Stewart House Ecological Enhancement Plan

Prepared for Sylva Group

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Rev00

TURNSTONE ECOLOGY

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This document presents information in relation to the approved development at Stewarts House, Sibford Ferris.

The purpose of this document is to provide information to the Local Planning Authority to allow discharge of Condition 7 set to an application for the proposed erection of a separate dwelling in the garden of an existing dwelling (16/00959/F) at Stewarts Way (OS Grid Location SP 3547 3719).

The Site Location and current site layout are provided in *Figure 1 & 2* with the design of the approved development shown in *Figure 3.*

Figure 1. Site Location

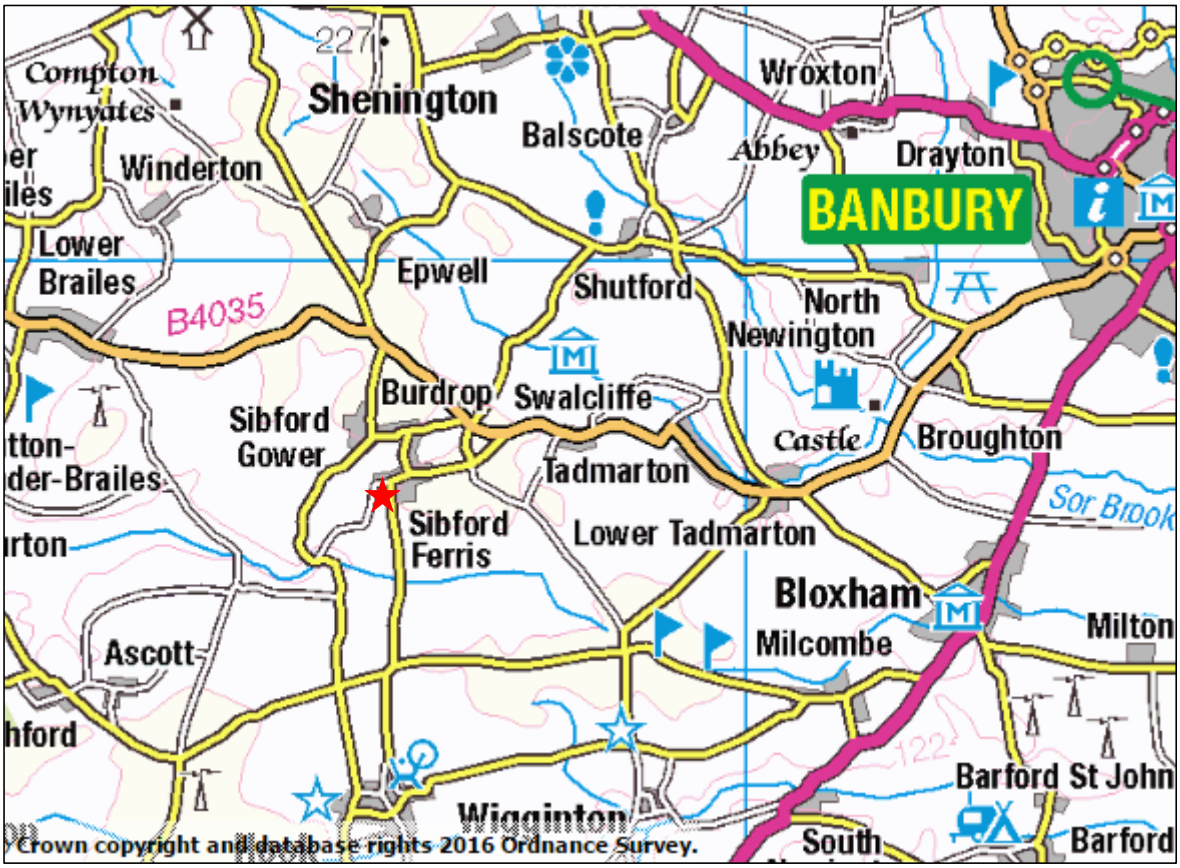

Figure 2. Site Layout (red line boundary showing proposed development site under 16/00959/F)

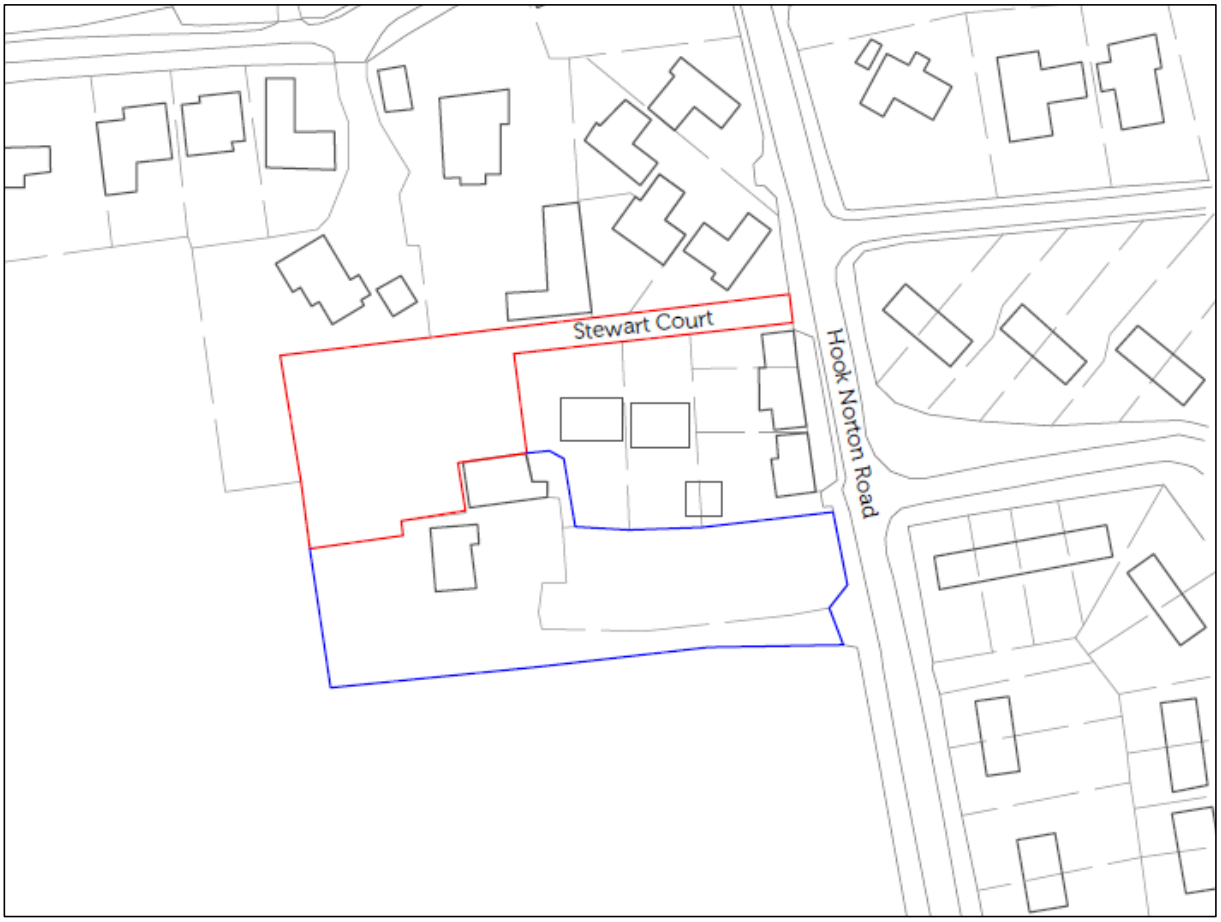

Figure 3. Approved development design

1.2 Planning Conditions

Planning Condition 7 has been set in relation to ecology and the natural environment;

"*Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, including any demolition, and any works of site clearance, a method statement for enhancing biodiversity on the site, including nesting provision for Common Swifts if possible, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the biodiversity " measures shall be carried out and retained in accordance with the approved details.*

Reason -To protect habitats of importance to biodiversity conservation from any loss or damage in accordance with Policy ESD10 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011 - 2031 Part 1 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework."

2 ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

2.1 General

The development site is within the garden of an existing dwelling on the south-west edge of Sibford Ferris and includes a dwelling and associated garage and gardens. The garden is currently used for amenity and the development site itself is well managed but dominated by a tennis court and swimming pool. The garden is bordered by the existing dwelling to the south; vegetated garden boundaries to the north and east; and an existing hedge to the west. To the west of the development plot is agricultural land with all other sides extending in to the village. The wider vicinity is dominated by agricultural land as well as interspersed streams and small domestic settlements.

The development site is considered to be of low ecological value and function and based on assessment from the Local Planning Authority does not currently support protected species.

2.2 Background data

2.2.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There is one statutory designated site located within 3 km of the approved development: Sharps Hill Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Sharp's Hill Quarry is a Geological SSSI and is designated for the richly fossiliferous Sharp's Hill Formation and the underlying Lower Bathonian Chipping Norton Formation. The site is critical for the sedimentological and stratigraphical interpretation of the north Oxfordshire Bathonian succession and for lithostratigraphic correlation between Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire.

Based on the reasons for designation, the distance from the site and nature of the development this site will not be impacted and will not be discussed further within this report.

2.2.2 European Protected Species Licence Sites

There is one site where an EPS mitigation licence has been issued (2010-2015) within 3 km of the approved development location. This is;

- EPSM2010-1903 is situated approximately 2.2 km to the ENE. This was granted for the destruction of a bat roost/s for non-breeding Brown Long-eared Bats (*Plecotus auritus*).

2.2.3 Biodiversity Action Plans

The Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan includes plans for habitats. These are;

- Grasslands: Lowland Meadow, Lowland Calcareous Grassland, Lowland Dry Acid Grassland.

- Woodlands: Lowland Wood pasture & parkland, Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, Wet woodland and Traditional orchards.
- Wetlands: Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Fens, Eutrophic Standing Waters, Mesotrophic Lakes, Ponds, Reedbeds, Rivers and Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pastures.
- Other: Arable Field Margins, Hedgerows, Lowland Heathland and Open Mosaic habitats on previously developed land.

None of these habitats are present within the approved development site.

3 WILDLIFE PROTECTION PLAN

3.1 Opportunities for Enhancement

The approved development is taking place in a residential garden which is dominated by a hard tennis court and swimming pool. Accordingly, there is limited opportunity for wildlife within the current layout, however the following enhancements will be completed;

- Additional planting along the boundary hedges to increase species diversity, ecological connectivity, nesting and feeding opportunities for birds and to increase the value of linear habitats for foraging bat; and
- Provision of bird nesting and bat roosting boxes within the new dwelling.

3.2 Enhancements

The below enhancements will endure an increase in biodiversity following the completion of the development.

3.2.1 Hedgerows

The boundary hedgerows will be retained in situ. These will be enhanced with additional planting to provide additional feeding and nesting opportunities for birds as well as greater ecological connectivity along the boundaries and enhanced commuting and foraging roosts for bats. Hedgerows should be planted using a mix of native broadleaved species and be of a similar diversity to that present within existing hedgerows.

3.2.2 Nesting Birds

Species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan that are likely to occur in such environment include House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) and Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Species that are on the UK Birds of Conservation Concern list include Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) (Red list) and Dunnock & Swift (*Apus apus*) (Amber List) and accordingly targeting these species where possible would be of conservation gain.

A range of open fronted and hole nesting nest boxes should be installed across the site which will increase the nesting opportunities for breeding birds. These boxes should also include one House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) terrace (*Figures 4-6*) with two larger boxes designed for Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). These boxes could be incorporated in to the walls of the property and examples of the recommended bird boxes can be found at http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/nesting-boxes/. Two Woodcrete hole nesting boxes will be erected on the trees present and one open fronted Woodcrete box within shrubs.

In addition to this it is suggested that four Swift (*Apus apus*) nest boxes are installed at the gable of the house (*Figures 4-6*) as Swifts are present in the adjacent property. The boxes should be installed in the top course of brickwork (a minimum of 5m high), in a shaded area out of direct sunlight, and away from windows.

This species can be further encouraged to use the boxes by playing tape recordings of the species at the time they are likely to be returning to the UK from their wintering grounds. Further information can be provided if necessary.

The exact technique for addition of the swift boxes can be chosen by the client with options including;

- External boxes *e.g.* Schwegler Type 17 Swift boxes;
- Built within the wall *e.g.* Schwegler Swift Brick, EcoSurv Swift Brick or http://www.birdbrickhouses.co.uk/brick-nesting-boxes/nesting-boxes/.

3.2.3 Roosting Bats

New roosting opportunities will be built in to the new building (*Figure 4)* in the form of two Schwegler 1FR bat tubes. The bat tubes are to be installed at the wall top with one tube on either side of the building in order to provide a range of aspects and temperature regimes as well as access to the wider countryside.

No lighting will be directed on newly created bat roost access points and roosting features and only movement activated timed security lighting used outside of potential roosting locations.

Figure 4. Mitigation locations - overview

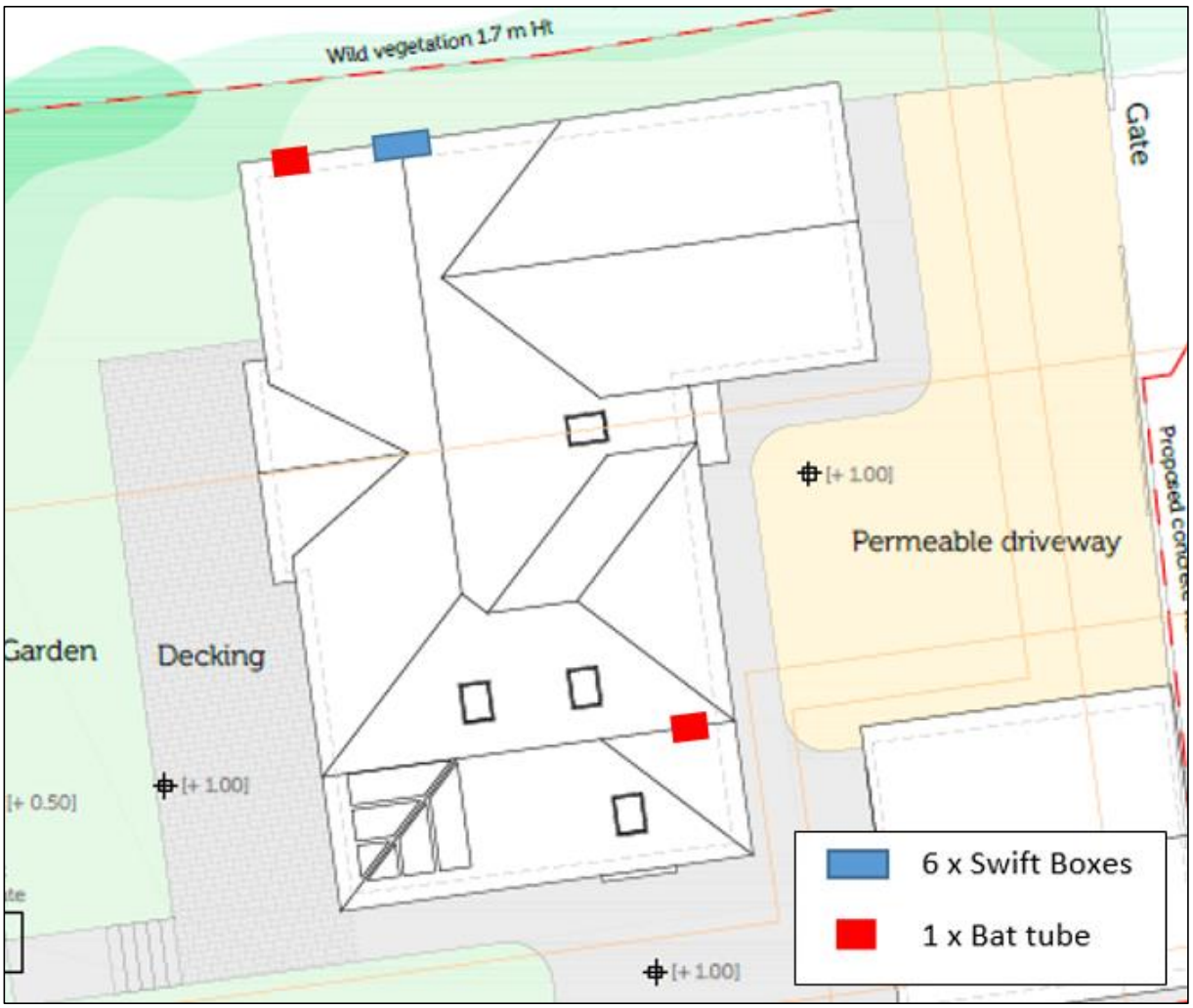

Figure 5. Mitigation locations – northern elevation

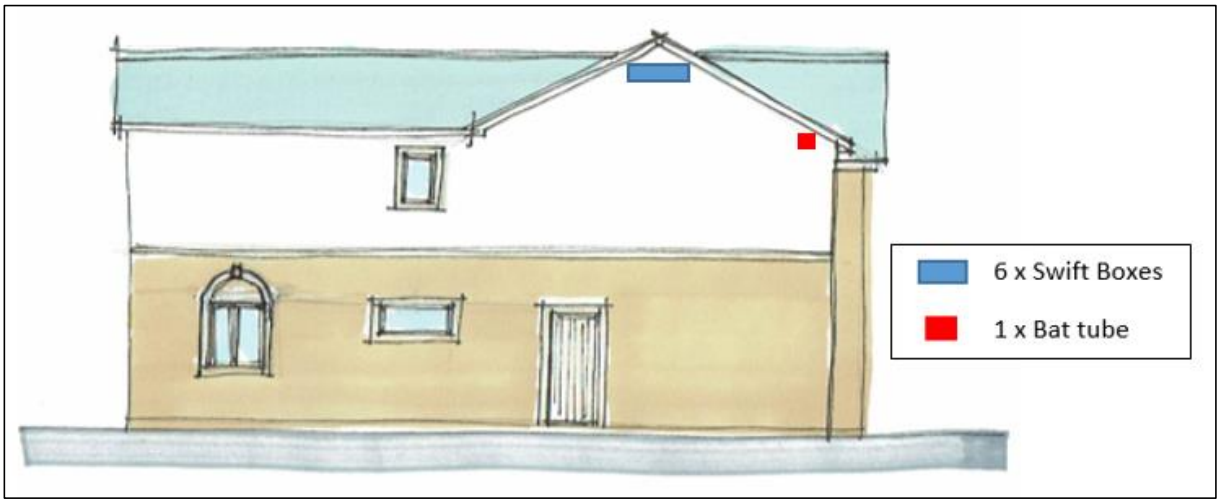

Figure 6. Mitigation locations – southern elevation