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Landscape and Ecological Management Plan prepared for: James Gran

For the Site of: The Bothy, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3JG

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Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

The Bothy, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3JG

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Scheme

Planning permission (24/02673/FP) has been granted for the change of use and conversion of existing outbuilding to one self-contained 1-bed dwelling to include alterations to fenestration; external rendering and parking and landscaping following demolition of existing extensions.

1.2 Site Context

The site is located at Grid Reference TL 10735 30440.

The site consists of a detached, single-storey building, developed land; sealed surface, vegetated garden, ornamental hedgerows and individual trees (Figure 1).

The site is surrounded by arable fields, pasture, and to a lesser extent woodland, in the immediate local area.

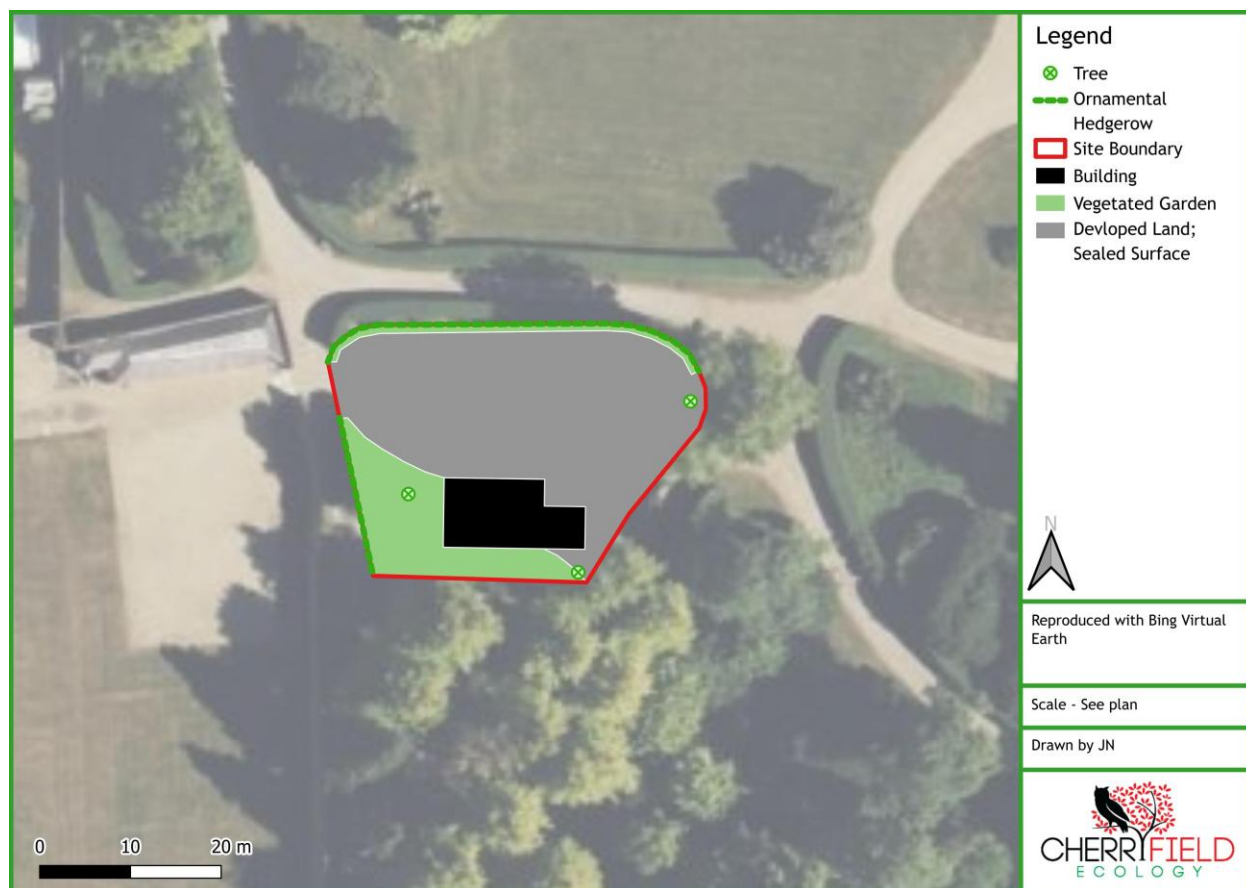


Figure 1: Site context

1.3 Purpose of this Management Plan

This report has been undertaken in order to satisfy the following condition:

Condition 5:

Prior to the completion and occupation of the development hereby approved a landscape and ecological management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a net gain for biodiversity and to comply with Policy NE4 of the Local Plan.

2.0 Aims and Objectives of the Management Plan

2.1 Scope of the Management Plan

2.1.1 Management Period

The management period of this plan is five years, at which time it will be checked and renewed for up to 30 years.

2.1.2 Management Responsibilities

The implementation of this management plan will be the responsibility of the landowner. Any transference of responsibility of this plan should be undertaken with the appropriate appointment of a competent organisation capable of delivering the detailed measures within this document.

The organisation of implementing this plan will be undertaken by a management company with the necessary certificates of competence to implement landscape management operation on site. The management organisation will ensure that site management complies with best practice standards and all relevant health and safety procedures, protection of the environment, avoidance of pollution and protection of protected species and habitats.

2.1.3 Document Review

In order to ensure that the plan continues to remain appropriate, applicable and effective, a review will be undertaken by both the landowner, and the controlling authority, to ensure that all information contained within the document remains relevant. This review will be undertaken once every 5 years. Should it be determined that the conservation aims of the management plan are not being met, remedial action will then be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme.

2.1.4 Controlling Authority

The controlling authority are North Herts Council, who should be consulted on any matters relating to the approved proposals for the scheme.

Council Offices

Gernon Road

Letchworth Garden City

SG6 3JF

2.1.5 Health and Safety

The site will be managed to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation, approved codes of practice (ACOP's) and Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance. As the managing organisation will be the main company involved in onsite works, the managing organisation will fulfil the landowner's role and the work managers role. This places an obligation on the managing company to ensure that any contractor understands and fulfils their health and safety role and any work undertaken on the site will follow the guidelines of the HSE.

2.1.6 Biodiversity

The management plan covers habitat boxes and other measures installed within the red line boundary shown in Figure 1.

The biodiversity receptors are therefore as follows:

- Bats
- Birds
- Planting

2.1.7 Landscape

Please refer to the landscape plan. With respect to geographical coverage, the management plan covers the red line boundary shown in Figure 1.

With regards to the focus of the management prescriptions, the scope is defined by the retained and proposed habitat that forms the proposals.

For landscaping details please refer to the landscape plan “Amended Plan - 101B - Proposed plans & elevations”.

The landscape receptors are therefore as follows:

- Vegetated Garden
- Ornamental Hedging

2.2 Aims and Objectives

The overarching aim of this Management Plan is:

To set out management and enhancement prescriptions to promote the landscape and ecological biodiversity value of the site.

2.2.1 Biodiversity

In respect of biodiversity, the supporting aims are;

1. to promote the use of the site by bats; and,
2. to promote the use of the site by target bird species.

2.2.2 Landscape

In respect of landscape, the supporting aims reflect those outlined above. With particular reference to:

3. The planting of amenity grassland areas;
4. The planting of new ornamental hedgerow; and
5. The management of areas of ornamental planting

In addition, the following aims guide the basis for specific management operations;

6. Conserve and enhance the ecological and landscape value of the site through safeguarding and enhancing the ecological and physical integrity of the site.

7. Creation of species habitats for UK wildlife which include UK protected species, through providing appropriate planting and management of habitat friendly maintenance methods and applications which do not cause harm or injury to flora or fauna.
8. To provide a safe and secure site which establishes and maintains health and safety procedures for management and maintenance of the site complying with all statutory legislation and best practice.
9. Maintains a flexible management approach which responds to the changing needs of the landscape and ecology of the site.

3.0 Information Gathering

3.1 Information Sources

Sources of information considered in the production of this management plan are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Desk study sources of information.

Source	Date	Information obtained
Ecological Appraisal (Cherryfield Ecology Ltd.)	January 2024	Current habitat types, quality, and structure. Other information relevant to the presence of protected and notable species.
Emergence Report Cherryfield Ecology Ltd.	June 2024	Information relating the presence of a bat roost on site.
Google Earth	January 2025	Contextual information for the site and surroundings
National and Local Landscape Character Assessments	January 2025	Contextual information for the site and surroundings

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Site Baseline - Biodiversity

The site consists of a detached, single-storey building, developed land; sealed surface, vegetated garden, ornamental hedgerows and individual trees.

3.2.1 Site Baseline - Landscape

The site falls within National Character Area 110 - Chilterns.

The National Character Area profile describes the Chilterns as:

‘The Chilterns form the north western edge of the chalk aquifer that underlies the London basin. These soft rocks form a steep, north west facing escarpment and a more gentle ‘dip slope’ to the south east. Small streams flow through larger valleys on the dip slope and from the foot of the escarpment. The upper reaches of these streams are

often dry. The River Thames cuts through the escarpment at the Goring Gap in the south.'

4.0 Management Prescriptions

4.1 Landscape and Biodiversity

The management prescriptions are summarised in Table 2 below. These are fully described in the text below.

Table 2. Summary of management prescriptions, receptors and aims of the management plan

Management Prescription Reference	Relevant Receptors	Relevant Aims
A	Bats	1
B	Birds	2
C	Grassland	3
D	Hedgerow	4
E	Ornamental Planting	5

A - Installation of bat boxes

Bats are protected throughout Europe and as there is foraging and commuting habitat, with a known roost within the site, the value of the site may be enhanced by providing artificial roosting sites. Bat boxes will be installed onto the trees present within the site (Figure 3). A minimum of two Schweglar 1FF boxes will be hung onto the trees at a minimum of 3m from ground level and face south/southwesterly. These boxes are known to be used by crevice and void dwelling species.

Once installed, the bat boxes need not be monitored, but will be checked annually to ensure that they have not been damaged, vandalised, or become unstable. Any such problems will be corrected by a licensed bat worker, and replacement within the management period will be undertaken, as necessary. If a full check is required to assess if the bat box is in use, a bat licenced ecologist will be required to undertake this check. However, if the checks are to confirm that the bat boxes are in place, this can be done so by the landowner.



Figure 3: Chillon Woodcrete Bat Box.

B - Installation of bird boxes

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. A selection of open fronted boxes, and songbird boxes (Figure 4 - 5) will be installed. A minimum of one of each of the boxes are to be installed. These will be placed at a minimum height of 2 meters and will be placed to face between north and east.



Figure 4: Robin box.



Figure 5: Songbird box.

All boxes installed on site will be checked annually by a suitable licensed ecologist or owner. This is to ensure all boxes are in good condition, clear of debris and clear of any disused nests.

C - Creation of amenity grassland

The proposed lawn on site will consist of amenity grassland.

This will be planted with a species-rich grassland mix that can tolerate regular mowing, such as EL1 Flowering Lawn Mixture (Emorsgate Seeds).

Below provides the recommended habitat management for this seed mix.

Ground Preparation

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll or tread to produce a level firm surface.

Sowing

Seed is best sown in the autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out, divide the seed into two or more parts and sow in overlapping sections. Do not

incorporate or cover the seed, but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.

First Year Management

The wildflower and grass species in this mix are perennial; they will be slow to germinate and grow and will not usually flower in their first growing season. There will often be a flush of annual weeds from the soil in the first growing season. This annual weed growth is easily controlled by repeated mowing.

Mow newly sown flowering lawns regularly (every 7 -10 days during growing season) throughout the first year of establishment. Cut to a height of 40-60mm, removing cuttings if dense. This will gradually develop a good sward structure, help maintain balance between faster growing grasses and slower developing wildflowers, and control annual weeds. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.

Management Once Established

Mow regularly as a lawn but not too short (25-40mm). To permit flowering, mowing can be relaxed from late June. Cut again when the sward gets untidy (after 4-8 weeks). Mowing may be suspended earlier in the year to allow cowslips to flower. Heavy quantities of cuttings should be collected and removed from the site.

D - The planting of new hedgerows

New lengths of ornamental hedgerow are proposed on site. It is recommended that these be planted with a diversity of native hedgerow species.

Suitable hedgerow species include:

- Hawthorn (*Crateagus monogyna*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Wild Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)

- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- Wayfaring Tree (*Viburnum lantana*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Spindle (*Euonymus europaea*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).

Where possible, no cutting will take place during peak bird nesting season, which runs from March to September. Where possible, shrubs and hedgerows will not be cut back annually, as flower buds often form on second-year growth. Trimming hedges on a two-year or three-year rotation, targeting different sections each year, will make sure there are always flowers for pollinators in spring and berries for birds in autumn. Hedges cut every three years can produce two and a half times as many blossoms as those cut annually. Rotational cutting can also save time and money that would be invested in annual cutting.

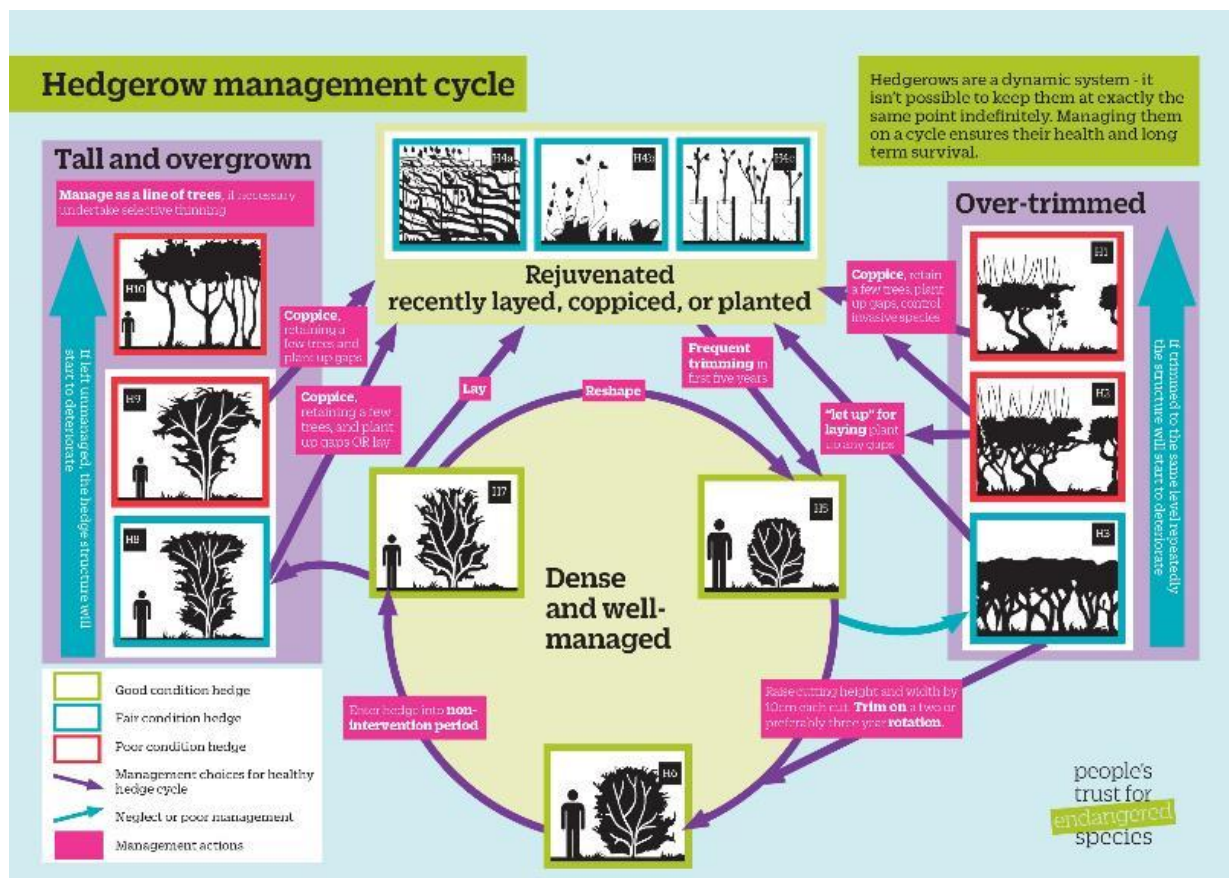


Figure 2: Hedgerow management cycle (<https://hedgerowsurvey.ptes.org/>).

E - Ornamental planting

The site will also feature areas of ornamental planting (located adjacent to the access road and car parking areas). These will be planted with a range of plant species that are beneficial for invertebrates, including a mix of native and garden plants that are known to provide insects with a food source, thus providing a food web for larger animals.

The below provides recommended species (*Plants marked * are native or wildlife-friendly):

Flowers for Borders -

- *Aubretia (spring to early summer) *Aubretia* sp.
- *Candytuft (summer to autumn) *Iberis* sp.

- *Cherry pie (summer to autumn) *Heliotropium arborescens*
- Corncockle *Agrostemma githago*
- Cornflower *Centaurea cyanus*
- Corn marigold *Glebionis segetum*
- Corn poppy *Papaver rhoeas*
- *Echinacea *Echinacea* sp.
- English Bluebell (spring) *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*
- *Evening primrose (summer to autumn) *Oenothera biennis*
- *Honesty (spring) *Lunaria annua*
- *Ice plant 'Pink lady' (early autumn) *Delosperma sutherlandii*
- Knapweed (summer to autumn) *Centaurea* sp.
- Mallow (summer to autumn) *Malva* sp.
- *Mexican aster (summer to autumn) *Cosmos bipinnatus*
- *Michaelmas daisy (summer to autumn) *Aster amellus*
- *Night-scented stock (summer) *Matthiola longipetala*
- Ox-eye daisy (summer) *Leucanthemum vulgare*
- *Phacelia (summer to autumn) *Phacelia tanacetifolia*
- *Poached egg plant (summer) *Limnanthes douglasii*
- Primrose (spring) *Primula vulgaris*
- Red campion (spring) *Silene dioica*
- *Red valerian (summer to autumn) *Centranthus ruber*
- Scabious (summer) *Scabiosa* sp.
- St John's wort (spring) *Hypericum perforatum*
- *Sweet William (summer) *Dianthus barbatus*
- *Tobacco plant *Nicotiana* sp.
- *Verbena (summer to autumn) *Verbena officinalis*
- *Wallflowers (spring to early summer) *Erysimum* sp.
- Wood forget-me-not (spring) *Myosotis sylvatica*
- Yarrow (early summer) *Achillea millefolium*

Plants marked * are hybrids or exotics that may be useful in the gardens

Herbs -

- Hyssop (summer to early autumn) *Hyssopus officinalis*
- Lavender *Lavandula sp.*
- Lemon balm *Melissa officinalis*
- Marjoram (summer) *Origanum majorana*
- Rosemary (spring) *Salvia rosmarinus*
- Sweet Cicely (spring to early summer) *Myrrhis odorata*
- Thyme (summer) *Thymus sp.*
- Angelica (summer to early autumn) *Angelica sp.*
- Bergamot (summer to early autumn) *Citrus bergamia*
- Borage (spring to early autumn) *Borago officinalis*
- Coriander (summer) *Coriandrum sativum*
- English marigolds (summer to early autumn) *Calendula officinalis*
- Fennel *Foeniculum vulgare*
- Feverfew (summer to autumn) *Tanacetum parthenium*

All plants that are native or wildlife-friendly above should be sourced from a stockist of native and local origin plants. Wild Seed can provide details of local, native-sourced plants and seeds.

Further advice, if required, should be sought from a landscape architect regarding planting location and implementation.

Most urban planting is heavily managed reducing their value to wildlife. Where possible no cutting should take place during peak bird nesting season, which runs from March to September. Where possible, shrubs should not be cut back annually, as flower buds often form on second-year growth. Pruning should ideally be undertaken on a two-year or three-year rotation, targeting different sections each year, to ensure there are always flowers for pollinators in spring and berries for birds in autumn. Rotational cutting can also save time and money that would be invested in annual cutting.

5.0 Implementation

5.1 Schedule and Management Responsibilities

5.1.1 Landscape and Biodiversity

The schedule for activities is as set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Schedule and responsible parties for biodiversity management prescriptions

Management Prescription reference	Contributing activities (as described in Section 4.1)	Timings	Responsible parties
A	Install bat boxes	At completion of build	Building contractor.
	Monitor boxes once a year.	December/ January Annually	Homeowner/ecologist
B	Installation of bird boxes	At completion of build	Building contractor
	Monitoring (and correction / replacement as necessary)	Between June and August	Homeowner/ building contractor/ ecologist
C	Sow new grassland seed mix	Autumn or spring	Landscape contractor.
	Mow grassland - first year	Regularly (every 7-10 days during growing season)	Owner or landscape contractor.
	Mow grassland - subsequent years	Mow regularly to between 25-40mm. Relax mowing regime from late June for 4-8 weeks.	Owner or landscape contractor.
D	Plant new hedgerow	Between October to the end of March	Landscape contractor.
	Manage hedgerow	Avoid breeding bird season (March - September). Trim sections on a 2-3 year rotation.	Owner or landscape contractor.
	Replace failures	As needed	Owner or landscape contractor.

6.0 References

Cherryfield Ecology (2024), Ecological Appraisal Report.

Cherryfield Ecology (2024), Emergence Survey Report.

Google Earth, (2025), Image from site location

Gardener's World (2020), <https://www.gardenersworld.com/> Accessed at time of the report

National and Local Landscape Character Assessments - NCA110 - Chilterns.

The Great British Hedgerow Survey (2019), People's Trust for Endangered Species, online <https://hedgerowsurvey.ptes.org/> Accessed at time of the report

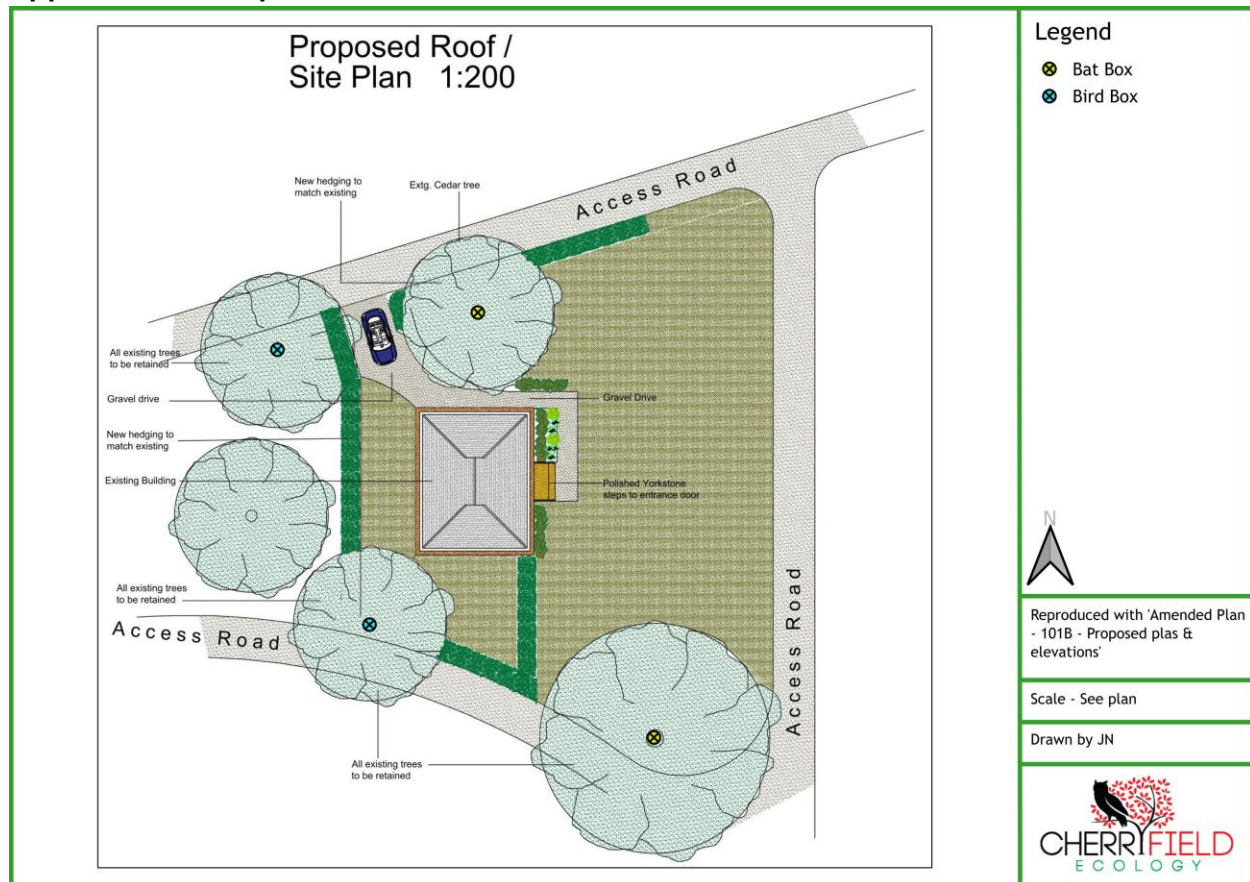
Wild Seed (2024) <https://wildseed.co.uk/> Accessed at time of the report.

Appendix I Proposed Plans



Proposed site plan: Amended Plan - 101B - Proposed plans & elevations' (Architech Limited, 2023)

Appendix II - Proposed Location of Habitat Boxes



Location of proposed boxes