17th February 2025

To Paul aBarrow

New Barn Nursery

Broadford Bridge Road

West Chiltington

West Sussex

UPDATE WALKOVER OVER SURVEY - TECHNICAL NOTE

NEW BARN NURSERY, BROADFORD BRIDGE ROAD, WEST CHILTINGTON, WEST SUSSEX,

CENTRED ON NGR: TQ 09683 21095

1.1 This technical note provides the findings of an update walkover survey of land at New Barn Nursery, Broadford Bridge Road, West Chiltington, West Sussex, centred on NGR: TQ 09683 21095. A previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of the site had been conducted by Lizard Landscape Design and Ecology Ltd on the 21st February 2019.

1.2 This aims of this technical note was to assess the continued validity of the previous ecological survey, based on an updated site visit. Reports and site survey are normally considered valid for 18 – 24 months following the site survey. Therefore, this update survey was required. This document should be read in conjunction to the previous survey report as detailed above.

Survey Methodology

1.3 The update ecological survey walkover was carried out at the site on 11th April 2024 to cover the works footprint and a 30metre buffer either side to account for evidence of [redacted] The habitats were assessed in accordance BS 42020 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development and broadly followed the 'Extended Phase 1' methodology as set out in the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Managements (CIEEM) Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment and the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

Surveyor

1.4 This report and assessment has been carried out by Richard Law BSc MRes CEnv MCIEEM FLS. Richard has been undertaking ecological survey work within the last 18 years on a number of differing locations throughout the United Kingdom for a variety of protected species, including bats (Class 2 2015-12576), reptiles, amphibians including great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) (Class 1 2016-20290) and terrestrial mammals including dormice (Class 1 2015-13188) and birds including barn owl (CL29/00236). Richard is also qualified in track and sign and trailing *via* an international system of assessment (*www.trackercertification.com*) and is therefore considered as competent in identifying the sign of a majority of the fauna found in the UK and can be considered as competent in assessing the presence/ likely absence of these species.

1.5 ***Figure 1: Site Location***

1.6 ***Table 1: Statutory Protected Sites***

Site	Reason for Designation	Location
Coneyhurst Cutting Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	At this site the western embankment of the A272 road cutting exposes the Paludin Limestone (BGS Bed 4) of the Lower Weald Clay Formation (Wealden)	3.2km North

1.7 There was a single statutory designate site within the search area. This was primarily designated for the geological interest and is not considered to be likely impacted by the proposed development works.

1.8 ***Table 2: Non-Statutory Protected Sites***

Site	Location
Cattlestone Farm Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)	1.0km southeast

1.9 This site was 1.0km away from the site and the small-scale development works are not considered likely to impact the integrity of this protected site.

Surrounding Habitats

1.10 The site survey area was situated within rural West Sussex and formed part of a larger works yard and agricultural unit. The surrounding land use was primarily agricultural (pasture), with hedgerow and tree lines demarcating the field boundaries. To the south were works buildings and storage sheds within bare ground and hard standing. There were some other farm estates to the east and west, with associated land being use for this activity There was a block of woodland (priory habitat) approximately 300m to the southeast.

Habitats Present

1.11 The habitats present were the same habitats present onsite as had been previously described. These were bare-ground, improved grassland (now called modified grassland), scrub, intact species poor hedgerow and standing water – pond. The species composition of most these habitats was consistent with the previous findings of the 2019 report. The species present within the modified grassland was slightly different with this species composition as below. The management of this habitat remained reasonably consistent with that previously described (grazing), but the change is likely due to the difference in the time of year of the

survey, with this update survey being carried out closer to the time when flowering parts are more apparent. The ground of the grassland area was very wet underfoot.

1.12 Modified Grassland*:* While dominated by perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), other species were occasionally present. These were: common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), common comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), tormentil (*Potemtilla erecta*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense),* cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*), horsetail (*Equisetum arvense),* bugle (*Ajuga reptans*), white dead nettle (*Lamium album*) and common vetch (*Vicia sativa*).

1.13 ***Table 3: Photos of Habitats Present***

Plate 1: Pond within brick wall	***Plate 2: Modified grassland with hedgerow to the rear***
	
Plate 3: Adjacent scrub and hedgerow	***Plate 4: Bat roost potential trees***
	

Plate 5:Bare ground at site entrance	*Plate 6:Bare ground and storage units*
	

Potential for Protected Species

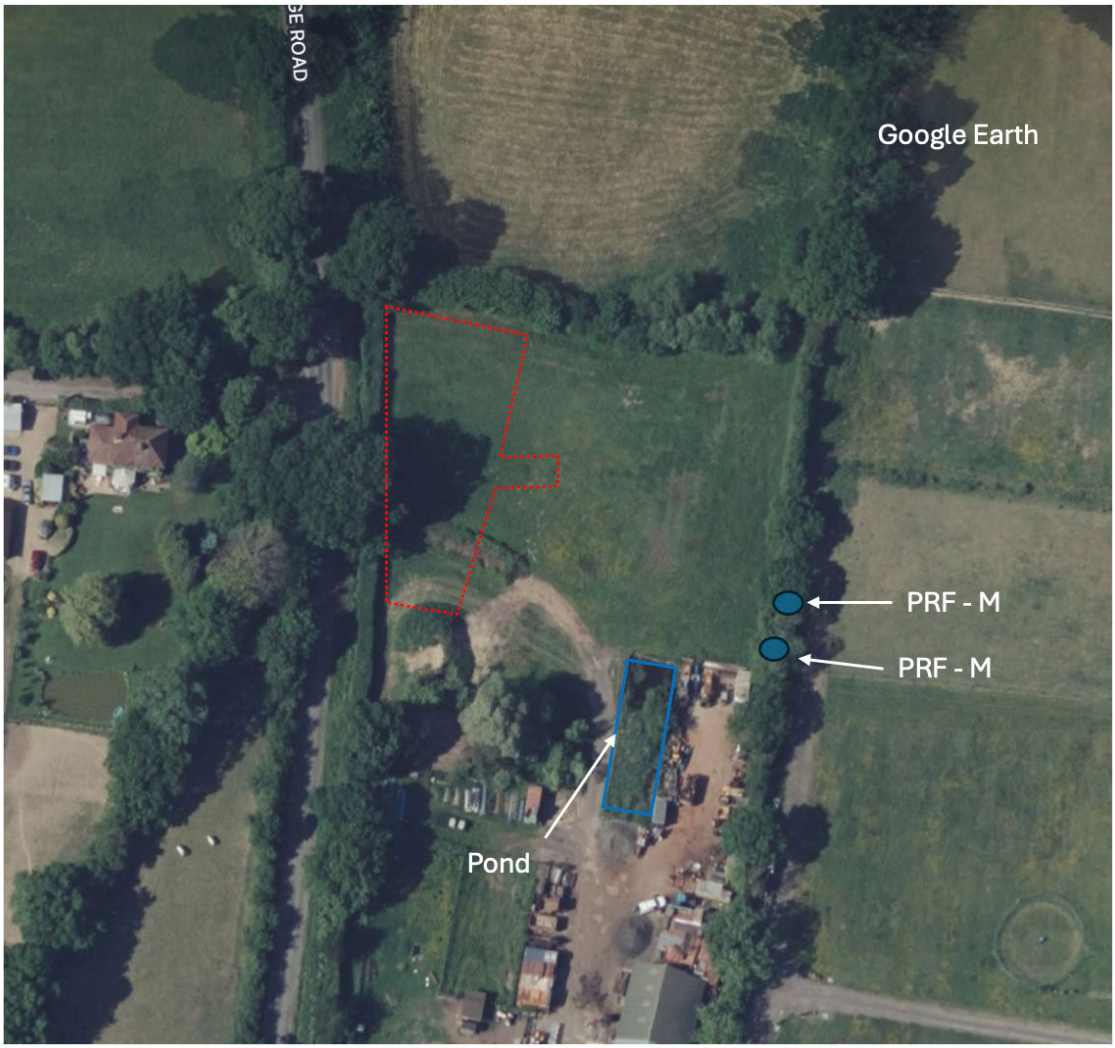
1.14 There was a pond within close proximity of the development footprint. The habitat suitability of this pond had been categorised as average, with a score of 0.66. The habitats were described as sub-optimal for great crested newt within the survey area, notably with the pond being within a brick wall which would limit the accessibility of amphibians from this water body to the surrounding habitats. The site was relatively isolated within the Broadford Bridge Road to the west and Harboltes Road to the east. There was not any significant network of ponds within the immediate surrounding landscape that could potentially support a population of great crested newt.

1.15 The ground was very wet under foot and was likely subject to very regular flood events. This is likely to severely limit the ability of reptile species to colonise this area.

1.16 There was not any evidence [redacted] observed within the site boundary and there were not any buildings that could offer bat roosting potential There were two pedunculate oaks (*Quercus robur*) along the hedgerow within the south-eastern corner of the site survey area, which exhibited features that bats could potentially roost within. These being woodpecker holes, cracks, splits and rot holes. These were classified as Potential Roost Feature (PRF) – M.

1.17 The hedging could potentially support dormice, but this is not to be affected by any of the proposed works and is outside of the development footprint.

1.18 ***Figure 2: Location of Bat Potential Trees and Pond (Works Area in Red)***



1.19 The recommendation and conclusions made by the previous report remain valid as the condition on site have not changed significantly over the time period between that survey (2019) and this update survey.

Great Crested Newt and Reptiles

1.20 It is recommended that the grass be kept short, as was recommended previously. This would prevent a mature sward developing which would then become favourable for colonisation by great crested newt and reptile species.

1.21 Due to the presence of a pond within close proximity to the site, while isolated by a brick wall, it is recommended that an environmental DNA (eDNA) survey is carried out on this water body to check for presence/ likely absence of great crested newt. This survey would be conducted from mid-April to late June. This would then further inform this application as to any additional measures to both protect this habitat

and to ensure that impacts on great crested newt are limited. If this species are present within the pond, then further surveys would be conducted to ascertain population levels. These would comprise of six bottle trapping surveys conducted between the months of March to mid-June.

1.22 District Licencing would also be an option with regards to this pond, depending on the costs associated with the application of this. It would, initially, be pertinent to conduct eDNA surveys for great crested newt prior to this.

Bats

1.23 The two oak trees that exhibited potential for roosting bats around outside of the works impact zone. Therefore, these trees are to be retained. Should this change, then three emergence surveys would be carried out in these trees, during the bat activity season (May to August/ September). Two of the surveys would be conducted during the bat maternity season (May to August). If a bat roost in found within these trees and is to be impacted, as a result, of the works, then licence from Natural England would be required.

1.24 To preserve the bat foraging habitat locally, any lighting installed as a result of this development will conform to the specifications which are outlined within BCT Guidance Note (2023). This will reduce any light pollution that could impact nocturnal activity of fauna, namely bat species, some of which are extremely sensitive to light pollution. Light spill into adjacent habitats will be reduced and avoided by the following:

- *All luminaries will lack UV elements; metal halide and fluorescent sources will be avoided,*
- *A warm white light spectrum on external lighting will be adopted (<2700kelvin) to reduce the blue light component,*
- *LED luminaries will be used where a sharp cut off is required to avoid light spill into adjacent habitat,*
- *External luminaries will feature wavelengths higher that 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats,*
- *Column heights of external lighting will be limited,*
- *Luminaries will be mounted on the horizontal plane, with no upwards tilt,*
- *Security lighting will be set on motion sensors and on short timers (<1min).*

1.25 The ecological enhancements that were previously recommended should also be incorporated into the developments. These were detailed as follows:

- *Retain and enhancement the hedgerows around the periphery of the site boundary with additional planting,*
- *Plant wildflower meadow species to enhance the herbaceous species present,*

- *Incorporate at least one bat box within the newly built residential building and at least one swift/ swallow nest box.*

1.26 The site can be considered, overall, as having a low ecological value. The measures to keep the grass sward cut to below 50mm in height will ensure that protected species will avoid colonising this habitat. Furthermore, to ensure that the construction phase doesn't not impact any protected species, it is recommended that Heras fencing be installed between the hedgerow and tree habitats. This would ensure that these areas are protected during the construction phase.

Signed

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References

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BCT (2023b) Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK – Bats and the Built Environment Series.

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Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (Eds) (2004). Bat Workers' Manual (3rd Ed.). JNNC, Peterborough.

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