



www.cherryfieldecology.co.uk

Report prepared for: James Gran

For the Site of: Old Generator House, Hexton Manor, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire,
SG5 3JH.

Version:	Written by:	Checked by:	Final:
Draft	Katie Green 29/05/2025	Heather Stuckey 02/06/2025	
Final	Katie Green 29/05/2025	Martin O'Connor 03/06/2025	Katie Green 26/06/2025

Cherryfield Ecology has prepared this report for the named clients' use only.

Ecological reports are limited in shelf life, Natural England usually expect reports for licenses to be from the most recent or current season. Therefore, should the project not proceed within 12 to 18 months of this report an updated survey should be undertaken in order to check for changes that may have occurred on site. Information is believed to be accurate at the time of the survey; recommendations are made without bias based on good practice guidelines within the industry. However, species presence and ecological parameters can change over time.

Katie Green BSc (Hons)
katie@cherryfieldecology.co.uk
07421 708652

Contents

1.0 Introduction.....	3
2.0 The Development Works	4
2.1 Works.....	4
2.2 Survey Results.....	4
3.0 Barn Owl Mitigation Plan.....	5
4.0 References	8

Barn Owl and Breeding Bird Mitigation Plan

Old Generator House, Hexton Manor, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3JH.

1.0 Introduction

During a Preliminary Ecological Assessment undertaken on 05/01/2024 (Cherryfield Ecology) evidence of barn owls *Tyto alba* and swallows *Hirundo rustica* was identified in the Ole Generator House in the form of pellets and a disused nest, respectively.

A mitigation report was therefore recommended to compensate for the loss of the nesting habitat.

2.0 The Development Works

2.1 Works

Planning permission is granted for the extension and conversion of the building into a three-bedroom dwelling. (see Figure 1).

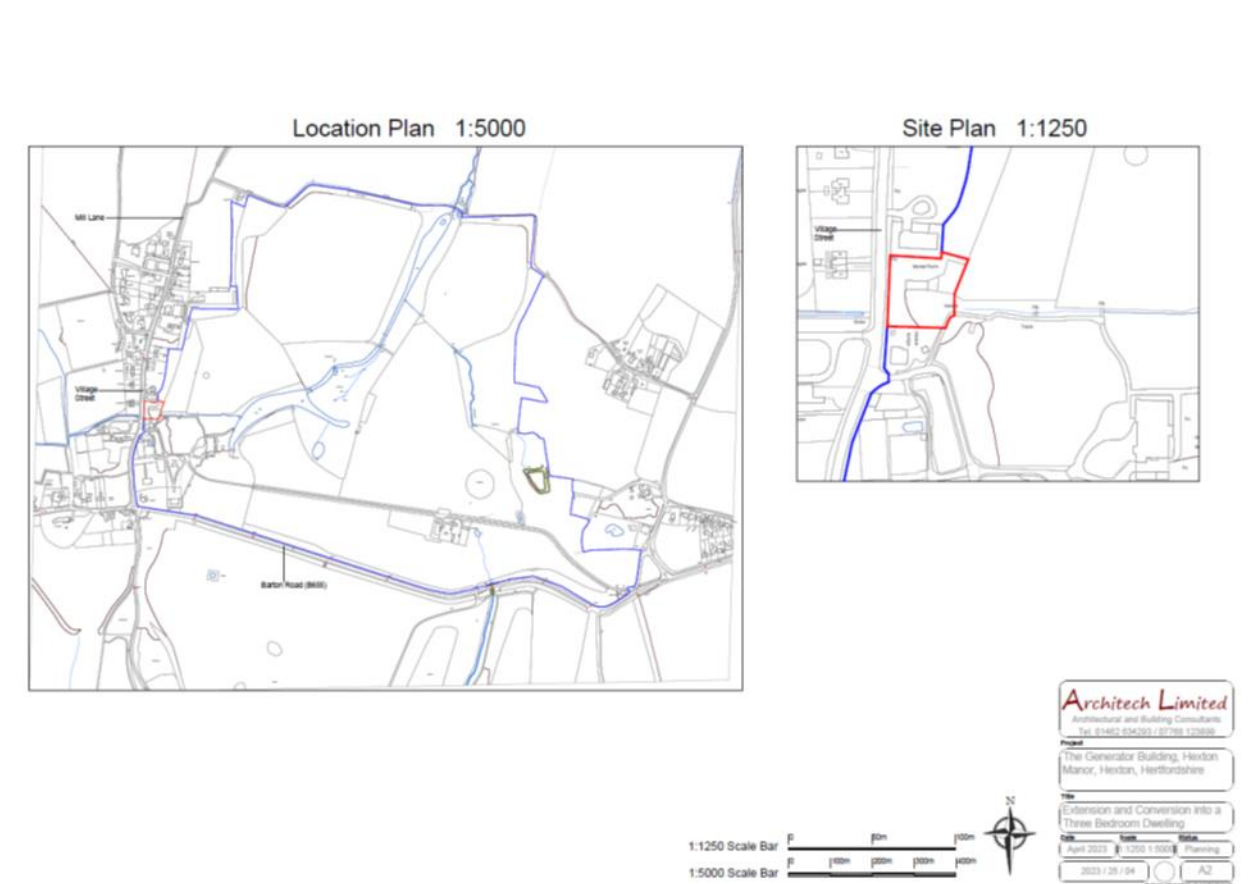


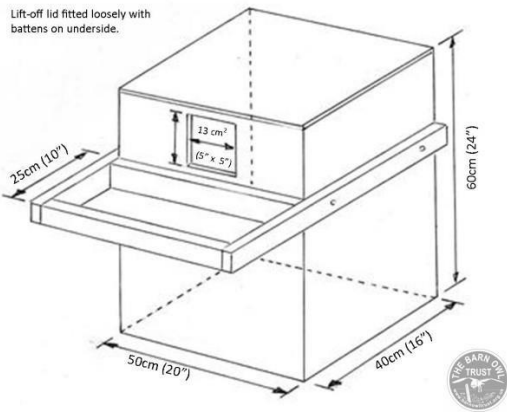
Figure 1: Current Layout (Architech Limited, 2023)

2.2 Survey Results

- The survey was carried out on 05/01/2024.
- The site consists of one detached outbuilding, amenity grassland and urban trees.
- There was a confirmed presence of breeding birds due to the presence of a swallow's nest and owl pellets.

3.0 Barn Owl Mitigation Plan

Table 1: Specification for Mitigation

Work	Specification
Barn Owl Mitigation	Mitigation for barn owl will include the following - The following is recommended before future works begin. - A barn owl box (see Figure 2) will be installed as soon as possible to provide owls with nesting and roosting opportunities away from the future construction zone. Ideally, this will be placed in trees/on a nearby building or on poles, allowing access to the hunting habitat around the site.  Figure 2: Example of barn owl box - Boxes will be at least 4m from ground level. Positioning the box near a noisy area is not an issue as barn owls will tolerate noise and disturbance. - Before works begin a final check of the nest/perch in the barn will be made to check that the barn owl has not started nesting (barn owls will nest year-round if the weather and food availability is suitable). - Due to the nature of the proposals, which include for the full conversion of the barn, it will not be possible to rehome barn owls into the loft void of the building. Therefore, a second barn owl box should be erected within the grounds to provide additional nesting habitat on site.
Breeding Bird Mitigation	Nests can be removed outside of the breeding season (March to August) no checks are needed, however if this is not possible the nest should be checked by an experienced ecologist to ensure that the nest is not in use. If a nest is found to be in use, a buffer zone, no less than 3m in radius will be required around the nest until no longer in use.

The lost nesting space will need to be replaced with a suitable bird box, the following explains the type of box needed and details for its installation -

The conversion will not allow for the installation of replacement nesting for swallows, and instead bird boxes and swift boxes will be installed to provide nesting habitat within the development. Bird boxes provide excellent, safe opportunities for species which may be present in the area. They are frequently used and therefore provide significant benefits to the bird assemblage.

These should be placed at a minimum height of 2 meters and will be placed to face between north and east. One open-fronted bird box (Figure 3), and one songbird box (Figure 4) will be installed.



Figure 3: Robin box



Figure 4: Songbird box

One swift box (Figure 5) will be externally mounted at the gable end of the new building.

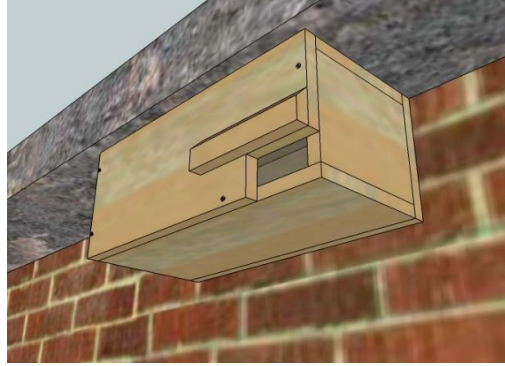


Figure 5: Swift box, source: <http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com/p/diy-swift-box-designs.html>

Plans

Locations of the barn owl nest box and bird boxes.



Figure 4: Location of mitigation

4.0 References

Barn Owl Conservation Handbook, (2012), Barn Owl Trust

Cherryfield Ecology (2024), Preliminary Ecological Assessment, Jan 2024

Client Drawing (2023), Existing Site Plan

Google Earth, (2025), Image from Site Location

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (2021), RSPB