



Bloor Homes

Normandy Way, Hinckley

15/00188/OUT: Discharge of Conditions 17, 19 and 20

June 2024

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following document has been produced to satisfy the requirements of Conditions 17, 19 and 20 of Outline planning permission 15/00188/OUT (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Ref.) which was submitted for the erection of up to 850 dwellings, 500m² of retail units, a primary school, community facilities including sports pitches, parkland, children's play areas, allotments, sustainable urban drainage systems, a new access and associated infrastructure (Outline - access only) at Normandy Way, Hinckley.
- 1.2 Bloor Homes have submitted a Reserved Matters application for Phase 4 (23/00574/REM). The proposals for Phase 4 are shown on the Proposed Site Layout (Ref: EM100-LS-021j (Site Landscaping overview Ph4) Boor Homes). Bloor have commissioned this report to inform the discharge of the Conditions 19 and 20.

Condition 17

No development shall commence, in any phase, unless and until such time as a scheme identifying the provision of bat boxes on properties adjacent to wildlife corridors of hedgerow or watercourse for that phase is submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Condition 19

No development shall commence, in any phase, unless and until a schedule of re-surveys and/or re-assessment of ecological plans and assessment for that phase is submitted to and agree in writing

Condition 20

No development shall commence, in any phase, unless and until such time as the re-survey and/or re-assessment of ecological plans and assessment as identified in condition 19 are submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved survey/assessments and any identified mitigation measures.

2.0 SCOPE

- 2.1 A Bat and Bird Box Plan is included within this report at Figure 1. This is based on the current Proposed Site Layout and is intended to discharge Condition 17.
- 2.2 A site visit was carried out on 12th June 2024 to inform Conditions 19 and 20. The aims of the site visit were to:
- Review the habitats on-site and their potential to support protected species.
 - Determine whether any further surveys are required.
- 2.3 Prior to the site visit, previous ecological reporting was reviewed as background information and to aid in directing the scope of survey. This included the 'Discharge of Conditions 14, 19 and 20 (15/00118/OUT) produced by Ecology Solutions in July 2020 and the Ecological Creation and Habitat Management Plan produced by RSK in November 2014.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The following outlines the survey methodologies used during the site visit.

Habitats

3.2 A field survey was conducted on 12th June 2024 by a suitably experienced ecologist from FPCR. Habitats were identified and mapped broadly following the UKHab Classification System¹, with minor departures from this methodology to allow for compatibility with the Defra metric where applicable. and comprised a systematic walk over the Site to classify the broad habitat types and identify any Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006).

Fauna

3.3 During the UKHab survey, observations, identification and signs of any species protected under the following list of Acts and Regulations (collectively referred to herein as ‘Protected Species’) were recorded:

- Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

3.4 Consideration was also given to the existence and use of the Site by other fauna listed as one or more of the following (collectively referred to herein as ‘Notable Species’):

- Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for the conservation of biodiversity in England on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, Section 41 (S41);
- species listed on any Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) initiatives; and
- Red Data Book (RDB) species.

3.5 The likely presence or absence of protected and notable species has been assessed by a number of factors including the availability or suitable habitat, connectivity, known species distribution, local records and an understanding of the ecology and habitats requirement of the individual species assessed.

Invasive non Native Species

3.6 Consideration was given as to the presence of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)⁴

¹ UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <https://ukhab.org>)

⁴ Act of Parliament, (1981). The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), London: HMSO.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Habitat Overview

- 4.1 Previous surveys undertaken in 2020 and 2023 identified the majority of the site has been subject to regular management through continued agricultural practices, and at the time the fields still being utilised for arable crops.
- 4.2 The habitats within the reserved matters application area are shown on Figure 2 and were found to have been left fallow and have been subject to some disturbance associated with development activity and are now best categorised as Sparsley vegetated land - Ruderal/ Ephemeral as they are dominated by Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, Bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides* and rough hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus* interspersed with bare ground.
- 4.3 In addition, a new balancing/ SUDS facility has been constructed and an area of developed land/ sealed surface was present, which currently accommodate a site compound.
- 4.4 All of the habitats within the Phase 4 application area were considered to be of low value.

Protected / Notable Species

Bats

- 4.5 Two trees were identified adjacent to the northern red line boundary of phase 4 and were considered to be of negligible suitability to roosting bats as they did not contain any potential roosting features.
- 4.6 The site provides negligible value to foraging bats. Adjacent to the northern boundary of Phase 4, is a section of the protected water vole corridor (Appendix A). In addition, a hedgerow extending from the southwestern corner of the Phase extends southwards towards the 'ecological area'. These provide potential commuting routes for bat species. As the newly created balancing pond establishes and despite the creation of an internal road that will bisect this, the value of the connectivity provided between the water vole corridor and the ecological area will likely increase in terms of both commuting and foraging habitat for bats.
- 4.7 During the construction phase artificial lighting should be directed away from these peripheral habitats to minimise any disturbance to bats that may utilise the habitats.

Enhancements

- 4.8 Figure 1 shows the locations of 10 new integrated bat boxes. It has been suggested that Ibstock Enclosed bat boxes are utilise, these would be integrated into the wall of the building at a height of between 3m and 6m. The facing on these boxes can be customised to match the facing bricks on the new buildings and therefore is quite discreet. Other boxes could be utilised if necessary, however, this should be agreed with an FPCR ecologist beforehand.
- 4.9 The principal of the location of these boxes is so that they are located close to potential commuting and foraging habitat for bats and so that they provide roosting opportunities in a range of different aspects and therefore offer a range of microclimates for different species and seasonal requirements.

Badger

- 4.10 No evidence of badger was recorded within the phase 4 site boundary or within 30m of the site boundary. High levels of construction activity in the area around the site suggest that badgers are unlikely to use the site for sett construction.
- 4.11 If works do not commence within 6 months of the badger survey then an updated survey to determine if badgers have established within the site will be required. If a sett is later identified further mitigation will be required and may also require a licence from Natural England.
- 4.12 To ensure that no impacts occur to Badgers during any construction activities all contractors working on the site should be briefed regarding the potential presence of Badgers.
- 4.13 Any excavations such as trenches within the site that are to be left open overnight should be covered or have a means of escape, such as a slope or wooden plank..
- 4.14 Any trenches or pits should be inspected each morning to ensure no Badgers have become trapped overnight.
- 4.15 The storage of topsoil or other 'soft' building materials on site should be given careful consideration. Badgers could adopt such mounds as setts, which would then be afforded the same protection as established setts. Such mounds should be regularly inspected to check for use by Badgers.

Great crested newts

- 4.16 According to the 2020 reporting by Ecology Solutions, great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* have been recorded within ponds within 500m of site (located approximately 440m north-west). However, as the majority of the site was previously arable fields, it was not considered suitable for great crested newts. A precautionary approach to site clearance was proposed on a phase-by-phase basis. As part of this approach, newt exclusion fencing was installed along the boundary of the wider site to prevent great crested newt from entering the development site during construction.
- 4.17 A single pond is located within the phase 4 site boundary. This pond is an attenuation pond for previous phases and was installed after the amphibian exclusion fencing was installed, therefore it is considered highly unlikely for great crested newts to be present within this pond. The habitat surrounding this pond are largely unsuitable for amphibians as they comprise areas of building site and sparsely vegetated land that was formerly arable farmland.
- 4.18 No further surveys or mitigation are considered to be required for great crested newts. In the unlikely event that great crested newt are noted on-site during works, all works should cease and further advice sought immediately from a suitably experienced Ecologist.

Birds

- 4.19 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built (also [take, damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1] under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006). For birds listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA, protection extends to offences relating to the intentional or reckless disturbance of these birds while at their nests or their dependent young.

- 4.20 The majority of species recorded within the site during surveys undertaken were common and widespread. It is considered that the hedgerow, and grassland within the site offer suitable nesting and foraging opportunities for birds.
- 4.21 Evidence of potential breeding skylark *Alauda arvensis* was recorded on site in the centre of the field. Though a nest was not recorded the behaviour of the birds suggested that a nest was located within the area.
- 4.22 It is therefore recommended that construction activity is avoided within the field during the nesting bird season. If any works are required, then an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW) should undertake a nesting bird check to identify a suitable exclusion zone to be implemented prior to works commencing. If nesting birds are found to be present during checks then works within the exclusion zone would need to be delayed until young have fledged.

Enhancements

- 4.23 Figure 1 shows the locations of 10 bird boxes comprising 5 swift boxes and 5 sparrow boxes
- 4.24 Bird boxes will be installed on buildings as per the plan. These will cater for a variety of species that rely on buildings for nesting, including common swift *Apus apus*, and house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Box location and placement should follow the following criteria:
- at least five metres clear below and in front of box;
 - away from doors, windows, tall trees, and bushes;
 - do not locate in cold windy or shady alleys.
- 4.25 House sparrow boxes can be installed at any height above four metres and gable ends are ideal. Outbuildings such as garages can also have house sparrow terraces installed. Boxes should be away from windows and doors and must be located within five metres of vegetation such as trees and shrubs within gardens.
- 4.26 If the proposed locations of the bird boxes require amending due to incompatible locations or it is required that other brands//styles of bird boxes are used, , this should be agreed with an FPCR ecologist beforehand and any amendments would follow the above principal and target the same species .

5.0 CONCLUSIONS/ SUMMARY

- 5.1 Updated habitat surveys were carried out in June 2024 in order to check if the habitat within site was subject to any material changes, since the previous surveys, both in terms of habitat composition and suitability for protected or notable species.
- 5.2 Overall, though the arable habitats have gone fallow and are more reminiscent of sparsely vegetated ephemeral/ perennial habitat. It is not considered that the habitat value has significantly increased and it is considered that the plot 4 remains of low ecological value.
- 5.3 During the construction phase, recommendations have been made to ensure that artificial lighting is not directed towards more structured habitats that border the site. This is to avoid potential disturbance impacts to bats.

- 5.4 No evidence of badgers were observed within the Site or within 30m, however as a mobile species, recommendations have been made for precautionary mitigation to avoid badgers getting trapped or harmed and for vigilance for any new activity.
- 5.5 During the walkover survey, skylark were observed in display flight over the Site, which suggested likely nesting. Recommendations have been made for and ECoW to undertake a nesting bird check prior to any works within the area (if between March and September for skylark). If nesting birds are observed then works in an exclusion zone will not commence until nests have fledged.
- 5.6 It has been concluded that impacts to other protected or notable species are unlikely.
- 5.7 Figure 1 provide locations of bat and bird enhancements and is anticipated to be sufficient to discharge Condition 17.

APPENDIX A PROTECTED WATER VOLE CORRIDOR

Protected Water Vole Corridor (1:5,000)

Section for which minimum 6.0m width protection zone from edge of watercourse to be provided for water voles

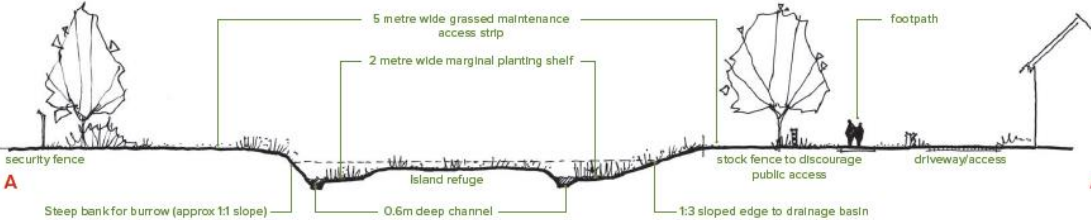


Ecological Area (1:5,000)

- 1 Unplanted wet channel (approximately 600mm deep) linking existing watercourse to drainage basins
- 2 Some scrub to be removed from existing watercourse to encourage food plants/marginal vegetation
- 3 Marginal vegetation margins within base of drainage feature. Species to include a mix of graminoids and herbs. Graminoids to include *Phalaris arundinacea* (Reed Canary-grass), *Sparganium erectum* (Branched Bur-reed) and *Carex acutiformis* (Lesser Pond-sedge). Flowering herb species such as *Alisma plantago-aquatica* (Water-plantain), *Butomus umbellatus* (Flowering-rush), *Caltha palustris* (Marsh-marigold), *Filipendula ulmaria* (Meadowsweet), *Iris pseudacorus* (Yellow Iris), *Mentha aquatica* (Water Mint) and *Veronica beccabunga* (Brooklime). Plug planted in groups.
- 4 Island refuge with grassland species mix for wetlands (such as Emosgate EM8) that is tolerant of occasional flooding and requires little management.
- 5 Central pond area lies within the floodplain and will be excavated to form channels and pools. There will be no direct inflow from the watercourse or on site drainage system. Water levels will fluctuate according to ground water levels, weather conditions and flood events. Area to be planted with *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed) and *Schoenoplectus lacustris* (Common Club-rush) which can tolerate fluctuating water levels.
- 6 Steeper (1:1) banks for burrows on south edges of drainage basins (as opposed to general 1:3 slopes elsewhere) sown with grassland species mix for wetlands (such as EM8).



Indicative Cross Section A-A' 1:250 @ A3



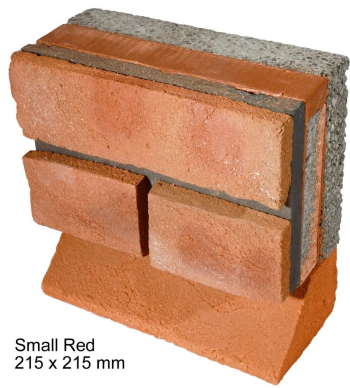
Note: These drawings are to illustrate the design principles only and are subject to the findings of further detailed site investigation works as part of the detailed design process

DEFINE

- Amenity Grass
- Wet grassland edges
- Rough grassland margin
- Scrub/nettles
- Marginal planting
- Permanent water

	Rev
DE155_006	Drg No
Bloor Homes	Client
Normandy Fields	Project
Water Vole Habitat Strategy Plan	Title
As Indicated	Scale

1

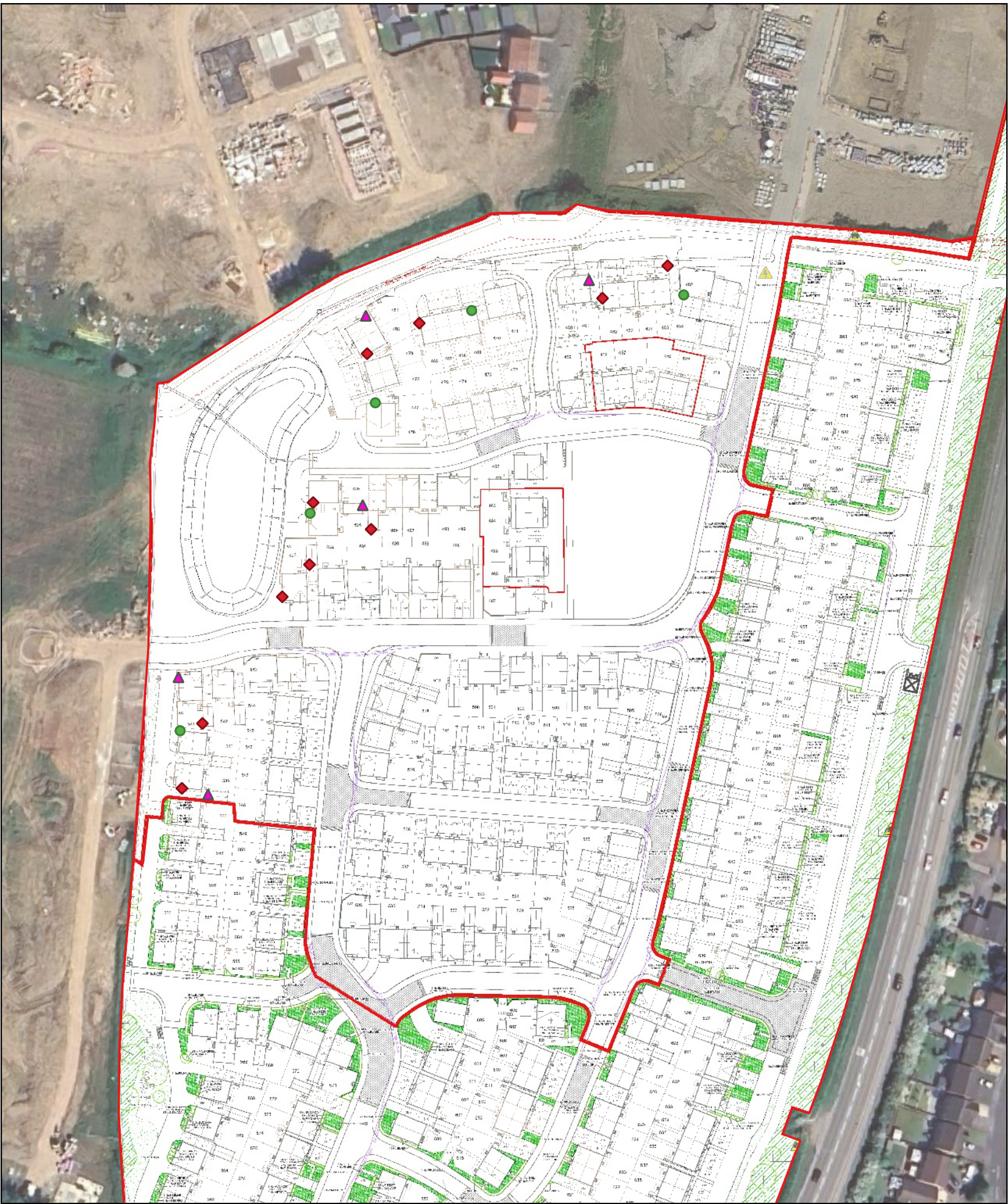
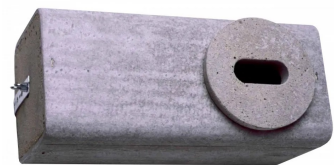


Small Red
215 x 215 mm

2



3



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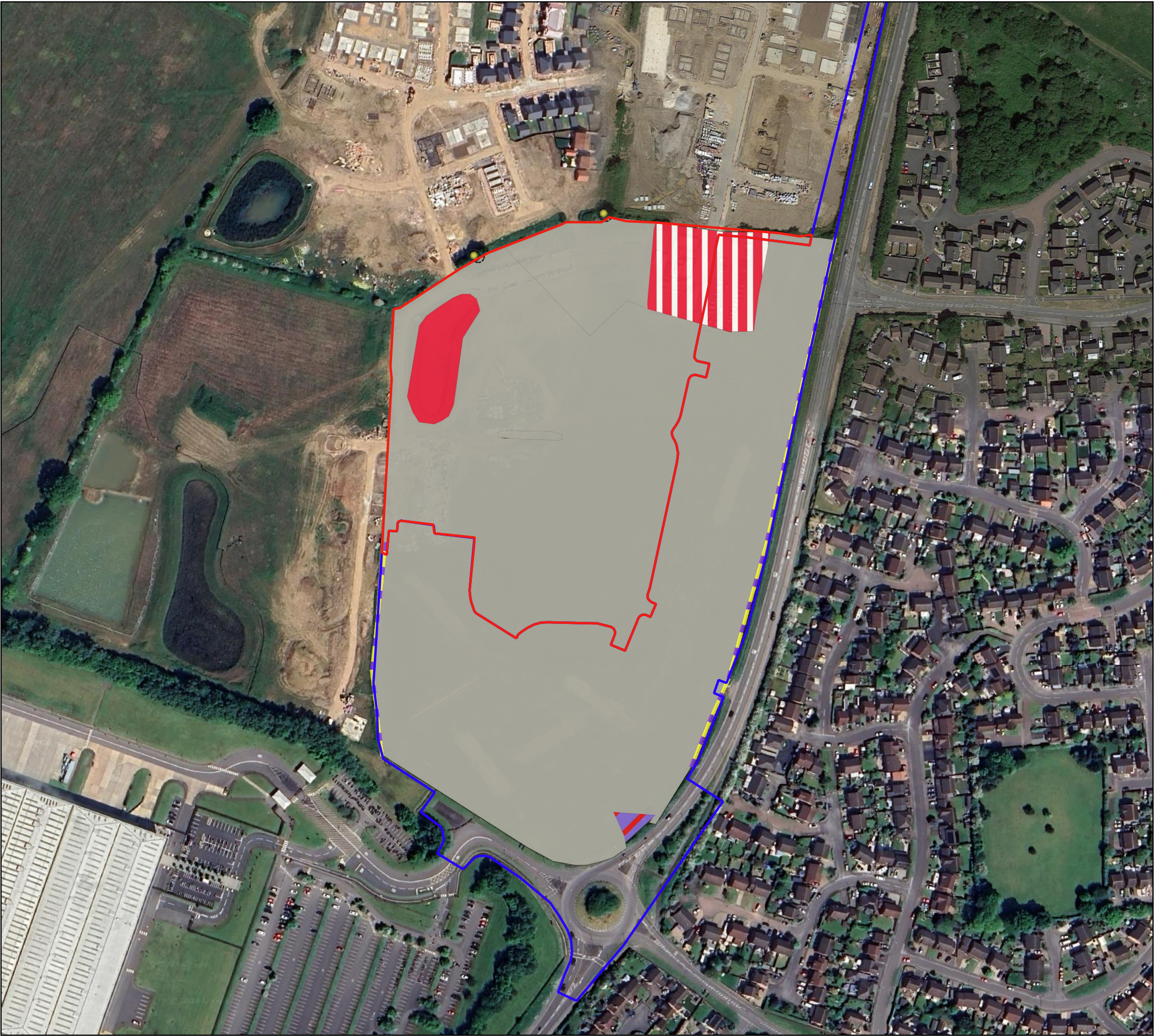
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Key

- Site Boundary
- (Integrated) bat boxes
- (Integrated) sparrow terraces
- (Integrated) swift boxes

Image Ref	Target Species/Taxa	Product*	Quantity
1	Bats	Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box 'B'	10
2	Sparrows	Vivara Pro Woodstone House Sparrow Nest box, NHBS 201458	5
3	Swift	No.17 Schwegler Swift Nest Box (Single Cavity)	5

* Or equivalent



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Key

-  **Reserved Matters Boundary**
-  **Other full Planning Application Boundary**

Baseline Habitats

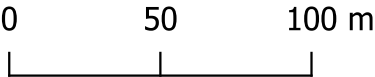
-  **Bramble scrub**
-  **Developed land; sealed surface**
-  **Ruderal/Ephemeral**
-  **Sustainable drainage system**

Baseline Hedgerows

-  **Native hedgerow**

Baseline Individual Trees

-  **Existing Medium Rural Tree**



client
Bloor Homes East Midlands
project
Hinkley West Phase 4
drawing title
UK Habitat Plan

scale @ A3
1:2,500

drawn
SH

issue date
14/6/2024

drawing / figure number
Figure 2