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Report prepared for: Architech Limited

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

| Version: | Written by:                   | Checked by:                   | Final:                        |
|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Final    | Heather Stuckey<br>27/08/2025 | Martin O'Connor<br>28/08/2025 | Heather Stuckey<br>28/08/2025 |

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Ecological reports are limited in shelf life, Natural England usually expect reports for licences to be no more than 12 months old and therefore should the project not proceed within 12-18 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.

Heather Stuckey BA (Hons),  
Bat Licence Level 2 & GCN Licence Level 1  
heather@cherryfieldecology.co.uk  
07421 833 512

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# Ecological Enhancement Plan

## 1.0 Introduction

The client, Architech Limited, has asked that an ecological enhancement plan be drawn up for the site of The Kennels, Hexton Manor, Hexton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 3JG.

The resulting enhancements and plans are based on general good practice.

The planning permission (24/02845/FP) detailed the following condition:

*‘Condition 4:*

*Prior to above slab level works an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP) for the creation of new wildlife features such as hibernacula, the inclusion of integrated bird/bat and bee boxes in buildings/structures, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved measures must be implemented on site prior to the first occupation of the first dwelling hereby approved and retained on site thereafter.*

*Reason: To ensure development is ecologically sensitive and secures biodiversity enhancements in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework’*

## 2.0 Site Context

### 2.1 Proposed Works

Planning permission has been granted for the ‘erection of one 3-bed dwelling following demolition of existing outbuilding including parking and landscaping (as amended by plan no. 101A)’. The proposed site layout and design can be found in Figure 1.

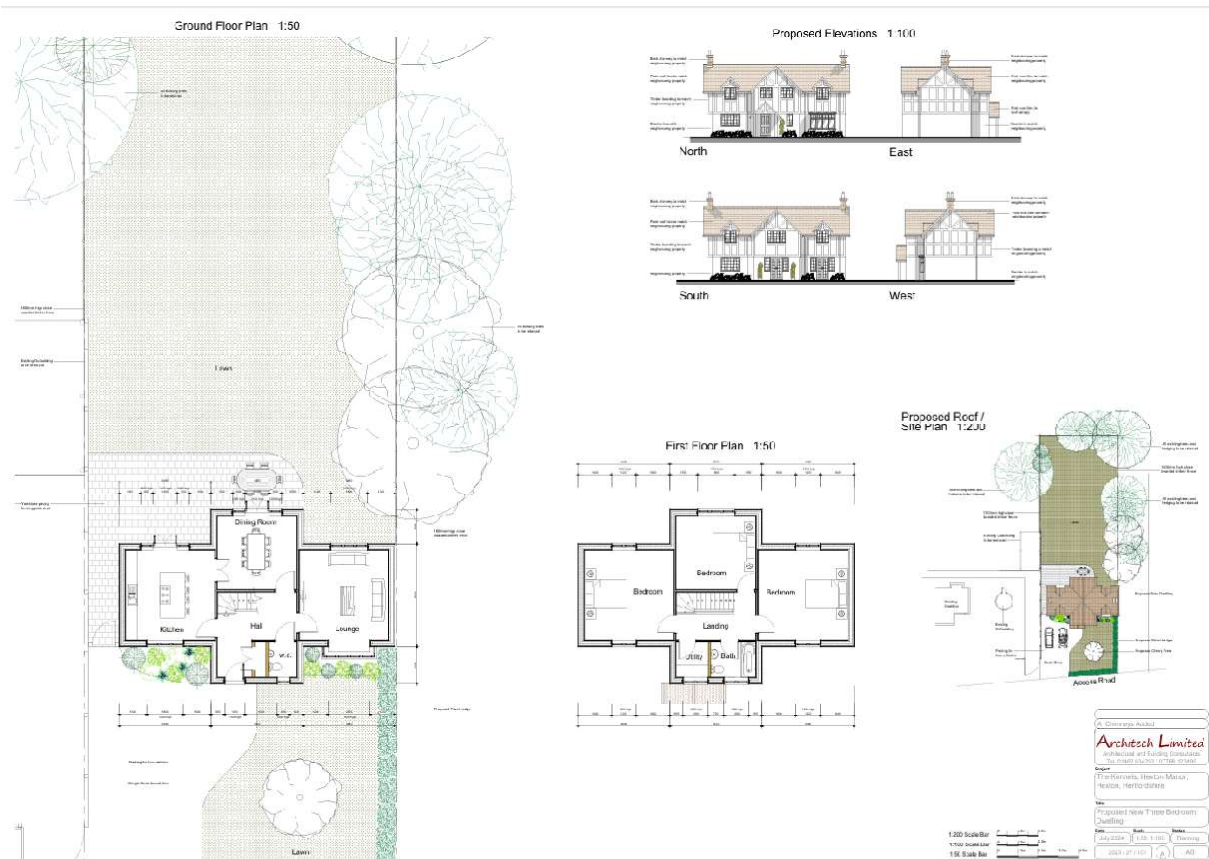


Figure 1: Proposed Floor & Elevation Plans (Architect Limited, 2024)

## 2.2 Site Baseline

An Ecological Appraisal was conducted in January 2024 (Cherryfield Ecology) which found the site to consist of one detached building, previously used as a kennels (B1), developed land and vegetated garden.

In regards to protected species, the site provided:

- **High** potential for roosting bats within B1. Follow up emergence surveys (Cherryfield Ecology, 2024) found the building to support a day roost for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and works will be carried out under a **Bat Mitigation Class Licence**.
- **Negligible** potential for badgers, reptiles and great crested newt (GCN) due to the lack of suitable terrestrial habitat on site , and a lack of known waterbodies within 250m of the site.
- **High** potential for breeding birds and the confirmed presence of nesting swallow *Hirundo rustica* within the building.
- **Negligible** potential for any other protected species due to the lack of suitable habitat onsite.

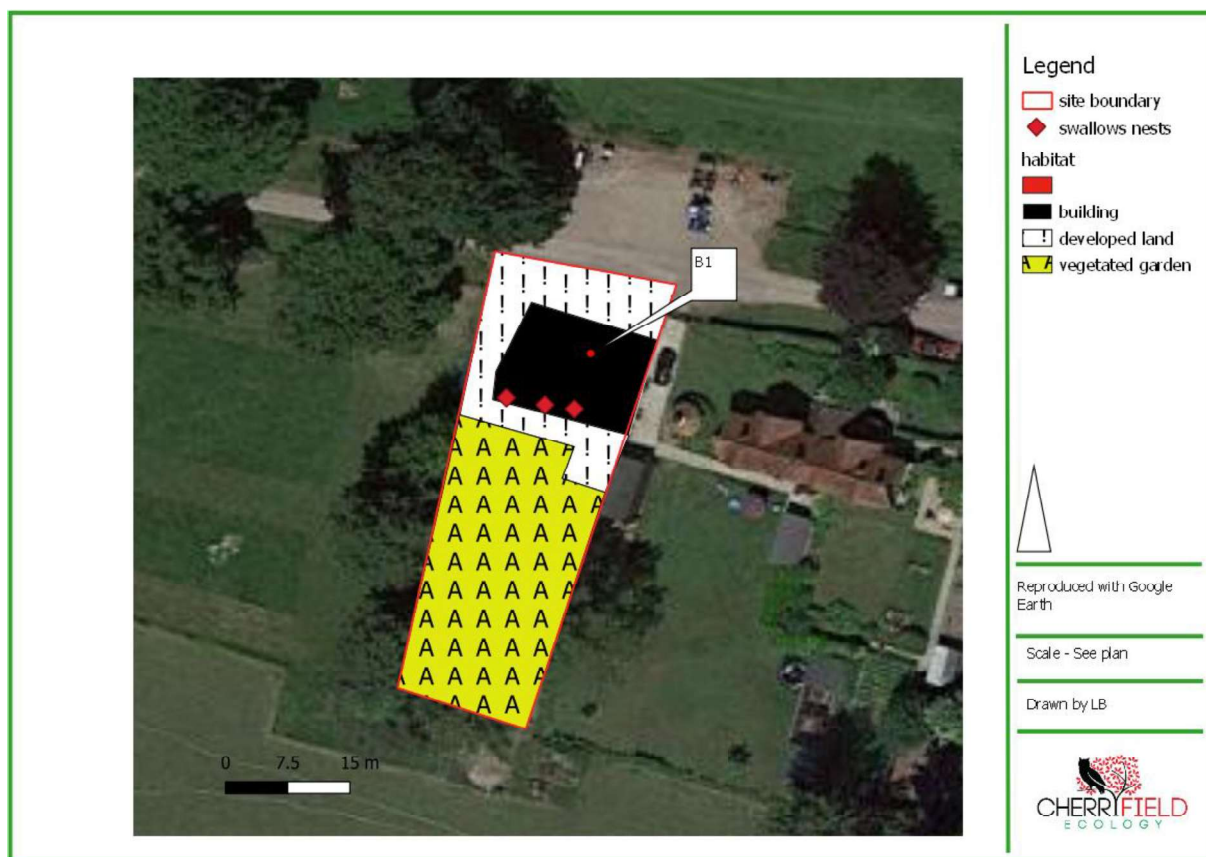


Figure 2: Baseline Site Plan

### 3.0 Ecological Enhancement

Table 1: Specification for Enhancement (see Figure 7 for Proposed Locations of Enhancements)

| Work                                                                                                                                            | Specification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Management |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| General Information<br><br>Including:<br>Specification,<br>Location, Timing,<br>Implementation<br>Programme,<br>Maintenance, and<br>Monitoring. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The owner is responsible for installing and maintaining all boxes and other measures.</li> <li>Bat tubes and swift clusters will be built into the building (no maintenance will be required) as and when the gables/end walls are built; if this is not possible, bat boxes and swift boxes will be mounted after the construction of the building.</li> <li>All other boxes and measures based in the surrounding area will be installed when the final landscaping is undertaken or when works are complete on the building.</li> <li>Boxes will not require monitoring in this case; the woodcrete boxes have been chosen for their longevity.</li> <li>All enhancement measures outlined below are to be in addition to any mitigation measures required on site.</li> </ul> | n/a        |
| Lighting                                                                                                                                        | <p>Lighting will be in line with the new bats and lighting guidelines, thus protecting commuting and foraging routes.</p> <p>Lighting should be in line with the BCT lighting guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023) <a href="https://www.thebct.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/">https://www.thebct.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/</a></p> <p>This lighting should be of low level, be on downward deflectors and, ideally, be on PIR sensors. Using LED directional lighting can also be a way of minimising the light spill affecting the habitat. No up-lighting should be used.</p>                                                                                                                                                               | n/a        |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Enhancement</b></p> <p>(all boxes included in this section must be of a woodcrete type as detailed, meaning little to no maintenance is required)</p> <p><i>Built-in boxes have been chosen to prevent damage and vandalism.</i></p>                                                                                    | <p>This will ensure that any roosting and commuting resources that the bats are likely to be using are maintained.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>Bat Enhancement</b></p> <p>A minimum of two integrated bat tubes (Figure 3) will be installed onto gable end of the eastern elevation of the new dwelling.</p> <p>These will be no less than 3m above ground level and away from any neighbouring ledge to prevent local cats from preying on bats using the boxes.</p> |  <p>Figure 3: Example of bat tube</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p><b>Ecologist:</b></p> <p>If integrated bat boxes are used these require no maintenance.</p> <p>If any damage is observed then an ecologist must be consulted.</p> |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p><b>Enhancements for Breeding Birds</b></p> <p>A cluster of two swift nest bricks will be installed in the western elevation due to the increased lack of nesting opportunities swifts are finding in modern-built homes.</p> <p>Information is adapted from the RSPB <a href="https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/rspb-news/news/stories/swift-advice-for-ecologists/">https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/rspb-news/news/stories/swift-advice-for-ecologists/</a> and <a href="http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com">http://actionforswifts.blogspot.com</a></p> | <p><b>Owner:</b></p> <p>Biannual checks of the boxes outside of the breeding bird season to remove debris and</p>                                                    |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>Notes on Swift Bricks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birds such as house sparrows can use swift bricks, but swifts cannot use house sparrow nest bricks.</li> <li>• Integral swift bricks are the preferred option for new housing developments. These should be fitted in clusters of 2 to 4 on gable ends and near the roofline where swifts would naturally look for a potential nest site.</li> <li>• Try to ensure swift bricks have a minimum of 5m clearance beneath and in front.</li> <li>• Always avoid locating them above doors and windows, to help prevent a disturbance issue to both the birds and human owners.</li> </ul> | <p>check the box is still in usable condition.</p>                                                                                    |
|  | <p><b>Enhancement for Invertebrates</b></p> <p><b>One pre-made bee box</b> will be installed on-site (Figure 5). This should be situated in a south-facing location and should avoid areas of high human traffic to avoid conflict.</p> <p>Planting nectar rich-plants will provide food sources for bees and butterflies (The Wildlife Trusts, 2022).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>Owner/ Landscaper:</b></p> <p>Biannual checks of the boxes to remove debris and check the box is still in usable condition.</p> |



Figure 4: Example of swift bricks, that can be built into a dwelling, Source: <https://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/>

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                              |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  <p>Figure 5: Urban bee nesting box, used for solitary bees and wasps</p> <p><b>Enhancements for Hedgehogs</b></p> <p>Hedgehog highways will be installed into any hard boundaries e.g. walls or fences in order to allow hedgehogs and other small mammals a continuous corridor across the site and to other gardens and green spaces. One hole per boundary will be required.</p> <p>A 13cm x 13cm is sufficient for any hedgehog to pass through. This will be too small for nearly all pets (Figure 6). Either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove a brick from the bottom of the wall, creating a 13cm x 13cm hole.</li> <li>• Cut a small hole in your fence if there are no gaps.</li> <li>• Dig a channel underneath your wall, fence, or gate.</li> </ul> <p>Ideally, rather than walls or fences, a hedge will provide foraging, shelter, and a route along as well as through the site.</p> |                                                                                              |
|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p><b>Owner:</b></p> <p>Biannual checks of the holes to ensure they are clear of debris.</p> |



Figure 6: Hedgehog Highway, Source - Wildlife Trust - <http://17474fab53f1b6ee92458-8f3ac932bad207a00c83e77eae8d15c.r12.cf1.rackcdn.com/Hedgehog%20Highway.jpg>

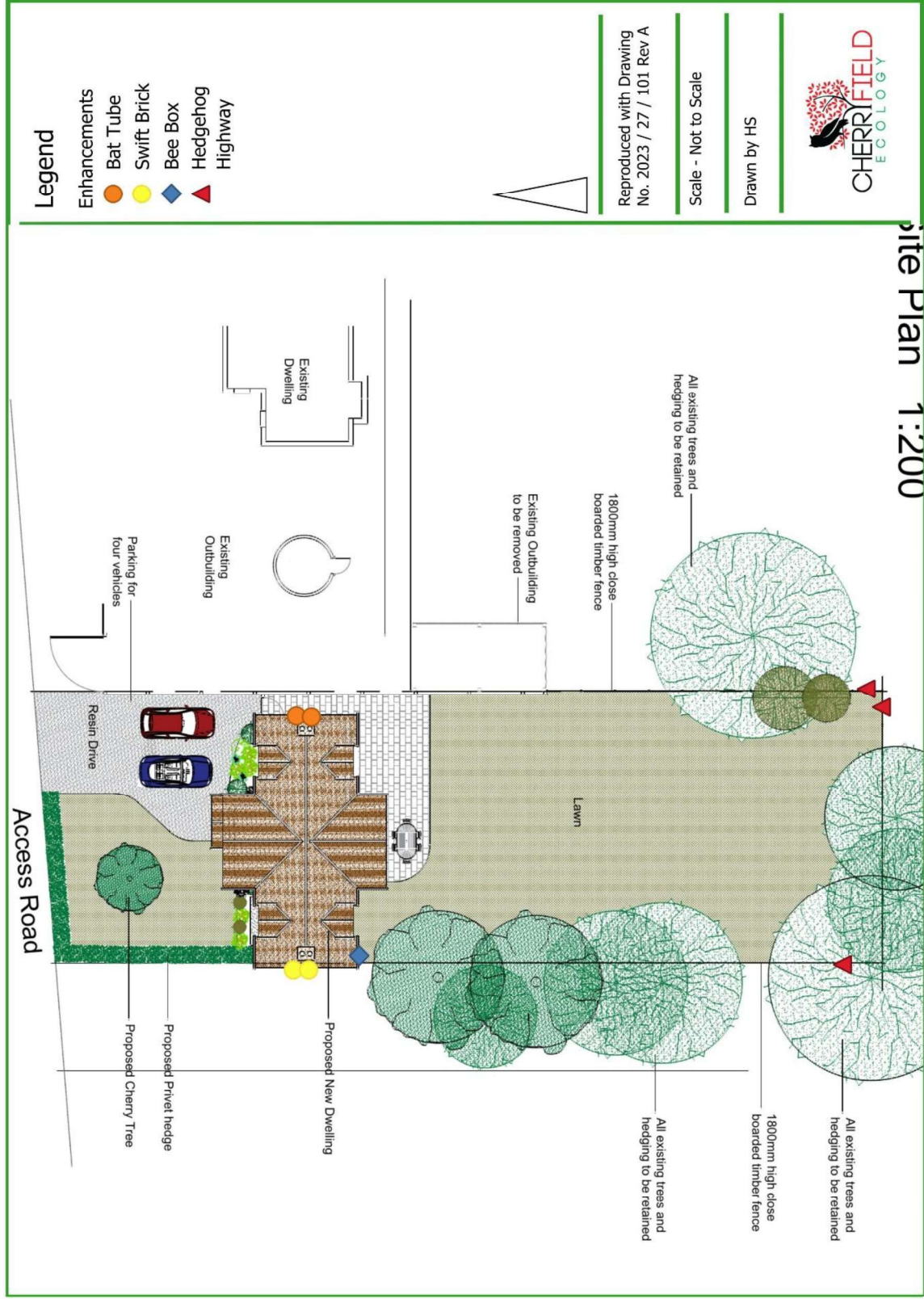


Figure 7: Proposed Locations of Enhancements

## 4.0 References

BCT/ILP (2023), Bats and artificial lighting at night,

<https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/> accessed on Dec 2023

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Gardener's World (2020), <https://www.gardenersworld.com/> Accessed 20/07/2020

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The Wildlife Trusts (2016) How to make a hedgehog highway. (Online)

<http://7474fab53f1b6ee92458-8f3ac932bad207a00c83e77eaae8d15c.r12.cf1.rackcdn.com/Hedgehog%20Highway.jpg> Accessed at time of the report.

Wild Seed (2020) <https://wildseed.co.uk/> Accessed 20/07/2024