, prepared by a suitably qualified ecologist, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The content of the Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy shall include the following:

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

The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details shall be retained in that manner thereafter. Reason: To enhance protected, Priority and threatened species and allow the LPA to discharge its duties under paragraph 187d of NPPF 2024 and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (as amended).

The aims of this BES are to provide ecological enhancement prescriptions to ensure that viable enhancements are provided to ensure gains to biodiversity are achieved as a result of the development. As such, alongside a landscaping plan, this report aims to provide sufficient detail to support the discharge of planning condition 4.

2.0 Ecological Mitigation, Enhancement and Management Plan

Table 1: Provision of New Species-Specific Enhancements

Works	Specification
Persons Responsible	The developer will be responsible for mitigation and provision of the new enhancements. The occupier of the proposed development (i.e. the landowner or managing agent) will be responsible for the management of these features post development.
Management Term	The management prescriptions outlined within this table must be implemented over a period of at least 30 years.
Bat Box	The integration of 2x Kent Type Twin Crevice Bark Boxes onto retained mature trees will provide additional roosting habitat for bats, as illustrated in Appendix 1. Bat Box Installation The bat boxes will be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing south or west with a clear flight path to and from the entrances. Bat Box Maintenance & Monitoring The bat boxes are designed to require no maintenance, however, they will be inspected annually (using binoculars from ground level) and after any storm events and will be replaced if broken/fallen down. Any internal access into the bat boxes will only ever be performed by a suitably licensed ecologist.
Bird Boxes	The installation of 2x Bark Box 28mm Entrance boxes onto retained mature trees will provide additional nesting value for smaller birds such as tree sparrows, blue tit and nuthatch. Bird Box Installation The boxes will be positioned 2-4m above ground level facing north-east where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Ideally the box will be tilted slightly forward (5-10°) so rain runs off the roof rather than into the entrance hole. The boxes should be at least 10m apart. Bird Box Maintenance & Monitoring The bird boxes are designed to require no maintenance, however, they will be inspected annually (using binoculars from ground level) and after any storm events and will be replaced if broken/fallen down. Any internal access into the bird boxes will only ever be performed outside of the bird nesting season, which is March to September inclusive.

Hibernaculum	One hibernaculum will be constructed in the retained woodland. It will comprise a mix of inert rubble, stone, timber and soil, arranged to create a variety of frost-free voids and crevices suitable for reptiles, amphibians and overwintering invertebrates. https://www.froglife.org/tag/hibernaculum/ Hibernaculum Maintenance & Monitoring The hibernaculum will be retained for the lifetime of the development. Features will not be disturbed, compacted or removed during routine landscape management. Surrounding vegetation will be managed sensitively to prevent excessive shading or encroachment while maintaining habitat connectivity.
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3.0 Bibliography

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Appendix 1: Proposed Enhancement Plan

