

1 VINYL SQUARE

THE OLD VINYL FACTORY

Joseph
Homes.

THE OLD
VINYL FACTORY

rps

DESK BASED

ECOLOGY REPORT

NOVEMBER 2019



1 VINYL SQUARE, BLYTH ROAD, HAYES

Ecological Appraisal Report

ECO00926 1 Vinyl Square,
Blyth Road, Hayes
Ecological Appraisal
2
30th October 2019

1 VINYL SQUARE: ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL REPORT

Quality Management

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- RPS were commissioned by Joseph Homes to undertake an Ecological Appraisal of 1 Vinyl Square, Blyth Road, Hayes. This comprised a desk study, review of previous ecological data, and review of third-party photographs which assessed the potential of the site to support species of conservation concern or other species which could present a constraint to the development of the site.
- The proposals involve a mixed-use residential-led development for 134 homes and 395 m² GIA of commercial floor space.
- RPS undertook a survey of the wider site including the 1 Vinyl Square site in 2011 and 2012 and the site was assessed as having low ecological value. The only potential ecological constraint identified was nesting Feral Pigeon. A number of buildings have since been demolished and new buildings are being constructed as part of the approved Masterplan. The 1 Vinyl Square site (the Application Site) was cleared of buildings and surrounded by hoarding.
- At present, the site comprises bare ground and hard standing, and is therefore considered to have negligible ecological value.
- Soft landscaping will be incorporated within the proposed development in accordance with the principles set out in the Design & Access Statement which includes details on the proposed landscaping proposals. Detailed species lists for planting will be produced post-permission as part of the detailed design stage and submitted pursuant to the pre-commencement of works condition process. Plant species will include species with a known attraction to wildlife, particularly invertebrates and birds.
- Further enhancements will be provided in the form of bird boxes suitable for House Sparrow and Black Redstart. Both species are Priority Species in the London Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), and the provision of nesting opportunities for these species will therefore potentially contribute towards LBAP targets.
- The soft landscaping and bird boxes will provide an overall positive biodiversity gain for the site compared with the existing baseline.

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1 INTRODUCTION

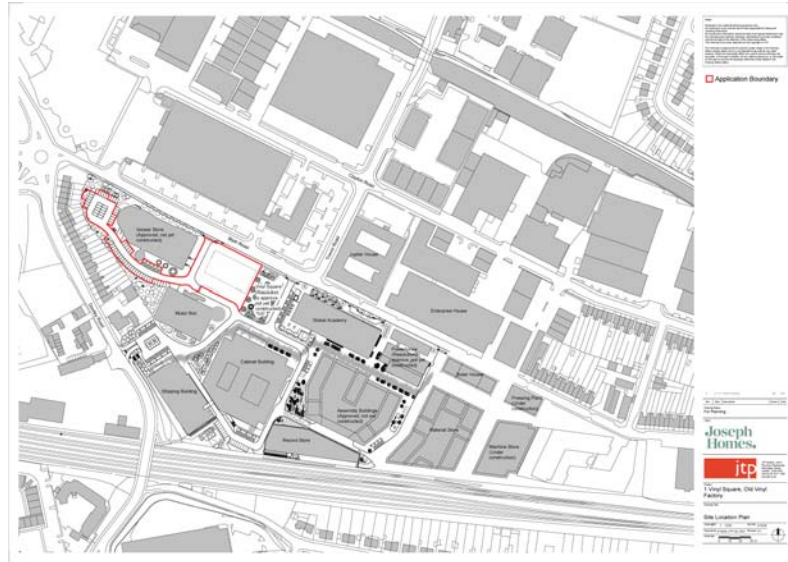
1.1 Purpose and Scope

- 1.1.1 RPS was commissioned by Joseph Homes to undertake an Ecological Appraisal (EA) of 1 Vinyl Square, Blyth Road, Hayes.
- 1.1.2 To undertake an assessment of the ecological impact of the proposals, a desk study was undertaken along with a review of previous ecology reports and third-party recent photographs of the site. This method of evaluation has been agreed by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to provide an up-to-date assessment of the site which supports the planning application.
- 1.1.3 The EA aims to:
- undertake a desk-based review of designated sites and records of protected species and other species that could present a constraint;
 - assess the habitats present on site;
 - assess the site for potential to support protected species or other species that could present a constraint, and make appropriate recommendations for further survey work if necessary;
 - provide outline options for mitigation measures as appropriate; and
 - make recommendations for appropriate biodiversity enhancements in line with national and local planning policy.
- 1.1.4 This report pertains to these results only; recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist and therefore the view of RPS. The surveys and desk-based assessments undertaken as part of this review and subsequent report including the Ecological Appraisal Notes are prepared in accordance with the British Standard for Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BS42020:2013).

1.2 Study Area and Zone of Influence

- 1.2.1 The site is located 1 Vinyl Square, The Old Vinyl Factory, Blyth Road, Hayes, London, UB3 1SY. The National Grid co-ordinates for the centre of the site are TQ 094 794.
- 1.2.2 The site is 0.45 ha in size, and was cleared of buildings over a decade ago (third-party information).
- 1.2.3 The site location is shown on Figure 1.

Figure 1: Site Location



1.2.4 The term Zone of Influence (Zoi) is used to describe the geographic extent of potential impacts of a proposed development. The Zoi is determined by the nature of the development and also in relation to designated sites, habitats or species which might be affected by the proposals.

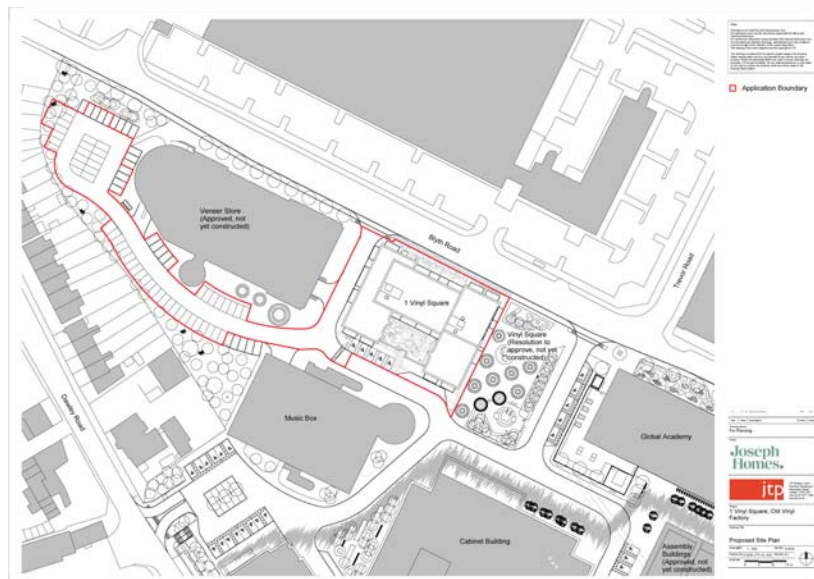
1.2.5 For this site, the Zoi is considered to be within the site boundary only.

1.3 Development Proposals

1.3.1 The proposals involve a mixed-use residential-led development for 134 homes and 395 m² GIA of commercial floor space. For more details refer to the Design & Access Statement.

1.3.2 The proposed site plan is provided in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Proposed Plan



1.4 Legislation and Policy

1.4.1 Relevant legislation, policy guidance and both Local and National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are referred to throughout this report where appropriate.

1.4.2 The relevant articles of legislation are:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019);
- ODPM Circular 06/2005 (retained as Technical Guidance on NPPF, 2019);
- Local planning policies;
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; and
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

National Planning Policy Framework

1.4.3 The latest iteration of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It is a material consideration in planning decisions.

1.4.4 The NPPF states that there must be a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 11) and that applications for housing should be considered in the context of that presumption.

Emerging Planning Policy

1.4.5 Following its Examination in Public, an updated Draft London Plan was released in July 2019. The Current 2016 London Plan is still the adopted Development Plan, but the Draft London Plan is a material consideration in planning decisions, and should be given weight in decision making, given it has been subject to independent examination. Adoption of the draft London Plan is expected in early 2020. It is noted that the draft London Plan includes a new Opportunity Area for Hayes, which includes the delivery of 4,000 new homes and 1,000 jobs.

1.4.6 In terms of local policies, the Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 (HLPP2) consists of a Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD), Site Allocations and Designations DPD and a Proposals Map. These DPDs have been through Examination (with no issues raised in relation to TOVF area and associated proposed designations/allocations) and are due for adoption in early 2020; they are therefore to be given weight in decision making.

Key Planning Policies and Guidance

1.4.7 The framework table below identifies the key policies and guidance relevant to biodiversity and the proposed development at 1 Vinyl Square.

	NPPF	London Plan (adopted)	Draft London Plan	LB Hillingdon draft Local Plan Part 2
Other Environmental Issues Including Noise, Biodiversity and Trees	Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment	5.3 Sustainable design and construction 7.14 Improving Air Quality 7.19 Biodiversity and Access to Nature	G1 Green infrastructure G5 Urban greening G6 Biodiversity and access to nature G7 Trees and woodlands G9 Geodiversity	DMHB14: Trees and Landscaping

The London BAP

- 1.4.8 The London BAP was prepared in the London Biodiversity Partnership, which is formed of statutory bodies, local nature conservation organisations, public institutions and businesses. The BAP aims to protect and enhance the London's biodiversity, ensuring that rare species are maintained and that common species remain common and in so doing, contribute to the maintenance of national and global biodiversity. It also aims to enable the local community to be in contact with nature, especially those that do not have ways to access the countryside.
- 1.4.9 In order to achieve the above objectives, the BAP has identified a number of habitat and species of nature conservation importance taking into account the UK BAP, and targets and actions have been set up to be implemented for their enhancement.

2 METHODS

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 Ecological records within a 1 km radius of the site were requested from GiGL London's biological records centre. Data requests were limited to records for protected species recorded within the last ten years and sites of nature conservation interest within 1 km of the site. This included a review of existing statutory sites of nature conservation interest, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Area of Conservation (SACs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), and non-statutory sites, such as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs).
- 2.1.2 Locations of statutory designated sites were accessed via the government 'MAGIC' website (MagicMap, 2019).
- 2.1.3 A 1:25,000 OS map was used to identify nearby features such as ponds or green corridors that could provide habitat or connectivity to other areas.

2.2 Review of Previous Ecological Appraisal

- 2.2.1 A review of the previous ecological report(s) undertaken by RPS along with third-party photographs were evaluated for their ecological value of the site; this approach was agreed with the Local Planning Authority as the site had been cleared and remained undeveloped.

2.3 Impact Appraisal

- 2.3.1 This ecological assessment identifies sites, habitats, species, and other features on the site that are of ecological value, based on factors such as legal protection, statutory or non-statutory site designations (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Local Wildlife Sites) or scarcity.
- 2.3.2 This ecological appraisal was undertaken in general accordance with current good practice Guidelines from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017). This form of ecological investigation is intended to provide a rapid assessment of the ecological features present, or potentially present, on a site and its surrounding area (the zone of influence – see above) in relation to this project.
- 2.3.3 The primary objectives are:
- to identify any likely ecological constraints associated with this project;
 - to identify any mitigation measures likely to be required;
 - to identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform a comprehensive Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA); and,
 - to identify any opportunities offered by this project to deliver ecological enhancements, in reference to both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Planning Authority (LPA) policies relating to biodiversity.
- 2.3.4 In appraising any impacts, the review considers the client's site proposals and any subsequent recommendations made are proportionate and appropriate to the site and have considered the Mitigation Hierarchy as identified below:
- Avoid:** Provide advice on how the development may proceed by avoiding impacts to any species or sites by either consideration of site design or identification of an alternative option.
- Mitigate:** Where avoidance cannot be implemented, mitigation proposals are put forward to minimise impacts to species or sites as a result of the proposals. Mitigation put forward is proportionate to the site.

Compensate: Where avoidance cannot be achieved, any mitigation strategy will consider the requirements for site compensatory measures.

Enhance: The assessment refers to planning policy guidance (e.g. NPPF) to relate the ecological value of the site and identify appropriate and proportionate ecological enhancement in line with both national and local policy.

2.4 Limitations

Desk Based Assessment

- 2.4.1 The desk study data is third party controlled data, purchased for the purposes of this report only. RPS cannot vouch for its accuracy and cannot be held liable for any error(s) in these data.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 There were no statutorily designated sites within the search area. Four non-statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), were identified in the search area. None of the SINCs had connecting habitat to the proposed development and therefore would not be affected by the proposals.
- 3.1.2 A large number of records of species were obtained from the data search: a total of 1,303 protected and notable species records were identified within the search area. The closest record of any species was a Kestrel recorded 14m from the site in 2006. The closest record for a statutorily protected mammal species was 110 m for a Common Pipistrelle bat in 2015. The majority of records received were only provided with grid references of 10 km accuracy, and therefore are not summarised further. Given the lack of suitable habitat on and adjacent to the site, this is not considered to affect the accuracy of the conclusions presented within this report.
- 3.1.3 Appendix A shows the locations of non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the site as received and extracted from GiGI. Full records can be provided upon request.

3.2 Review of Previous Ecological Data

- 3.2.1 The previous report and surveys in 2011 and 2012 (RPS, 2012) undertaken across the wider Old Vinyl Factory site, which included the 1 Vinyl Square site, recorded that the majority of the site comprised buildings and hard standing, with small areas of grassland, native and introduced scrub and standing water present.
- 3.2.2 The large derelict buildings on the wider site were considered to provide potential nesting habitat for Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. A record for the species was obtained from the 2011 data search 938 m to the north. However, it was considered that the species was unlikely to be present as there was very limited foraging habitat on or adjacent to the wider site.
- 3.2.3 An inspection of Neptune House (now referred to as The Power House) found no indication that it was being used as a roost by bats. The lack of suitable features inside coupled with the extensive use by Feral pigeons reduced the suitability of the building as a bat roost. No further survey was deemed to be required. The Power House has a recent resolution to grant planning permission for extension and refurbishment of the building.
- 3.2.4 The 1 Vinyl Square part of the wider site mainly comprised hard standing with some areas of standing water in 2011/12. There were no UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats on the Application Site.
- 3.2.5 No other ecological constraints were identified.

3.3 Review of Third-Party Photographs

- 3.3.1 A review of third-party photographs submitted on 30th September 2019 illustrate the site was undeveloped and comprised hardstanding and bare ground; refer to Appendix B.

4 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4.1 Designated Sites

- 4.1.1 Four designated sites were identified within 1km; however, as the site was surrounded by several large buildings within a highly urbanised area, it is considered likely that these will provide a sufficient barrier between the proposed works and these sites of nature conservation interest. No impacts on designated sites from construction or use of the 1 Vinyl Square development would therefore occur.

4.2 Habitats and species

- 4.2.1 The majority of the western part of the site was cleared over a decade ago. The Application Site comprises bare ground and hard standing and has negligible ecological value and no potential to support protected species or other species which could present a constraint to the development. No ecological impacts from construction of the development on habitats or species would therefore occur.

5 OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY

5.1 Enhancement and Mitigation Overview

- 5.1.1 As the Application Site is currently of negligible ecological value, opportunities exist to enhance the biodiversity value of the site in conjunction with landscaping being provided on the wider site in accordance with the Masterplan.
- 5.1.2 The principal enhancement opportunity is via the provision of soft landscaping in the form of gardens, balconies, terraces and communal amenity roof spaces in accordance with the principles set out in the Design & Access Statement. The installation of nest boxes is also recommended within the site.
- 5.1.3 Construction has commenced on the wider site masterplan, and a number of buildings have been constructed near to the Application Site including the Music Box multistorey car park immediately to the south and Global Academy UTC to the east. As part of the surface car parking to the west of the Application Site, new landscaping has been installed which has created new habitats and enhanced the ecological value of this part of the wider site. The habitats provided on the Application Site will therefore provide further ecological linkage for mobile species across the wider site, enhancing the biodiversity value of the site compared to the baseline.
- 5.1.4 Linking the created habitats through soft landscaping with the surrounding green spaces would also contribute to the implementation of BAP targets in terms of enhancement of species and habitats of local and national importance.

5.2 Habitats

- 5.2.1 The principle means of enhancing the ecological value of the site will be through the inclusion of soft landscaping, through the installation of:
- Semi-mature trees;
 - Herbaceous planting;
 - Ornamental grasses;
 - Shrub planting;
 - Allotment planting;
 - Climbing plants;
 - Raised planters.
- 5.2.2 Whilst the space will be primarily for tenants and occupants to enjoy, it can also provide a valuable habitat for birds and invertebrates.
- 5.2.3 The soft landscaping will be incorporated within the proposed development in accordance with the principles set out in the Design & Access Statement which includes further details on the proposed landscaping proposals.
- 5.2.4 Detailed species lists for planting will be produced post-permission as part of the detailed design stage and submitted pursuant to the pre-commencement of works condition process. Plant species will include species with a known attraction to wildlife, particularly invertebrates and birds.

5.3 Species

Black Redstart

- 5.3.1 In the UK the Black Redstart is afforded full protection as a Schedule 1 breeding species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). It is also listed as a Red Data Book species and

is on Appendix II of the Berne Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, 1979.

- 5.3.2 The London BAP aims to promote the importance of the Black Redstart across the city and enhance habitats (where possible) to encourage its population.
- 5.3.3 To maximise opportunities for Black Redstart within the development two bird boxes suitable for Black Redstarts boxes will be provided. They will be located on the roof top and placed on screens or the sides of other structures such as lift overruns at a height of 1-1.5 m above the roof floor level (but not higher than the structures themselves).
- 5.3.4 The boxes should face somewhere between south and north-easterly (north, west and south westerly facing boxes should be avoided as they will either not get any sun, or they will be exposed to prevailing wind directions). Details of locations will be determined post-consent.

House Sparrows

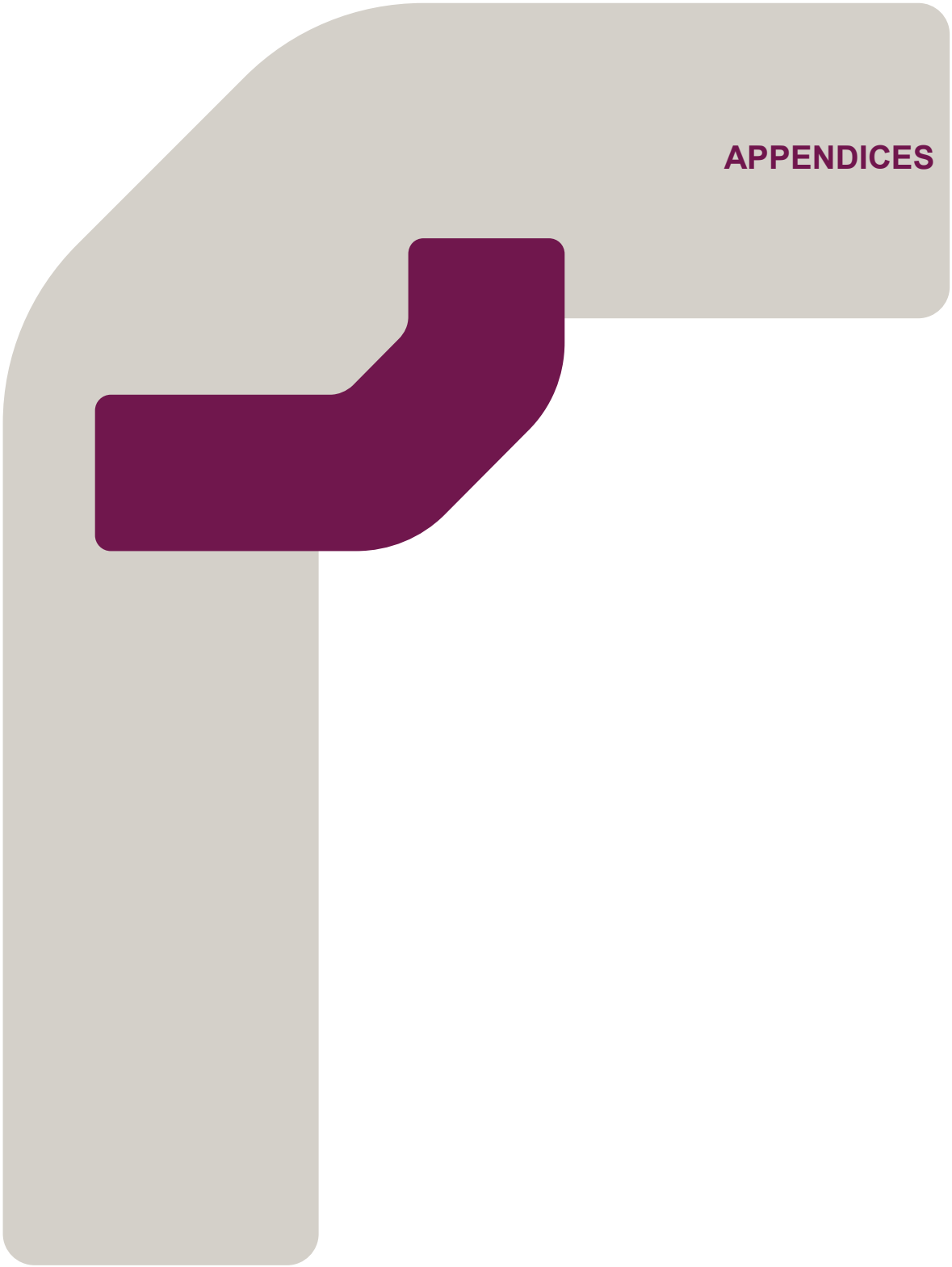
- 5.3.5 The House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, particularly those in core city areas, are occupying sub-optimal habitats, and if populations have been relying on being constantly topped up with immigrants from outside, they may now be suffering from the effects of a rural decline. Previous studies (English Nature, 2003) studies have concluded that the use of green roofs in urban areas could potentially provide alternative foraging areas and nesting sites for House Sparrows and that they could have a significant positive benefit to this species.
- 5.3.6 House Sparrows are gregarious and prefer to nest close to each other. To recreate optimal House Sparrow nesting conditions (i.e. under old house eaves), Schwegler have designed a “Sparrow Terrace” which provides room for three sparrow families under one roof. They are made from long-lasting, breathable Woodcrete with dimensions of 245 x 430 x 200 mm, a weight of 13 kg and coloured either stone or brown. They are designed for fixing to walls, although they could be placed adjacent to features such as the atrium roof or parapets, and laid directly onto ballast to prevent flooding, if fixture to vertical surfaces proved problematical. The sparrow terrace exhibits high occupation rates and can last for 25 years with little maintenance.
- 5.3.7 Three House Sparrow boxes will be provided. Details of locations will be determined post-consent.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Application Site comprises bare ground and hard standing with negligible ecological value.
- 6.2 No adverse impacts on designated sites, habitats or protected species would occur as a result of the construction or use of the proposed development on the Application Site.
- 6.3 The creation of various types of soft landscaping proposed for the Application Site, as set out in the Design & Access statement will provide an overall ecological enhancement compared with the existing baseline. Plant species will include species with a known attraction to wildlife, particularly invertebrates and birds. The habitats will also complement habitats created elsewhere on the wider site and improve connectivity across the site for mobile species such as invertebrates and birds.
- 6.4 The provision of nest boxes for House Sparrow and Black Redstart has the potential to contribute towards London BAP targets for these species.
- 6.5 Overall therefore the development of the 1 Vinyl Square site will deliver a net gain for biodiversity.

REFERENCES

- CIEEM (2016). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
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- JNCC (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat survey: a technique for environmental audit* (revised reprint). Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- RPS (2011). *Phase 1 Habitat and Ecological Scoping Survey Report: The Gatefold Building, Hayes*. JPP2700-R-001c. RPS, St Ives, Cambridgeshire.

A large, light beige graphic on the left side of the page, shaped like a stylized hand holding a pen. The hand is open, with the thumb and index finger forming a loop. A dark maroon pen is positioned horizontally, held between the thumb and index finger. The pen has a rounded tip and a slightly tapered body.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Designated Sites – 1km

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- Boundaries - polygon features
- 1km from site boundary
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Rev	Description	By	CS	Date



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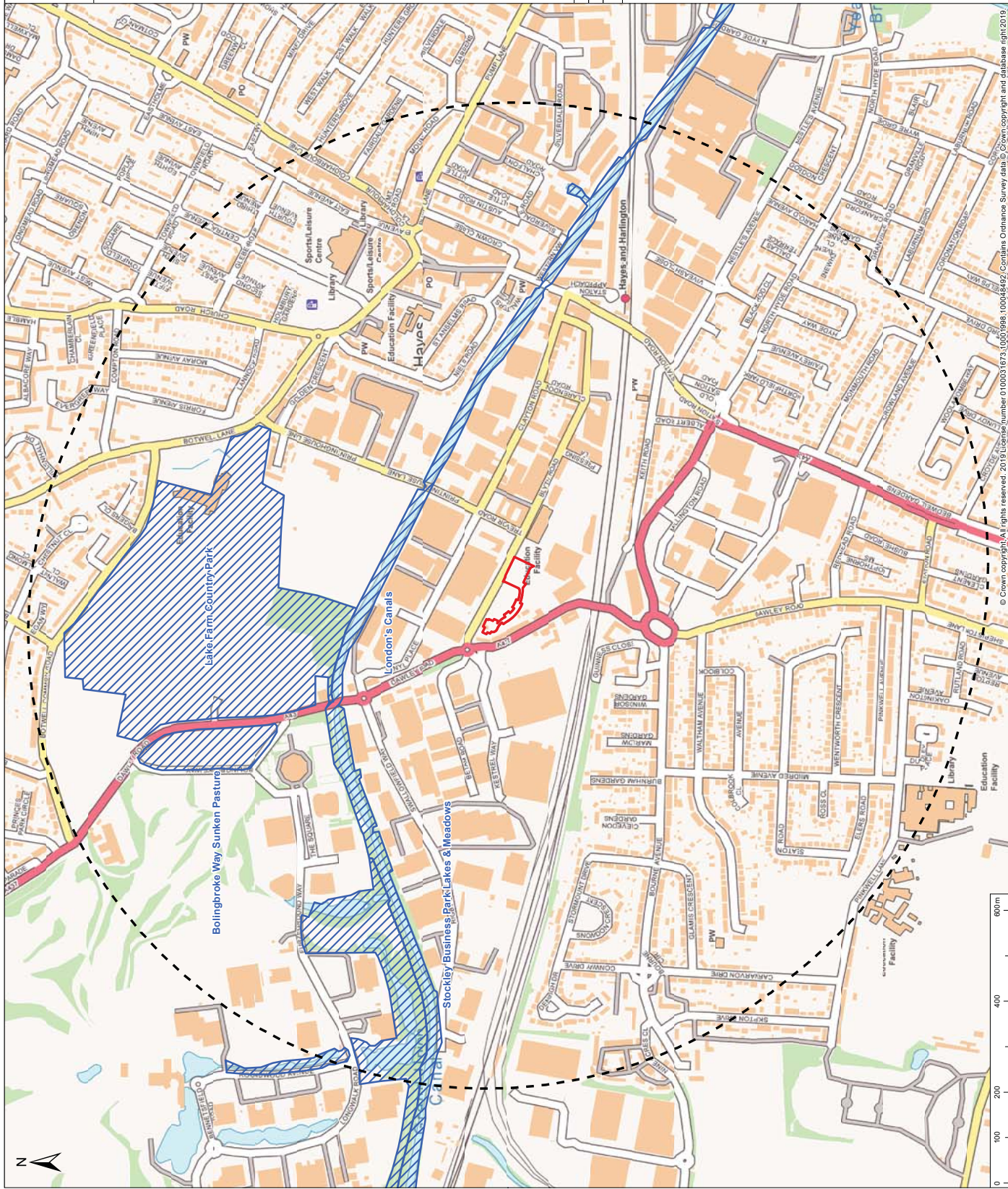
Client Joseph Homes

Project 1 Vinyl Square

Title Designated sites with 1km

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1 02

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Appendix B

Photographs





