

Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan

Heath House Lane, Southampton

For:

Kode Architecture

June 2024

This report is the responsibility of Abbas Ecology,
It should be noted, that whilst every effort is made to meet the client's brief,
no site investigation can ensure complete assessment,
or prediction of the natural environment

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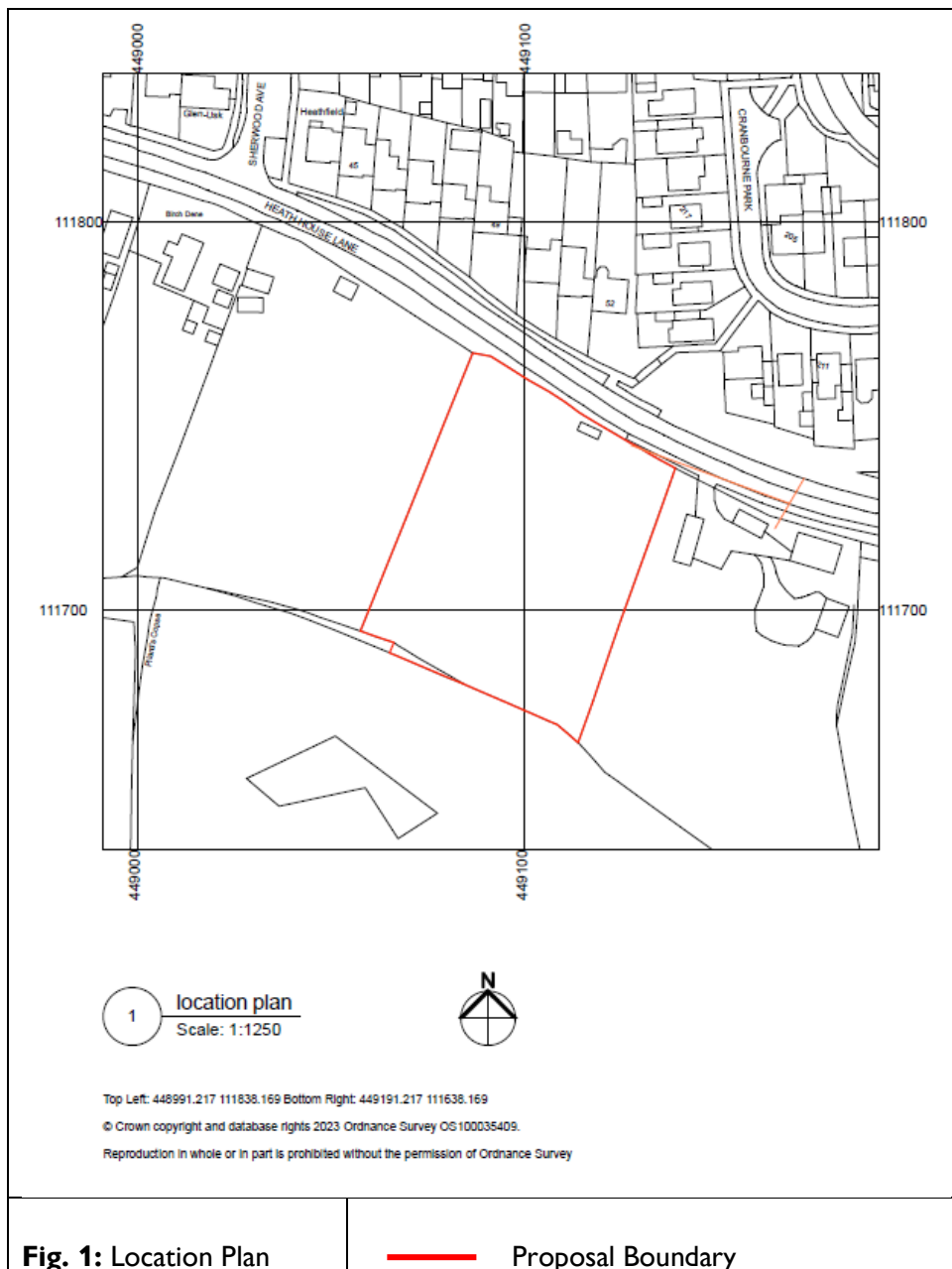
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I. Introduction

I.1 Site

The site is in Hedge End, a district west of Southampton. It is located to the south of Heath House Lane, on the edge of an urban location, with residential housing to the north and west becoming open countryside to the east.

The site location and ownership boundary are shown in Map 1.



1.2 Description of proposal

The proposal involves the change of use of land to Agricultural with associated works including, engineering works to land to raise ground levels to allow erection of a poly-tunnel and an outbuilding. No other proposals of a similar nature were discovered during a planning search.

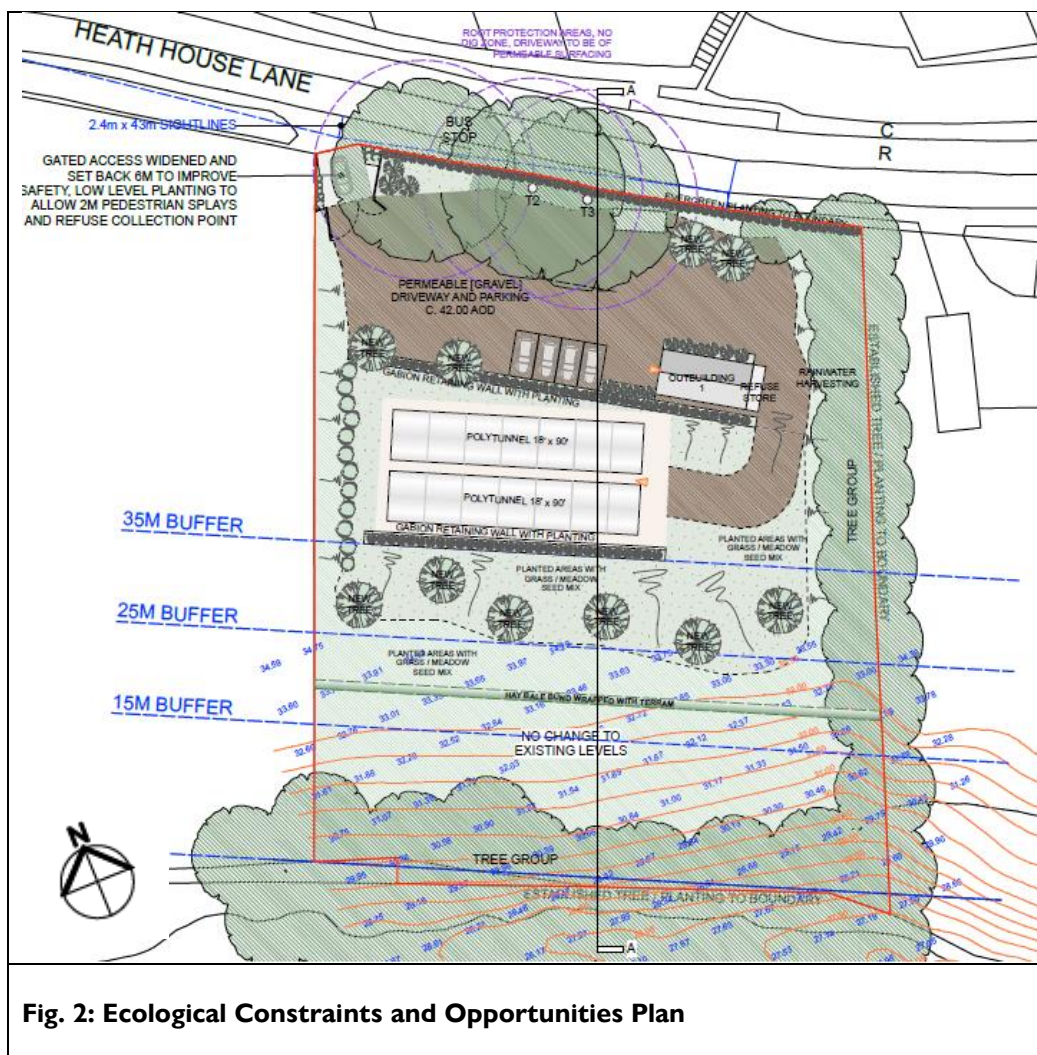
1.3 Summary of Results

The proposal has the potential to affect commuting badgers, hedgehogs, invertebrates, nesting birds, dormice and reptiles and Pilands Copse SINC which is designated for ancient woodland.

Mitigation described in the Ecological Impact Assessment, ref. 5690, April 2024 safeguards these features and is detailed further in this report.

The proposal has taken on the following:

- Root protection of retained trees along the north and northeastern boundary.
- New native planting against retention wall.
- Areas of grassland around the site will be left to grow and managed for invertebrates and in turn other fauna.
- 35 metre buffer to protect the bordering SNCI ancient woodland Pilands Copse.
- Implementation of a CEMP to include pollution measures to protect the SNCI, including a hay bale bund situated across the site at the 35m buffer line.
- Conditioning of a BEMP to details locations of ecological enhancements.
- Concrete bund to prevent potential run-off entering the tributary.



3. Mitigation Measures

3.1 Pilands Copse SINC

To avoid any potential adverse impacts such as accidental damage, dust silting and pollution incidents to this SINC during construction, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be prepared for submission and will be implemented.

There must be a 35m buffer from the SINC, free from any infrastructure and with biodiversity enhancements to mitigate the impacts of development and disturbance on the ancient woodland. The 35m buffer must be separated from the construction area by heras fencing as illustrated in fig. 3. Contractors will be briefed that no vehicle access must happen over this zone and no dumping of materials from construction is allowed in this zone.

No rubbish, agricultural or garden waste must be deposited in the SINC buffer zone or be allowed to enter the SINC. This includes soil, plants, grass clippings, hedge clippings, scrub or anything from this site. The rhododendron scrub present along the eastern boundary is considered an invasive species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and it is unlawful to allow it to spread into the wild. Cherry Laurel is also present and invasive, and while not listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act, should also not be allowed to spread into the SINC. Pendulous sedge will also need to be controlled and not allowed to enter the SINC.

6.2 Neutral grassland

Where possible, the proposals will include retention of as much grassland as possible, surrounding the polytunnels and within the buffer area. This will be left to naturally colonise and set seed to support invertebrates and in turn other fauna. The retention/natural re-colonisation areas are illustrated in fig. 3.

6.3 Scattered trees and woodland fringe

The trees will be protected during the construction phase in accordance with the British Standards Institute guidance (British Standards Institute, 2012) by installing construction hoarding along the root protection zones before works begin.

6.4 Badgers and hedgehogs

If excavations are left open at night, wooden boards or planks will be provided as a means of escape for any animals that fall in. Any pipework will be capped over-night to avoid animals becoming trapped. Hedgehog-friendly gravel boards with holes of 10 x 10 centimetres will be included within any new fencing. The buffer between the SNCI and the proposal will ensure foraging and commuting habitat for both species is maintained.

Hedgehog gravel boards are available from many building suppliers and across the internet, such as [Hedgehog Friendly Gravel Board | Jacksons Fencing \(jacksons-fencing.co.uk\)](#) However, they can be cut into fence panels, see [Link your garden with a hedgehog highway \(hedgehogstreet.org\)](#)

6.5 Foraging Bats

A sympathetic lighting scheme must be implemented across the site that will include but not be constricted to:

- Use of LED luminaires.
- The 35m buffer with the SINC will be unlit providing a dark buffer.
- Any external Any external luminaries must be fixed to the unit at a height below 3m and be downward pointing/hooded. There must be 0% upward light ratio. There will be no lighting units other than those fixed to the new buildings and/or polytunnels. No lighting must be directed at the mature oaks at the north of the site or the tree group at the east of the site.
- Use of motion sensor activated, or Central Management System (CMS) controlled security lighting triggered only when necessary.
- Light sources should emit minimal ultra-violet light, peak higher than 550nm and be of a warm/neutral colour <2,700 kelvin.

6.6 Breeding birds

Any scrub (including bramble) removal should be timed to occur between September and the end of February would avoid impact on nesting birds. This should happen as part of the clearance for dormice. If vegetation removal is planned during the breeding season (March to September inclusive) a suitably qualified ecologist will need to check for evidence of nesting birds before vegetation removal commences. Any nest present will be left, and a five-metre buffer zone will be placed around the nest, excluding any works until the young have fledged. It is strongly recommended that the end of April – end of June is avoided for scrub removal.

Dense areas of scrub are on the eastern and western boundary, this includes patches of rhododendron scrub along the eastern boundary which would be favourable to remove.

6.7 Reptiles

Mitigation will involve habitat degradation using a trim and push exercise. This will be conducted under an ecological watching brief and involves a two-stage process in a directional manner to allow reptiles to move into suitable retained habitat along the southern boundary. This will be undertaken in the reptile active season between March and October when the temperatures are above 10°C. The log piles will also be removed under ecological supervision and any reptiles found during the process will be safely relocated to retained habitats outside the works area.

All existing grassed areas within the construction zone must be cut to 300mm high (ankle height) on the first day then a further cut under ecological supervision must be undertaken from the road towards the retained 35m buffer. All grassed areas must be made as short as possible, construction should happen the following day or the grass maintained very short until construction starts.

The area for habitat degradation is shown in fig. 3.

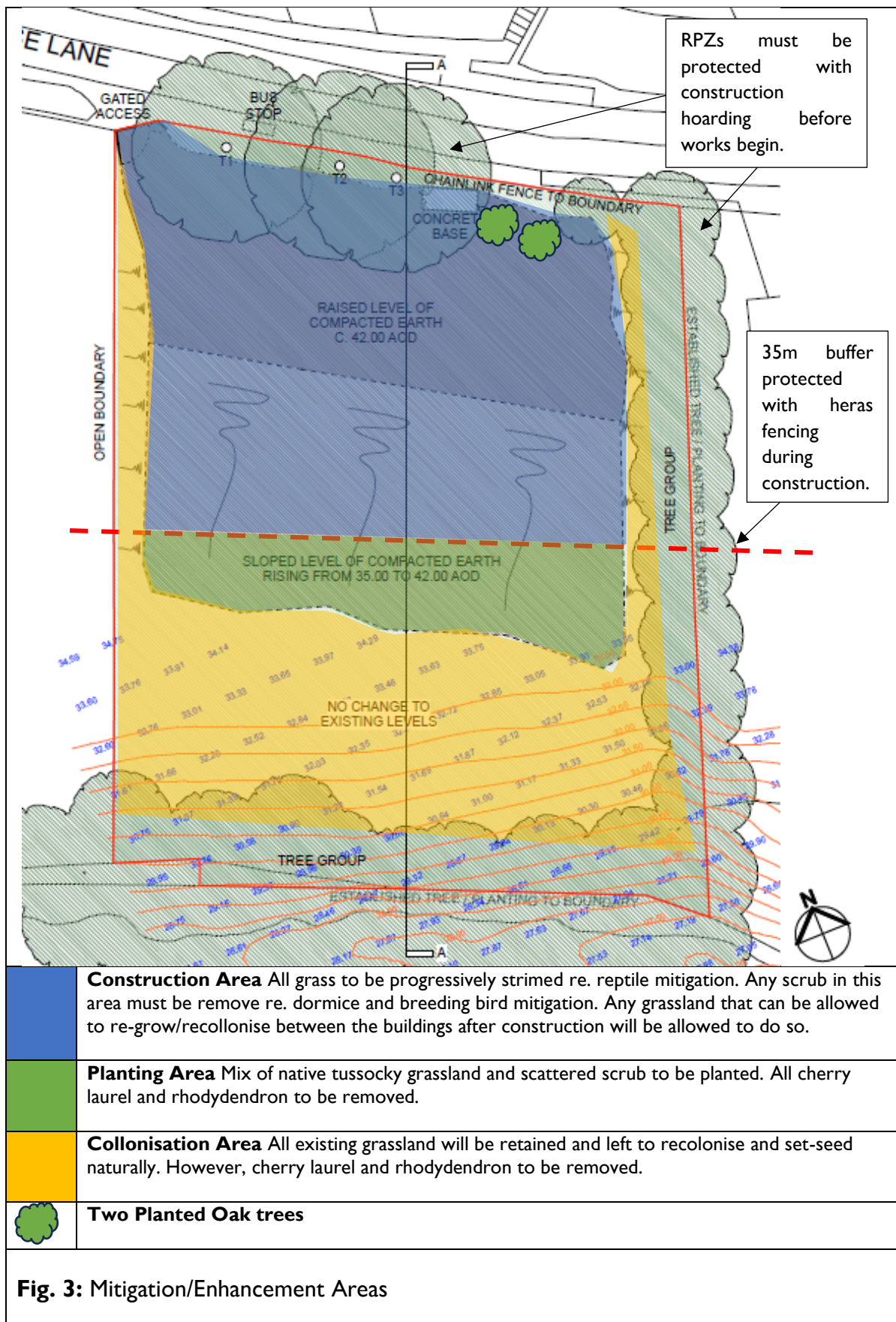
6.8 Hazel dormouse

There is a very low risk that dormice could be encountered on site during works.

The proposed clearance of scrub on the eastern and western margins will proceed in accordance with precautionary methodology to ensure that the species is safeguarded from harm. Scrub clearance works will be undertaken as a single stage clearance in May to September/October. This one stage

clearance will allow all scrub vegetation to be cleared in one operation. The vegetation clearance will be undertaken in a single direction with the noise of the brush-cutters encouraging any dormice present to safely move away from the working area and into adjacent suitable habitat south towards Pilands Copse SNCI. If dormice are discovered, then the works will stop immediately, and Natural England will be contacted for further advice, and this may result in a European Protected Species licence application being obtained.

The root balls of the cut scrub must be removed by November of the same year. If the scrub removal happens during the bird breeding season an ecologist must be present.



4. Enhancements

Two bird boxes will be installed. One on a mature oak, T2 one on the outbuilding, above the refuse store as shown in figure 4. The oak tree box will be a standard woodcrete bird box such as [Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Box | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#) the bird box on the outbuilding must be a woodstone open nest box such as [Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Open Nest Box | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#) The nestboxes must be sited between 1.5 and 3m high.

Three kent bat boxes will be fitted onto T3, one facing east, one, south and one west. Such as [Eco Kent Bat Box | NHBS Practical Conservation Equipment](#) as indicated on fig. 4. These must be placed at a height between 4m and 6m.

A native planting scheme will be planted against the new retaining wall and will include a non-intervention grass mix such as <https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/meadow-mixtures-for-specific-soils/tussock-mixture/> with scattered native scrub species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and field maple. This can utilise a native hedgerow mix but the scrub species should be planted individually with approximately 5m or more between each plant. In both cases suppliers' guidelines must be followed for establishment then the area can be left to develop naturally.

Rhododendron and cherry laurel must be removed from the planting scheme area and areas around the perimeter of the site. Guidance for rhododendron removal can be found here [managing_and_controlling_rhododendron.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) Cherry laurel can be removed in a similar way or both can be removed by a professional contractor.

The remaining grassland around the perimeters of the site and towards the bottom and within the buffer will be allowed to grow and set seed, supporting an abundance of invertebrates which in turn will support a range of fauna.

There will be native planting along the road, this will include two oak trees in the gap as indicated in fig. 3.

At least two log piles will be created in suitable areas across the site and include partially buried logs that will provide a deadwood habitat resource for invertebrate species, such as stag beetle which were recorded in good numbers within 1km of the site. There are piles of logs already on site these should

either be retained if outside the construction zone or moved into the 35m buffer or along the retained area on the eastern side.

5. Monitoring

Photographs will be taken of the following features, compiled and sent to the LPA, one year after the completion of the works:

- Construction area after the progressive strim to move reptiles.
- Heras Fencing along the edge of the 35m wide buffer strip erected prior to construction.
- RPZs protected with hoarding.
- Bat boxes in T3.
- Bird boxes on outbuilding and T2.
- The native planting area, post-planting.
- The two oak trees.
- Log piles.

