



Barton's Road, Havant

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of Fortitudo Limited

October 2020

Barton's Road, Havant
Ecology 7673
Version V02

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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Client is proposing to re-develop the site at Barton's Road and construct a mixed use development on the site. Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in February 2020 to provide the ecological assessment of the habitats on site for the planning application.
- 1.2 The ecological assessment consisted of 1) a desk study of existing ecological data in relation to the site, and 2) an ecological assessment of the land within the application site.
- 1.3 The Phase I survey included a daytime inspection of the on-site vegetation for the presence or likely absence of protected or notable species and to assess the ecological value of the habitats present.
- 1.4 The site was previously owned by SSE energy and the site contained large buildings and a tree line along the boundaries. Following the decommissioning of the site the buildings were demolished and all vegetation was cleared.
- 1.5 The site in its current condition has no ecological value and comprises bare ground with remaining tree stumps. No potential protected species issues were identified on the site during the walk over.
- 1.6 The site lies within the zone of influence of Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA and Ramsar. Payments will need to be made in line with the Solent and Waders Brent Geese Strategy to mitigate for the increased residential units on the site within 5.6 kilometres of this international site.
- 1.7 There is opportunity within the site to enhance the ecology and provide biodiversity net gains. Recommendations include the provision of wildflower meadows, native species in landscaping and the inclusion of bat and swift bricks within the new buildings.

2.0 Introduction

Project Background

- 2.1 Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in February 2020 to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for an area of land at Barton's Road, Havant. For the site location refer to **Appendix A**. This report will contribute to a forthcoming planning application to be submitted by the Client to Havant Borough Council. The application will be for a mixed use development comprising 191 apartments and two drive-through restaurants, together with associated access, parking and landscaping. Proposals are shown in **Appendix B**.
- 2.2 This report describes the current ecological baseline of the site based on the findings of the ecological assessment.

Brief

- 2.3 To carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the land within the site boundaries, to inform the Client of any further survey work required and of the ecological implications of their proposals.

Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.4 The key legislative provisions of relevance to this report with respect to the development proposals and their potential effects on ecological features are listed below:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- 2.5 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was the Government's response to the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity (The Rio Convention), with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity in the UK. The new UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework replaced the previous BAP and is the government's response to the new strategic plan on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although the UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework supersedes the UK BAP, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats still remain an important reference source for identifying habitats and species of principal importance within the UK. Within England, Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) lists species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.
- 2.6 The Government has set out its policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the planning system in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019), paragraph 174, which states that the planning system should '*promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity*'.
- 2.9 The application site is located within Havant. The Havant Borough Core Strategy (2011) includes core policy CS11 related to the environment which includes:

Planning permission will be granted for development that:

- 2. Protects and where possible enhances the borough's statutory and non-statutory designated landscape, habitats and features of biological, hydrological or geological interest. Protection and enhancement will be achieved by appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures including wardening, education and information and the creation of new habitats, water bodies/courses planting of new trees and woodland.*
- 3. Has particular regard to the following hierarchy of nature conservation designations within the borough (as identified on the Proposals Map):*
 - (i) Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar [International].*
 - (ii) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves [National].*
 - (iii) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), other Ancient Woodland not identified in (ii) above [Local].*
- 5. Supports an ongoing programme of survey of habitats and species and designation of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.*
- 6. Incorporates partnership working with conservation organisations to improve public understanding of biodiversity and to manage public access to designated sites, particularly on the coast, to reduce harm to nature conservation interests.*
- 7. Incorporates partnership working with landowners and developers to ensure land management practices restore, enhance and where appropriate create new valued landscapes, habitats and their soil structure, particularly the ancient woodland remnants of the Forest of Bere and coastal salt marsh.*
- 8. Protects wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors to prevent the fragmentation of existing habitats and to allow species, for example Brent Geese, to respond to the impacts of climate change by making provision for habitat adaptation e.g. coastal managed realignment and species migration.*
- 11. Responds to the emerging evidence from the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project, the published recommendations, and future related research.*

3.0 Methodologies

Desk Study

- 3.1 The desk study methodology is based upon guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management (CIEEM, 2017). A data-gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain any available information relating to statutory nature conservation sites and priority habitats and bat species (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Summary of information sources used for the Desk Study

Organisation / Source	Information Sought
Hampshire Biological Information Centre (HBIC)	Records of the presence of key protected and notable species and non-statutory wildlife sites within two kilometres of the site.
MAGIC	Locations of and citations for all national statutory wildlife sites, including SSSI, within two kilometres and all international sites including SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites within five kilometres of the site.
Ordnance Survey Maps	Large scale habitat information and identification of off-site habitats which may require consideration (such as ponds) within 500m.

Ecological Assessment

Habitats

- 3.2 A site visit was carried out on 12th February 2020. The survey was carried out by experienced ecologist Louisa Jones in clear weather conditions, still and dry and an ambient temperature of 7°C. The survey employed techniques based on standard Phase I Habitat Survey methods (CIEEM, 2016). Habitat types on site were identified according to standard habitat definitions (JNCC, 2010) and mapped at an appropriate scale.
- 3.3 The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to allow allocation of habitats to the standard Phase I habitat types and where relevant to identify any BAP habitats which are present on site. Any habitats identified as having potentially high botanical value will be subject to further botanical surveys, if deemed necessary.

Protected species

- 3.4 The Ecological Assessment included an assessment of the potential for habitats on or immediately adjacent to the site to support legally protected or conservation-notable species. The location and nature of any signs of the presence of protected species (such

as droppings, footprints, burrows, etc.) were documented and mapped accordingly. Indicative survey methods for protected species are outlined below.

Badgers (Meles meles)

- 3.5 Any area that could be used for foraging by badgers or could potentially contain a badger sett was surveyed and any signs noted including:
- Evidence of active or disused setts;
 - Evidence of potential badger diggings;
 - Latrines / dung pits;
 - Evidence of badger foraging ('snuffle holes');
 - Footprints; and
 - Badger hairs.

Bats

- 3.6 Bats use trees as potential roost sites and trees on the site were inspected from the ground and an assessment made for the potential of the tree to support bats. Features which may support bats include holes and crevices, ivy covering and peeling bark. The assessment for roosting potential in trees is based on BCT guidelines (Collins, 2016) shown below in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Potential of trees to support bat roosts

Potential	Criteria
Negligible	Negligible features on the tree
Low	A tree of sufficient size and age but features present have limited roosting potential
Medium	A tree with one or more potential roost features that may be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and habitats present. Unlikely to support a roost of high conservation value.
High	A tree with one or more potential roost sites that are suitable for use by a large number of bats.

- 3.7 Bats use features in the landscape to navigate and also habitats may provide key foraging locations. Foraging and commuting habitat was assessed based on based on BCT guidelines (Collins, 2016) shown in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Assessment of foraging/commuting habitat

Potential	Criteria
Negligible	Negligible features on site likely to be used by bats

Low	Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats.
Medium	Habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and may be used by significant numbers of bats including annex II species.

Birds

- 3.8 Any habitat features, for example, scrub and trees, which could potentially be used by nesting birds, were surveyed and any nesting activity was noted. The habitat was also assessed regarding its potential for bird activity.

Great Crested Newts (Triturus cristatus)

- 3.9 Ponds within the vicinity of the site were noted and the potential of the land to act as a commuting route, shelter or foraging resource for great crested newts was assessed. If present, areas of standing water present on-site were assessed in accordance with current Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment guidance (Oldham *et al.*, 2000) for their potential to support breeding newts.

Reptiles

- 3.10 Habitat features that could be suitable as hibernacula, foraging or basking areas were noted. Extant refugia were lifted and examined for evidence of reptiles, including sloughs (shed skins).

4.0 Results and Analysis

Designated sites

Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.1 The data search revealed no national Statutory Designated Sites within two kilometres and three international Statutory Designated Sites within five kilometres of the site.
- **Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA):** Chichester and Langstone Harbour supports important numbers of birds including dark-bellied brent geese (*Branta bernicla*), bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) and dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpina*). This area lies 2.6 kilometres to the south of the site.
 - **Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC):** The Solent maritime has been designated for the combination of habitats present which includes coastal plain estuaries, areas of smooth cord-grass (*Spartina maritima*) and Atlantic salt meadows. This area lies 2.6 kilometres to the south of the site.
- 4.2 The development site is considered a sufficient distance from these international sites to not have any direct impacts. Development sites within 5.6 kilometres of the Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar and SPA, which result in an increase in residential units, can impact this designated site through increased recreational pressure. Further recommendations are therefore provided in **Section 5.0**.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.3 The data search revealed the presence of twenty non-statutory designated sites within two kilometres of the site. The non-statutory sites were designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). The majority of these lie outside the urban area of Havant and are within the surrounding countryside.
- 4.4 Battins Copse SINC is an area of woodland that lies 175 metres to the south west of the site. This SINC, while in close proximity to the development site, is separated by urban areas and a main road. Impacts to this site from development are therefore considered unlikely.
- 4.5 These non-statutory sites are considered to be outside the zone of influence of the development due to the distances involved and the scale of the works on the site. No further action is required.

Ecological Assessment

- 4.6 The results of the Ecological Assessment are presented below. A Phase I habitat survey map is shown in **Appendix B**. The map illustrates the location and extent of the sites surveyed, along with additional notable features.

Habitats

- 4.7 The site at Barton's Road, Havant is the site of a previous complex of buildings owned by SSE Energy which had a tree lined boundary. When SSE energy left the site all the buildings were demolished and the trees cut to stump level (**Figure 1**) and the site was cleared under the relevant permissions. The boundaries of the site are formed by palisade fencing.
- 4.8 There is minimal vegetation present within the site with areas of ivy (*Hedera helix*) present around the tree stumps and some low growing perennials in cleared sections. Species in these areas comprise dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). There are very sparse areas of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) which do not provide any cover for protected species due to the low density.
- 4.9 A large spoil mound is present in the centre of the site from the demolition works.



Figure 1: Cleared areas of the site at Barton's Road

- 4.10 The habitats on the site have no ecological value.

Protected and/or notable species

Badgers

- 4.11 The HBIC data search returned two records for badger within two kilometres of the site dated 2006.
- 4.12 During the survey no evidence of badgers was recorded on the site, including setts. The cleared site has no potential to be used by foraging badgers and is isolated from any other suitable habitat. Badgers will not be impacted by the works and no further action is required.

Bats

- 4.13 The HBIC data search returned records for fifteen species of bat within two kilometres of the site dated between 1995 and 2019:
- Western barbastelle (*Barbastellus barbastellus*)
 - Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)

- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)
 - Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*)
 - Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*)
 - Natterer's (*Myotis nattereri*)
 - Alcaho (*Myotis alcaho*)
 - Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii*)
 - Brandt's (*Myotis brandtii*)
 - Whiskered (*Myotis mystacinus*)
 - Nathusius's pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)
 - Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
 - Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
 - Long-eared species (*Plecotus* sp.)
 - Brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)
- 4.14 The DEFRA run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences. There were no records of granted EPS licences within two kilometres of the site.
- 4.15 There are records for multiple species of bats in the area including the Annex II species Bechstein's and barbastelle. These records are predominantly located outside the central urban area of Havant where the site is located. These are also light adverse species which are not commonly found in central urban areas. The site provides no foraging opportunities for the local bat populations with no linear vegetated areas which could be utilised by foraging or commuting bats. The site is located in a well-lit area and is not near any potentially important areas for bats.
- 4.16 Bats will not be impacted by the development of the site. There are opportunities to enhance the site for bats and recommendations have been provided in **Section 5.0**.

Birds

- 4.17 HBIC provided records for the following red list bird species of conservation concern that may be present on the site: skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*), grey wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). In addition to these records the following Schedule 1 and/or Annex I species were returned: peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*) and redwing (*Turdus iliacus*). The records also included four colonies of swifts (*Apus apus*) to the south of the site provided by the Hampshire Swifts.
- 4.18 The site provides no suitable breeding habitat for birds with no areas of dense scrub or vegetation present within the site.
- 4.19 Birds will not be impacted by the development of the site. There are opportunities to enhance the site for birds and recommendations have been provided in **Section 5.0**.

Great crested newts

- 4.20 The HBIC data search returned no records of great crested newt presence within two kilometres of the site. The DEFRA run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences. There were no records of granted EPS licences within two kilometres of the site.
- 4.21 No evidence of amphibian presence was recorded during the survey. The site is not considered suitable for great crested newts with the presence of bare ground and limited vegetation.
- 4.22 There are no ponds within 500 metres of the site and the site is in the middle of an urban area. Great crested newts are therefore considered absent from the development site and will not be impacted by the works. No further action is required.

Reptiles

- 4.23 The HBIC data search returned two records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), one record of grass snake (*Natrix Helvetica*), one record of adder (*Vipera berus*) and one record of common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) within two kilometres of the site dated between 2006 and 2018.
- 4.24 The habitats across the site are not considered suitable to support populations of reptiles. The site is predominantly bare ground and does not provide the necessary foraging areas or cover or refuge to support populations of reptiles. The areas of scrub on the site are limited in cover and are isolated from any areas which would support a viable population.
- 4.25 Reptiles will therefore not be impacted by the plans and no further action is required.

5.0 Impacts and Mitigation

Impacts and Required Mitigation for the Proposed Development

Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA)

- 5.1 Developments which result in increased residential units within 5.6 kilometres of Chichester and Langstone Harbours have been shown to increase recreational pressure on this designated area. Increased numbers of people and dogwalkers along the coast increase the disturbance to birds feeding within the harbour resulting in a significant impact.
- 5.2 To mitigate this impact the development will be required to pay a financial levy in line with the Solent and Waders Brent Geese Strategy. This levy funds wardens, rangers and other mitigation projects which act as off-site mitigation for this impact and has been agreed with Natural England.
- 5.3 With this mitigation in place there will be no significant impact on the designated site.

Enhancement Measures for the Development

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 5.4 In accordance with the Natural Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019), paragraph 174, development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. The site is currently bare and provides good opportunities to result in a biodiversity NET gain.
- 5.5 The following enhancement measures should be included within the design and are illustrated in **Appendix D**:
 - Areas of wildflower grassland can be incorporated into the landscaping scheme to provide additional habitat for local invertebrates which will further enhance the site for local populations of bats and birds. The seed mix should be of local provenance and be allowed to flower before being cut.
 - The landscape planting should incorporate a range of native species such as oak (*Quercus robur*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*). These will provide a range of foraging resources for the local bird population and also provide additional nesting areas.
 - Integral bird boxes should be included within the new buildings on the site. The buildings provide an opportunity to include integral swift boxes at the eaves on the 4.5 storey block of flats. The bricks should be installed at the eaves in clusters with a minimum of 4 bricks. They should be installed in shaded areas out of direct sunlight and away from windows. These bricks provide nesting opportunities for swifts but also for house sparrows.

- Integral bat tubes will also provide opportunities for local bat populations such as common and soprano pipistrelles which are found in urban areas.
- The creation of log piles within the areas of wildflower grassland would provide additional habitat for invertebrates which will enhance the area for bats, birds and also hedgehogs.
- The inclusion of wildlife ponds within the design will create focal points for residents. The ponds should be created with a sloping side and be kept free of fish. The margins of the ponds should be planted with species such as purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and water mint (*Mentha citrata*). The ponds can be fenced with a post and rail fence and information boards provided to educate residents about the importance of ponds and the local wildlife present. It may be possible to link these with the drainage strategy for the site.

6.0 References and Bibliography

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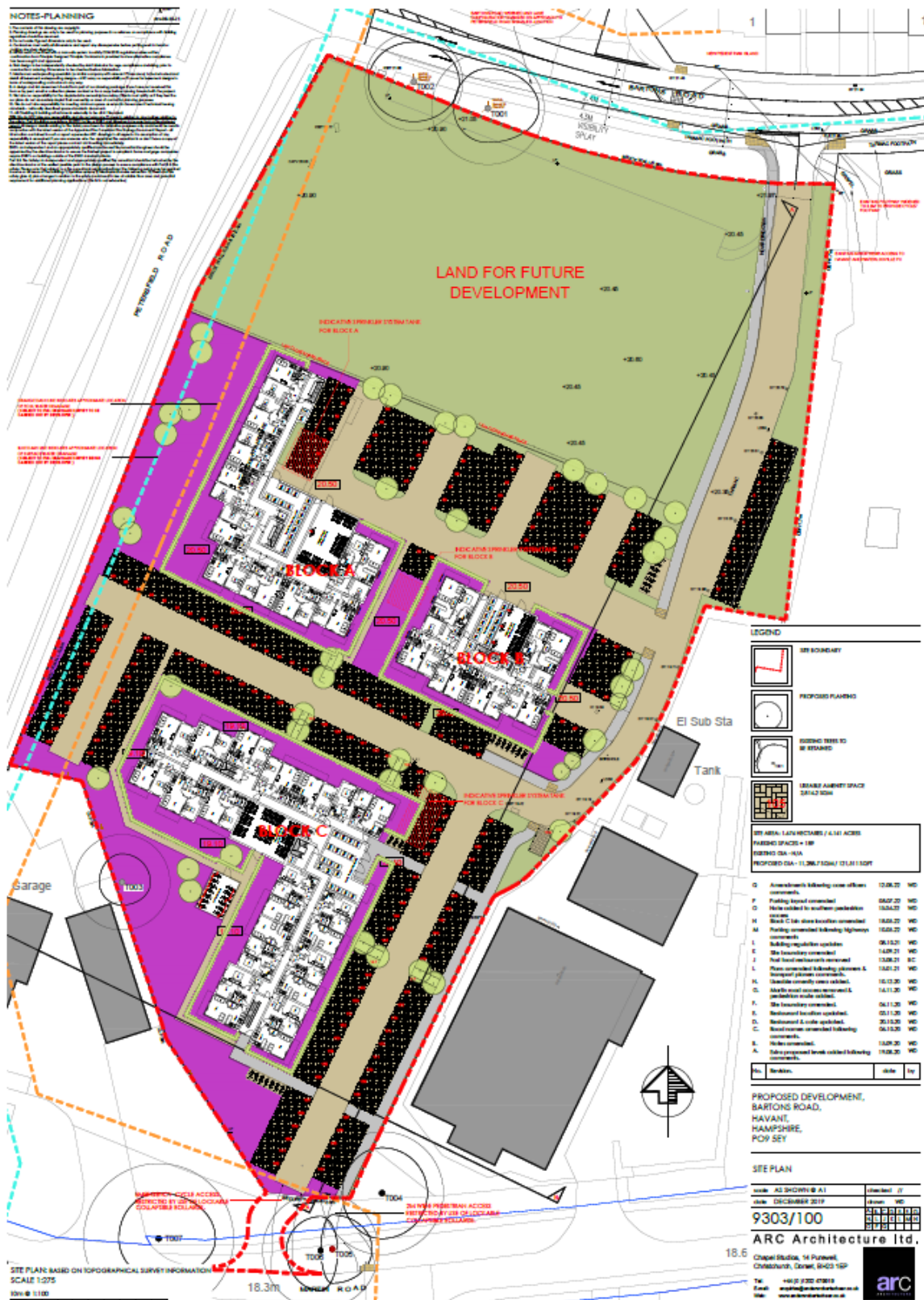
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Appendices

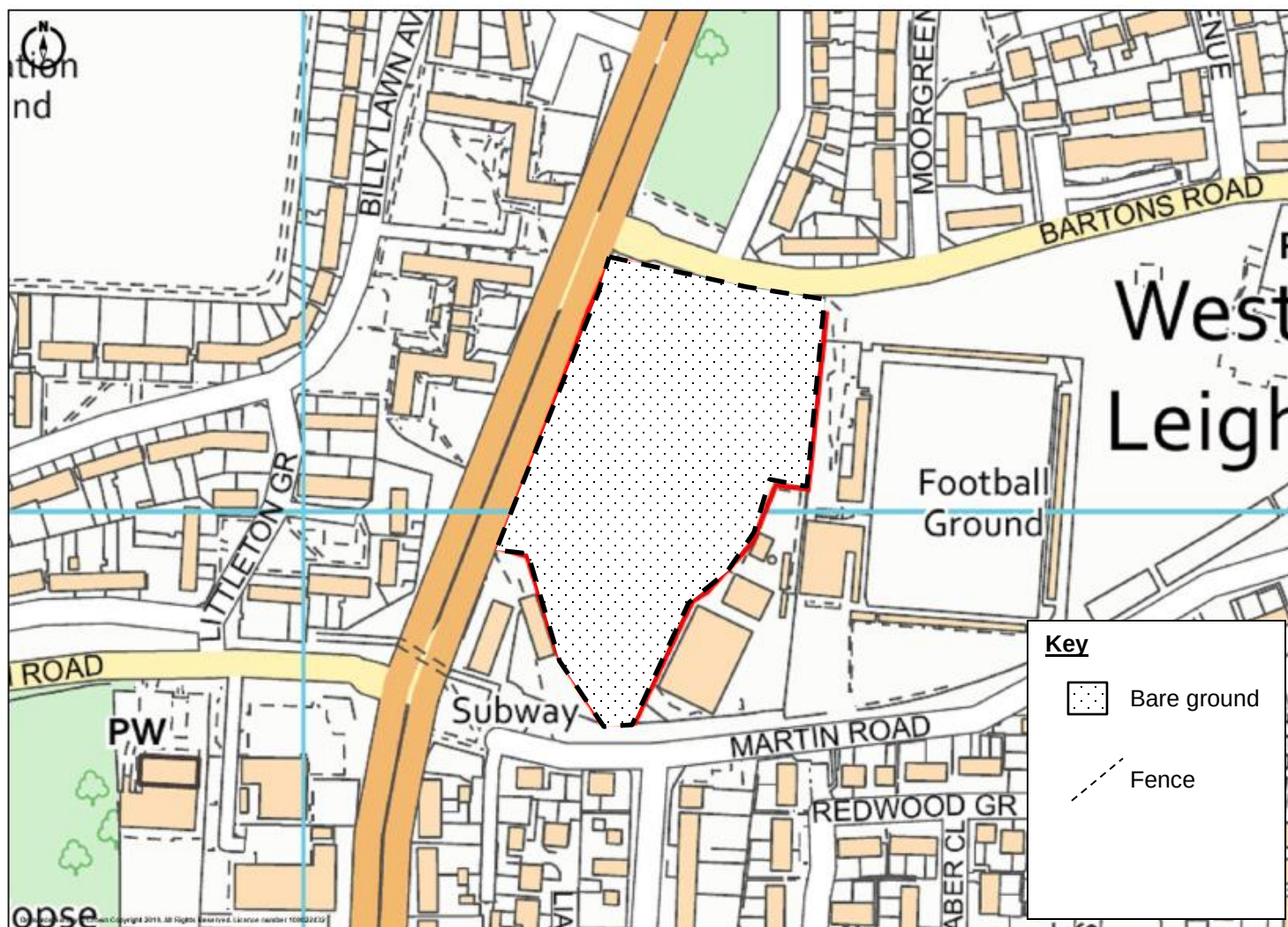
Appendix A: Site Location (○)



Appendix B: Site Proposals



Appendix C: Phase 1 Habitat Survey Map



Appendix D: Ecological Enhancement Opportunities



Swift brick: Made from woodstone material, a mix of concrete and wood fibres, this swift box is designed to be built into a wall with the front panel visible. It can also be mounted externally on an outside wall. Swifts are colony breeders and boxes should be erected in pairs as high as possible, ideally under the eaves.



Small Red
215 x 215 mm

Ibstock bat box – designed for integration into the wall of new buildings providing roosting space for pipistrelles. It provides a discrete home for bats with several roosting chambers to provide zones of differing temperatures. The bats are contained within the box itself and the entrance at the bottom allows droppings to fall out so it is maintenance free.



Log pile ideal for reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates.

Appendix E: Relevant Legislation

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose Habitats Directive into UK legislation. The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites and European Protected Species. European Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across Europe.

European Protected Species (EPS) are those listed under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations and include dormouse, great crested newt, otter and all species of bat. The regulations prohibit the deliberate capture, killing or disturbance of any EPS; it is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any of these species. In order to carry out a lawful operation (e.g. development work which has full planning permission) that may result in an offence under the Habitats Regulations, it is necessary to obtain a licence from Natural England. EPS Licences will only be granted after Natural England has been satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternative and that there will not be any adverse impacts on the favourable conservation status of the species. This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which continue the same provision for European protected species, licencing requirements and protected areas after Brexit.

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principle piece of legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Various amendments have occurred since the original enactment. The Wildlife and Countryside Act contains both habitat and species protection. Certain bird, animal and plant species are afforded protection under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. Measures for the protection of the countryside, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also included within the Act.

COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 adds to the protection afforded in the WCA to SSSI's and other important sites for nature conservation. In addition, under the Act it became a criminal offence to "recklessly disturb" Schedule 1 nesting birds and species protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. It also enabled heavier penalties on the conviction of wildlife offences.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 improved wildlife protection by amending the WCA. The main function of the NERC Act was to raise the profile of biodiversity amongst public authorities. Section 40 (S40) of the Act places a 'Biodiversity Duty' on all public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their normal functions.

