



Land South of Clifton Road, Deddington

Ecological Appraisal ADDENDUM

Introduction

Blue Cedar Homes Ltd received planning permission from Cherwell District Council to construct seven residential dwellings on the north-western part of a field located to the south of Clifton Road, Deddington, Oxfordshire, OX15 0TH.

Malford Environmental Consulting prepared the following documents to support the original planning application:

- ❖ Land South of Clifton Road, Deddington, Oxfordshire_Ecological Appraisal_Final Report (MEC, 23 November 2020); and
- ❖ Land South of Clifton Road, Deddington, Oxfordshire_Ecological Enhancement Statement (Planning Condition 11) (MEC, 29 March 2022).

Since planning permission was granted, the scheme has been revised to reduce the number of dwellings from seven to five, while dwellings are now single-storey. The current application therefore now seeks consent for this reduction in the number of dwellings.

This Ecological Appraisal Addendum has been prepared on behalf of Blue Cedar Homes Ltd by Malford Environmental Consulting, which will form part of the new planning application documentation. This addendum considers whether this change has any new or additional ecological effects over and above those identified in the original ecological appraisal and ecological enhancement documents.

The following aspects of the new scheme design, which are relevant to ecology, will remain unaltered:

- ❖ Land use, habitats and wildlife within the study area grassland field (baseline conditions);
- ❖ Size and location of the development application site;
- ❖ Retention and removal of existing trees and shrubs;
- ❖ Retention of the semi-natural grassland within the remaining field that will be reinstated with a traditional grazing regime; and
- ❖ The inclusion of native hedge and tree planting at the interface between the proposed application site boundary and adjacent field edge.

Predicted Impacts and Mitigation

Predicted impacts (Ecological Appraisal Sections 6.1 – 6.5) and associated mitigation (Ecological Appraisal Sections 7.1 – 7.4) covering grassland, trees supporting potential bat roost features, foraging/commuting bats, hedgehog and nesting birds remain unaltered and are therefore still relevant for the revised scheme design and new planning application.

There are no new predicted impacts associated with the revised scheme, and as such no additional ecological mitigation is required.

Ecological Enhancement

The revised scheme does result in changes in the opportunities for ecological enhancement due to the revised layout and building designs, in particular: due to the reduction in number of dwellings from 7 to 5; conversion of dwellings from two-storey to single-storey with associated reduction in height of eaves/ridge; and re-distribution of dwelling units and associated garden further into the south of the application site.

These scheme design changes potentially alter the opportunities for ecological/wildlife enhancements, as agreed as part of Planning Condition 11, including: integration of bat boxes; integration of bird nesting boxes; new planting; and wildlife hibernacula. These changes are discussed below.

Bat boxes

The original scheme integrated four bat roosting boxes on the south and west-facing gable elevations of Plots 2, 5, 6 and 7.

Although the new dwellings have been reduced to single-storey, there are still opportunities to integrate bat roosting boxes at the apex of gable end walls that provide locations of a sufficient height above the ground. Therefore, four bat roosting boxes can be integrated as follows:

- ❖ Plot 1: 1 bat box on the southeast facing gable end elevation;
- ❖ Plot 2: 1 bat box on the east facing gable end elevation;
- ❖ Plot 3: 1 bat box on the east facing gable end elevation; and
- ❖ Plot 4: 1 bat box on the west facing gable end elevation.

The revised scheme will continue to deliver enhancements for roosting bats as previously agreed as part of the original scheme.

Bird boxes

The original scheme integrated ten swift nesting boxes or integrated swift bricks on the northeast and east-facing elevations of Plots 3, 5, 6 and 7.

Swift boxes were chosen as swift has been recorded in Deddington and is an Amber list species (species of moderate conservation concern due to declining populations), and provision of permanent nesting locations aimed specifically at swift was designed to help re-address this issue.

Although the new dwellings have been reduced to single-storey, there are still opportunities to integrate bird nesting boxes at the apex of gable end walls that provide locations of a sufficient height above the ground for some nesting birds.

However, due to the reduction in ridge height the predicted efficacy of the nesting boxes for use by swift is reduced. However, it is still recommended to provide integrated swift bricks as these boxes could still be used by swift and are also readily used by a range of other small passerine birds such as house sparrow, tits and starling. As such integrated swift nesting bricks are now seen as a 'universal bird box' for new development.

Eight swift nesting bricks can be integrated as follows:

- Plot 1: pair of swift bricks on the northwest facing gable end elevation;
- Plot 2: pair of swift bricks on the north facing gable end elevation;
- Plot 3: pair of swift bricks on the north facing gable end elevation; and
- Plot 5: pair of swift bricks on the east facing gable end elevation.

The revised scheme will continue to deliver enhancements for nesting birds as previously agreed as part of the original scheme, although it is recognised that the potential for nesting locations to be used by swifts has been reduced due to the lowering of ridge heights.

New planting

For the original application the Landscape Layout Plan (Drawing No. JWL_011.01D, dated November 2020) and the Landscape Planting Plan (Drawing No. JWL_011.03) provide the soft landscaping strategy and details of plant species, numbers and sizes.

The soft landscaping strategy for the revised scheme is shown on the Landscape Layout Plan (Drawing No. JWL_011.01F, dated January 2023).

The differences include:

- ❖ *Species-rich grassland*. Relocation of species-rich grassland from the south of the application site to within an area of communal open space along the western boundary, due to the redistribution of the dwellings / gardens further south. Species-rich grassland in terms of habitat establishment and management will remain unaltered, but the revised scheme does result in a slight reduction of this habitat.
- ❖ *Hedgerow*. The revised scheme layout leads to an increase in the length of new mixed native hedgerow planted along the application site boundaries, which now includes an extension of the eastern boundary as well as a new hedge along the western boundary. Hedgerow establishment and management, including the recommended hedgerow species mix, remains unaltered.
- ❖ *Trees and shrubs*. The revised scheme layout maintains parity of proposed new trees and shrubs with the existing scheme design. Tree and shrub establishment and management, including the recommended species mix, remains unaltered.

The revised scheme will continue to deliver habitat enhancements as previously agreed as part of the original scheme, albeit with a slightly different mix of habitat areas/lengths.

Wildlife hibernacula

The revised scheme can continue to integrate four wildlife hibernacula (refugia piles), constructed by stacking 1-2m lengths of cut log on top of each other, along the application site boundaries as per the agreed design. As such the scheme will continue to deliver this habitat enhancement as previously agreed.

Conclusion

The revised scheme is broadly equivalent to the original scheme, with predicted ecological impacts and mitigation remaining unaltered. Ecological enhancements integrated within the revised scheme design are the same mix of habitats and wildlife features as those within the original scheme design, albeit with minor reconfigurations such as reducing the amount of species-rich grassland and increasing the amount of mixed native hedge. Bird boxes continue to be integrated, but it is recognised that their efficacy for swift nesting may be reduced due to the lowering of dwelling ridge heights.

The revised scheme maintains parity with the original scheme, and therefore the conclusions of the original ecological appraisal remain unaltered and are still valid for this new scheme design. In particular, the revised scheme will continue to have no adverse impacts on the ability of local wildlife to survive, breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young or to hibernate or migrate, and would actively improve the situation for target species such as bats and birds.

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Director

1st February 2023