

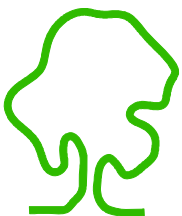
WHITEOAK DEVELOPMENTS LTD



**THREAL'S COTTAGES, WEST CHILTINGTON,
PULBOROUGH, RH20 2RF**

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



September 2024



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Environmental Assessment Services Ltd

REPORT DATA SHEET

Requirement	Data
Report Reference	725/GB/WhiteoakDevs/Threals/PEA
Date	September 2024
Client	Whiteoak Developments Ltd
Report type	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Purpose	Submission to Planning
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WHITEOAK DEVELOPMENTS LTD

THREAL'S COTTAGES, WEST CHILTINGTON, PULBOROUGH, RH20 2RF

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

September 2024

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Environmental Assessment Services Ltd has been appointed to prepare a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in relation to the proposed redevelopment of land at Threal's Cottages, to the east of Threal's Lane, in West Chiltington.

The site (as existing) comprises two adjoining cottages with surrounding land including two outbuildings. It is proposed to demolish the existing cottages and outbuildings and develop 4No. residential dwellings with associated access from Threal's Lane, parking and landscaping.

The aim of this report is to collate preliminary, baseline information on the conservation and ecological status of the site in terms of habitats and species within the framework of current environmental legislation and provide recommendations in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the site, where appropriate.

The assessment comprised consultation with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre to obtain records of protected, rare and notable species within 1 km of the site, consultation with Horsham District Council regarding Tree Preservation Orders for trees within and adjacent to the site, and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) undertaken on 6 August 2024 to identify features of ecological value and the site's likely potential to support protected and other notable species.

Consultation with Horsham District Council has confirmed that there are no trees within or adjacent to the site which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Assessment of the site, along with a review of consultation data provided by Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, found the site to be of generally low ecological value, but improving due to a lack of recent management.

The proposed redevelopment will include the demolition of existing buildings considered to have some potential for use by bats. Whilst no evidence of the presence of bats was identified during the site walkover assessment, there remains some uncertainty. Therefore further surveying is recommended to confirm presence / likely absence.

Protection measures have been recommended for trees, hedging, birds, amphibians and reptiles, together with standard protection measures to be implemented during clearance for the protection of mammals including [REDACTED] hedgehogs which could access the site during development works.

Should bats be found to use the site, it is considered that there will be adequate scope to provide compensation habitat. Based on this understanding, and the findings of this assessment, it is concluded that the proposed redevelopment of the site from two to three

residential dwellings should have no significant detrimental impact on the ecological value of the site.

WHITEOAK DEVELOPMENTS LTD

THREAL'S COTTAGES, WEST CHILTINGTON, PULBOROUGH, RH20 2RF

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

September 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The following report, prepared by Environmental Assessment Services Limited, is a preliminary assessment of the baseline status of the ecology of land at Threal's Cottages in West Chiltington, West Sussex.

The site comprises two adjoining cottages (residential dwellings) with surrounding land and two small outbuildings. The Ordnance Survey map reference for the centre of the site is TQ 09280 16502. See Appendix A for the site location and existing site plans.

It is proposed to demolish the existing dwellings and outbuildings and redevelop the site to comprise 4No. residential dwellings with associated access from Threal's Lane, parking and landscaping. See Appendix B for the proposed site plans.

1.2 Aim of the Report

The aim of the report is to collate preliminary, baseline information on the conservation and ecological status of the site in terms of habitats and species, within the framework of current environmental legislation.

The report also evaluates the potential of the site to support protected species, in particular for:

- Animals and plants listed under Schedules 1 and 5, and Schedule 8, respectively, of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) as amended, and those European protected species listed under Schedules 2 and 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- Plants and animals with Red Data Book¹ or Notable² status.
- Plants, animals and habitats identified as Priority Species / Habitats or Species / Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation in England (formerly UK Biodiversity Action Plan)³.

¹ The World Conservation Union Red List of threatened species provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on taxa (species or group of related species) evaluated to determine their relative risk of extinction.

² Notable (or Nationally Scarce) species occur in 16 – 100 10 km squares in Britain.

³ Species derived from Section 41 list of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 + the hen harrier.

Where the site includes features of ecological value, and/or has potential for protected species, an assessment of the likely impacts of the proposal is made, together with recommendations for any further surveying, mitigation and enhancement as considered appropriate.

1.3 Legislation

The legislation relevant to this study is:

- i. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which transposes into UK law the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (known as the “Bern Convention”) and the Birds Directive 2009.
- ii. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) 2000, which strengthens the legal protection for threatened species.
- iii. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, which through Section 41 provides a list of habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity conservation (Priority Habitats and Species) in England.
- iv. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, which transposed the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law.
- v. Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which safeguards both the animals and their setts.
- vi. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (made under section 97 of The Environment Act 1995), which make provisions for the protection of important hedgerows.
- vii. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which makes requirements for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the planning system.

1.4 Assessment Method

This assessment has been prepared generally in accordance with the CIEEM EcIA guidelines, as applicable, as recognised by the British Standard on Biodiversity BS42020:2013.

The assessment was undertaken in two stages:

- a) Consultation: comprising data searches by Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) and Horsham District Council.
- b) Preliminary ecological appraisal (walkover survey) carried out on 6 August 2024 to:
 - Assess the baseline status of the site.

- Identify its use by species of flora and fauna protected or controlled under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and associated European legislation.
- Identify notable features of interest that should or could be retained and/or enhanced as part of the proposals.

2. CONSULTATION AND BASELINE DATA SEARCH

2.1 Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre Data Search

2.1.1 Data obtained from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) provided information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites and records of protected and notable species within the search area. The search was conducted for a 1 km radius surrounding the Ordnance Survey grid reference TQ 09280 16502. The search area was selected based on the scale and likely impacts of the proposed development.

2.1.2 The statutory and non-statutory designated sites identified by SxBRC within 1 km of the site are set out in section 3.2 below, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on these sites. Mitigation, where appropriate, is recommended in section 4.

2.1.3 Records of protected and rare species within 1 km of the site have been provided by SxBRC. These records are discussed under the protected species headings in Section 3.3 below, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on these species. Mitigation, where appropriate, is recommended in section 4.

2.2 Horsham District Council

2.2.1 Horsham District Council's online mapping service was used to identify Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) at and within the vicinity of the site. There are no individual trees at or within close proximity to the site which are protected by a TPO.

2.2.2 The woodland, known as Hardbarrow Copse, located to the north of the neighbouring property, The Gate House, is registered under a current Tree Preservation Order (TPO/0556).

3. SITE ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) was carried out on 6 August 2024. The following is based on the findings of that assessment, together with a review of information provided by the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) and Horsham District Council. Photographs taken during the site survey are provided in Appendix C.

3.1 Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The site is located to the east of Threal's Lane. Land extending west of Threal's Lane has been developed for residential use. Land to the north is developed for residential use and new residential dwellings are being developed on the eastern side of Threal's Lane both to the north and south of the site. Land to the east of Threal's Lane comprises pasture adjoining woodland.
- 3.1.2 The site sits in an elevated position with land to the north, east and west falling rapidly. A slope and retaining wall lies along the western boundary of the site with Threal's Lane. There is a steep access into the site to a levelled parking area for 2-3 cars within the southwest corner of the site. The northern half of the western boundary of the garden area is marked by a short section of beech hedging.
- 3.1.3 The northern boundary of the site is marked by a cherry laurel hedge, beyond which the land falls steeply to the access and parking area for the adjacent dwelling. A beech hedge lies along the boundary with the property to the south, where the ground level is roughly similar to that of the site. This area, a former farmyard to the south of the site, is presently under redevelopment for residential use.
- 3.1.4 Land to the east of the site comprises open pasture. The land within the garden area falls to the east, up to a post and wire fence, beyond which the land continues to fall. The grassland within the adjacent field at the time of our visit was rough and tussocky. There are five sycamore trees on the eastern boundary of the site.
- 3.1.5 The garden area has comprised mown lawn with a small number of ornamental shrubs and climbers, however, the lawn has not been cut this season allowing the grass and herbaceous planting to grow tall. Common Nettle has become dominant within the northeast corner of the site.
- 3.1.6 To the east of the house is a small outbuilding of block construction with a pitched roof clad in corrugated (probably asbestos) cement roofing sheets with metal frame windows and a lean-to to the north. The southeast corner remains short grass and rough ground used as hardstanding for parking, in addition to the parking area within the southwest corner of the site.
- 3.1.7 The northwest corner of the site comprises more dominant grasses and there is a sunken patio area, adjacent to which is a small outbuilding of block construction with a shallow pitched roof clad in profiled metal roofing sheets.
- 3.1.8 The cottages are two storey with a (north-south facing) pitched roof and central chimney stack. The building is of stone and brick construction, with later extensions to the rear of brick and stone construction with pitched clay tiled roofing and flat felt clad roofing.
- 3.1.9 Internally, the cottages have been gutted and the first-floor ceilings removed. The roofing is slate with a bitumen lining, wooden struts and beams. The roofing space is lit by the first-floor windows (as the ceilings have been removed) and by a loft space window in the eastern façade and a large clay tube in the western façade. There is no dividing wall within the loft space between the two cottages, so the loft

space will always have been reasonably well lit by the window and tube in the eastern and western façades. Small sections of the loft space have boarding and there are three plastic water tanks within the loft space (all dry and all empty).

3.2 Designated Sites and Priority Habitats

- 3.2.1 There are no statutory sites within 1 km of the study site. However, there numerous Sites of Special Scientific Importance outside within 5 km of the site. The closest of these is Hurston Warren which is situated approximately 1.4 km to the east of the site. There are two non-statutory sites within 1 km of the site as identified (by SxBRC): these are West Wantley Farm Meadow, a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and Jacket's Hill, a Local Geological Site (LGS), both of which are situated 540 m south and 830 m east, respectively. The proposed redevelopment of the site, from No.2 to 4No. residential dwellings, is not considered likely to have any significant impact on any statutory or non-statutory sites.
- 3.2.2 European sites include Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. These, together with Ramsar sites, are protected for their ecological significance. Proposed development should not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites. The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC (Sussex bat SACs) lie within West Sussex and the Impact Risk Zone identified by Natural England includes Horsham District. The Arun Vally SPA, SAC and Ramsar also lies within West Sussex and is within 20 km of the development.
- 3.2.3 The Mens SAC is situated approximately 8.6 km northeast of the site. Barbastelle bats are the qualifying feature of this habitat. The likely impact of the proposed development (in the absence of mitigation) on this species is considered in Section 3.3 below.
- 3.2.4 Ebernoe Common SAC is situated approximately 14 km northwest of the site. Barbastelle bats and Bechstein's bats are the qualifying feature of this habitat. The likely impact of the proposed development (in the absence of mitigation) on these species is considered in Section 3.3 below.
- 3.2.5 Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar is approximately 3.2 km west of the site. Rare and diverse plant, invertebrate and bird assemblages are the qualifying features of this habitat. Key species include Bewick's swan, Little Whirlpool Ramshorn snail and *Pseudamnicola confusa*.
- 3.2.6 There will be no direct land take from any designated (or non-designated) sites as a result of the proposed development. Designated site habitat management will not be affected by the proposed development. The potential impact of the proposed development on feature species of the European and Ramsar sites (including lighting impacts) and invasive species is considered in Section 3.3 below. The development is within the 5 km Impact Risk Zone for the Arun Valley sites. The proposed development is not considered likely to result in a significant increase in air pollution.
- 3.2.7 The site has been assessed for its potential to include or be part of (BAP) Priority Habitat as listed on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act).

3.2.8 Section 41 Habitats recorded within 1 km of the site include:

- Ancient or veteran tree
- Open water
- Traditional orchard
- Wood-pasture & parkland
- Ancient woodland
- Deciduous woodland

3.2.9 The site includes an area of grassland which has previously comprised mown lawn (residential garden habitat) but which has now become overgrown, comprising a tall grass sward with a large stand of Common Nettle. No Priority Habitats were identified within or immediately adjacent to the site.

3.2.10 Areas of deciduous woodland lie to the north and southwest of the site. Numerous bodies of water, including ponds, lie within 1 km of the site and there is good ecological connectivity through the area. The closest of these features are two adjacent ponds situated approximately 120 m to the southeast of the site. The proposed development is unlikely to have a direct impact on these habitats, however, the proposed development may affect species associated with these habitats. The potential impacts are considered in the following section of this report.

3.3 Protected and Controlled Species

3.3.1 *Trees and Hedgerows*

Within the site are a number of hedgerow features including a section of Beech hedging along the northern half of the western boundary and along the site's southern boundary. Cherry Laurel forms the site's northern boundary with the adjacent residential property. Additionally, there are five Sycamore trees on the site's eastern boundary.

The proposed new access for Plot 1 will result in the removal of the section of beech hedging along the northern half of the western site boundary. The development of this plot will also be likely to encroach on the cherry laurel hedge along the northern boundary of the site. Compensation planting, with a mix of more appropriate native shrub species along the north and east boundaries of this plot would offset this loss.

It is likely that other boundary planting may be retained under the proposed scheme, however, the proposed redevelopment works may encroach on the existing tree and shrub planting, which lies along the southern and eastern boundaries of the site, where appropriate protection measures are not implemented.

Standard tree and hedging protection measures should be implemented for all tree and hedging species to be retained during site clearance and the redevelopment of the site. See section 4.1 below.

3.3.2 *Plants*

Records indicate the presence of 21 notable plant species within 1 km of the site, together with one recorded lichen (Scarlet-Cup Lichen, *Cladonia coccifera s. lat.*) and two mosses (Rusty Fork-moss (*Dicranum spurium*) and Dense Fringe-moss (*Racomitrium ericoides*)).

The site comprises hard cover and a residential garden area which has comprised mown lawn with a small number of ornamental climbers. The site, as existing, has not been recently managed and has become 'overgrown' with a tall grass sward with common herbaceous species and an area of Common Nettle.

No notable plant communities were noted during the site walkover assessment.

The proposed redevelopment of the site will result in the loss of the existing grassland habitat. Some of this habitat is likely to be recreated, however, there is likely to be a reduction in soft landscaping within the site as a result of the proposed development.

No further botanical surveying is recommended in relation to the current proposal.

3.3.3 *Invertebrates*

Records held by Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre indicate the presence of 24 rare, notable and protected invertebrate species. These include the Sussex rare Long-winged Cone-head bush-cricket (*Conocephalus*) and Brown Hairstreak butterfly (*Thecla betulae*) which is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). There are also a number of records for Stag beetle, a UK BAP Species. Of the recorded species, a total of 18 are moth species.

The existing garden comprises an outgrown lawn area, with a small amount of ornamental planting around the house, site boundary hedging (of cherry laurel and beech) and five young sycamore trees. The grassland, in its current state is likely to be used by a range of invertebrate species suited to grassland habitats and likely to use the rough grassland in the adjacent field. However, the current condition of the grassland within the site is not representative of its long-standing condition (a residential garden). The site, when managed as a garden habitat, is unlikely to be of significant ecological value to invertebrates.

It was noted that the existing cottages appear to be used by invertebrates, probably for overwintering. A small cluster of (dead) ladybirds were noted together with 3 (dead) hornets and peacock butterfly wings (possibly predated on by the hornets). Invertebrates are considered less likely to have used the building when in occupation (by humans).

The proposed development will result in the loss of some garden planting and the existing buildings. New planting, similar to the existing planting is likely to be re-introduced post development together with new buildings, however, the new building are unlikely to offer any overwintering potential for invertebrates.

The proposed development is not considered likely to have a significant impact on the local invertebrate community in this case. However, features for overwintering should be considered to compensate for the loss.

3.3.4 *Amphibians*

Great crested newts (GCN) and natterjack toads are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), making them a European Protected Species. It is an offence (amongst other things) to: deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill an individual of the species; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Meaning that both the individual and its habitat are protected.

According to the Horsham District Council: Impact Risk Zones map (produced by Nature Space) the site appears to lie within the green/white zone, (however, the available mapping is provided at a scale which is difficult to read) suggesting that the site lies within an area designated as having low – moderate habitat suitability.

There are records of common frog, common toad, palmate and smooth newt within the search area. There are no records of GCN within the search area.

We understand that GCN surveying was undertaken at a pond approximately 900 m east of the site in 2015. Palmate and smooth newt were confirmed to be present, however, no GCN were found, suggesting the absence of GCN.

There are no water features within the site. Mapping shows three ponds and a small watercourse within 500 m of the site with the closest of these situated 120 m to the southeast of the site.

The ponds to the south of the site were subject to a Habitat Suitability Assessment in 2020. The ponds were found to be “Poor” and “Below Average”. It was concluded that the water bodies were highly unlikely to support breeding GCN.

The garden area within the site has previously been managed to garden lawn with the grass mown to a short sward. As existing, the garden area comprises a tall sward, more suited to use for foraging and shelter by amphibian species.

Based on the lack of records of GCN in the area, despite surveying efforts, the poor suitability of ponds close to the site, and the long-term management of the site as garden habitat with close mown lawn, it is considered unlikely that the site is used by GCN.

The proposed redevelopment of the site, from two cottages to three houses is not considered likely to have a significant impact on amphibians, however, standard precaution measures should still be implemented during site clearance and development works for the protection of all amphibian species (frogs, toad and newt species which have been recorded present). See section 4 below.

3.3.5 Reptiles

The more widespread reptiles; Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica*), Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), Viviparous Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and Adder (*Vipera berus*), are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). It is an offence, amongst other things, to intentionally kill or injure any individual. The more restricted species; Sand Lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) and Smooth Snake (*Coronella austriaca*), are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making them European Protected Species.

The more common reptile species, as previously mentioned, have been recorded within 1 km of the site. Most recent survey efforts (2017) have recorded Slow worm to the west of the site.

The grassland within the site, as existing, is considered to offer some potential for use by reptiles, notably slow-worm, grass snake and possibly viviparous lizard. However, when managed as a garden with short lawn, the site would have been less suitable for these species.

The redevelopment of the site will involve the loss of existing soft-landscaping, including habitat suitable for reptiles (boundary features are likely to be retained). Given the small area of the site, and the short period of time since the site has become suitable, it is not considered likely that the proposed development will have a significant impact on the local reptile population. However, there is some potential for harm to be caused to reptiles as a result of the proposed development for which protection measures will be required. See section 4 below.

3.3.6 Birds

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by UK law. It is an offence to take, kill or injure any wild bird, or to take, damage or destroy any nest (whilst being built or in use) or egg of any wild bird under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In addition to this protection, those birds and their young listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) must not be disturbed at or near the nest. Part I birds are protected at all times and Part II during the closed season only.

A summary of the notable bird species recorded within 1 km of the site and their protection status was provided by SxBRC and has been reviewed as part of this assessment.

Chicken wire netting has been installed along the soffits and within the clay tube which could otherwise provide access into the roof space for use by roosting and nesting birds. This wire netting does not appear to be a recent installation. No evidence of nesting was identified on or within the building, however, now that the fireplaces are disused it is considered possible that birds may nest in the chimney. A single feather was noted within one of the fireplaces. The existing cottages were also checked for their suitability to support barn owls. No evidence of the presence of barn owls was observed within the buildings.

Other features, including the hedging and trees within the site may be used by nesting birds during the nesting season (February to August, inclusive). The outbuildings present within the site were inaccessible during the site visit but were sealed and are not thought to be suitable for nesting birds.

It is considered that there will be no significant loss of habitat as a result of the proposed development. However, nesting birds may be disturbed by the redevelopment of the site where appropriate mitigation is not implemented. See Section 4 for recommendations.

3.3.7 *Bats*

All species of bat are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (meaning all species of bat are both UK and European Protected Species).

It is illegal to:

- Kill, injure or capture (take) bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not).
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost.

Disturbance is unlawful where bats ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear/nurture their young, hibernate or migrate is impaired or where local distribution or abundance is significantly impacted. This may occur where actions impact their roosts, flight lines or foraging areas.

Record held by SxBRC indicate the presence of seven bat species within 1 km of the site including Myotis, Pipistrelle, Long-eared, and Noctule Bats. The surrounding area is considered to include good habitat for bats. Bats are considered likely to forage within the fields and woodland to the east of the site and may also use the garden areas within the site and neighbouring properties.

The building was viewed both externally and internally for bat roosting potential and evidence of the presence of bats. It was noted that chicken wire, which appears to have been present for some time (i.e. not recently installed), is present along the soffits and gaps around the roofing including a clay tube in the western façade which provides light into the roof space.

The loft space is currently lit by the first-floor windows, but this wouldn't have been the case when the properties were occupied. The roofing space is also lit by a window in the eastern façade of the loft space and by a large clay tube in the western façade. As there is no dividing wall between the two roof voids, the roof space is and would have been well lit throughout the day. This is likely to reduce the suitability of the loft space for roosting bats. It is not known if the loft space was in regular use by people when the building was occupied so this cannot be commented on, but there was no permanent stairway and a ladder had to be used for access.

The site, as existing, comprising an area of overgrown garden together with areas of beech and cherry laurel hedging, is thought to have low potential for use by dormice.

The proposed development and future site use is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on hazel dormice. No further recommendations are given in this case.

3.3.10 *Other Protected and Notable Species*

SxBRC hold records for Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within 1 km of the site. There are no other records of notable species considered likely to be impacted by the proposed development within 1 km of the site.

The site is considered likely to be used by hedgehog as part of this species wider habitat. The proposed redevelopment of the site is not considered likely to impact this species, however, standard protection measures should be implemented during site clearance and redevelopment to prevent harm to this species. See section 4 below.

3.3.11 *Non-native Invasive Species*

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) lists those non-native species that are established in the wild, but which pose a conservation threat to native biodiversity and habitats. Schedule 9 aims to regulate further release of these species by making it a criminal offence to release them into the wild.

Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre hold records for eight plant and five animal Schedule 9 species within the site.

Recorded plant species include:

- Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*),
- Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*),
- Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Recorded Animal Species include:

- American Mink (*Neovison vison*)

SxBRC also hold records for an additional 10 species designated Sussex invasive within 1 km of the site.

Cherry Laurel (a Sussex invasive species) was identified along the site's northern boundary. Any waste material containing invasive species should be appropriately disposed of to prevent spread to the wild.

4. MITIGATION

The preliminary ecological appraisal identified some features of ecological value and habitat types of high ecological value that may potentially be used by protected species.

4.1 Trees and Hedging

Fencing should be used to protect the existing trees and hedging present along the site boundaries which are to be retained under the current proposal for the benefit of wildlife.

For both trees and hedging, the root protection area should be calculated in accordance with BS:5837. Exclusion fencing should be installed prior to commencing demolition, site clearance and ground works, and should remain in situ (and in good working order) until the main development works are completed.

Where hedging is to be removed, new hedge planting is recommended to compensate for the loss. New planting should comprise a mix of native species suited to the rural location of the site.

4.2 Planting and Invertebrates

The proposed scheme should look to minimise hard landscaping and maximise the area of soft landscaping within the site post development.

The existing boundary planting should be retained where possible and hedging should be used in preference to fencing along the boundaries of the new properties.

4.3 Amphibians and Reptiles

The proposed development will result in a reduction in the area of existing soft landscaping (garden habitat) considered unlikely to impact the local amphibian and reptile population. However, there is some potential for harm to be caused to any individuals which may be using the site during the interim period before site clearance, while normal garden management has ceased, and the site is not occupied (by people).

It is considered likely that there will be a significant delay before development works commences on site. It is therefore recommended that existing garden vegetation is subject to regular maintenance, and the grassland is regularly cut to maintain a short sward lawn, during the period prior to commencement of any development works on site. This will maintain a lower habitat suitability for amphibians and reptiles and therefore reduce the risk of harm during site clearance.

As the management of the site prior to the issue of a planning discussion cannot be guaranteed, it is recommended that an Ecological Mitigation Strategy form part of the planning conditions. The site should be reassessed when / if planning is granted, and an appropriate protection scheme prepared and approved by the Council based on the condition of the site at the time. This will ensure that reptiles and amphibians

are appropriately protected based on habitat conditions immediately prior to works commencing on site.

4.4 Birds

The proposed development of the site will include works within close proximity to existing hedging and trees which could be used by birds to nest. Any works to the existing vegetation should be scheduled outside of the bird nesting season. Where this is not possible, a check for nesting birds should be undertaken immediately prior to the start of works. Should nesting birds be confirmed to be present, works should be delayed until all chicks have fledged

4.5 Bats

Further surveying is recommended in order to ascertain how bats use the site and the likely impact of the proposed development on this species.

The existing building is considered to have potential for use by bats, however, no evidence of the presence of bats, with the exception of some potential feeding waste (butterfly wings, but no droppings), was found within the building.

The proposed development includes the demolition of the existing building which, if used by bats, will result in the loss of roosting and/or feeding perch habitat. If this is the case, compensation may be delivered within the proposed new buildings on the site.

Where appropriate provisions for bats are included within the design, any loss of bat roosting potential may be adequately compensated for, and potentially net gain of potential roosting habitat provided. Further surveying for bats will be required in order to confirm which, if any, bat species are using the site and/or the building, and how they are using the building in order to make appropriate recommendations for mitigation.

If bats use the building a licence will be required from Natural England for disturbance / loss of roosting habitat caused by the proposed development.

4.6 ██████████ Hedgehogs (and other wildlife)

Excavations, in which animals may become trapped should not be left open overnight. They should either be covered (boarded over), or a means of escape provided. Excavations should be checked every morning and, should any animals be become trapped, they should be assisted to escape, or advice should be sought from a suitably experienced ecologist / species specialist.

4.7 Non-native Invasive Species

Cherry Laurel (a Sussex Invasive species) has been identified within the site. All non-native invasive species should be appropriately dealt with to restrict their spread into the wild.

Any new planting within the site should exclude the introduction of non-native, invasive plant species.

4.8 Other Protected and Notable Species

If any new evidence of protected species is discovered whilst site clearance and construction work is in progress, Natural England should be informed immediately and appropriate advice on how to deal with the situation should be sought from a qualified ecologist.

5. ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Some ecological enhancement should be included within the development site to secure biodiversity improvement beyond that of the existing site. The following recommendations are given:

- i. Roosting and nesting features for both birds and bats should be included within the proposed redevelopment of the site. The features to be installed should include both bat boxes and nesting boxes and should be positioned onto suitable trees within the garden area and within the fabric of the proposed buildings to provide long-term roosting / nesting features within the site.
- ii. Any additional planting within the site should include a variety of native trees, shrubs, and flowering plants to increase diversity within the site, foraging habitat, and provide shelter, hibernation, and roosting opportunities. Non-native, invasive planting should be avoided.
- iii. The proposed redevelopment of the site should look to minimise hard landscaping within the site and maximise soft landscaping.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The site comprises two adjoining cottages (residential dwellings) with surrounding land and outbuildings, and a garden area. The garden area has comprised mown lawn with a small number of ornamental shrubs and climbers, however, the lawn has not been cut this season allowing the grass and herbaceous planting to grow into a tall sward with a large stand of common nettle.

6.2 The proposed development, comprising the demolition of the existing dwellings to allow for the provision of 4No. residential dwellings with associated access, parking, and landscaping, is deemed unlikely to result in a significant change of habitat within the site. However, the site in its existing condition does have potential for use by protected and notable species for which further surveying and mitigation has been recommended.

6.3 The proposed development is / is not considered likely to have a significant impact on European (SPA and SAC) or Ramsar sites, or species associated with these sites.

- 6.4 Further surveying is recommended for bats. The survey period for bats ends in September each year when bats disperse to their winter roosts. The site is most likely to be used as a summer roost with no identified winter roosting potential. Therefore, further surveying should be scheduled in for spring 2025.
- 6.5 Protection measures have been recommended for amphibians, reptiles, birds and bats, together with standard procedure protection measures during clearance for mammals including [REDACTED] hedgehogs which could access the site during development works. It is recommended that a Mitigation Strategy is prepared as a Condition of planning, based on the Condition of the site at the point planning permission is granted, as it is considered likely that there will be a significant delay before a planning decision is made.
- 6.6 Design plans for the site should look to reduce hard cover and increase soft landscaping for the benefit of wildlife. A landscape management plan is not deemed appropriate for post development residential garden habitats, but it would be beneficial to implement a regular vegetation management plan for the site prior to development.
- 6.7 It is noted that planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution relating to protected species. Should any protected species be identified before or during development, all works should cease and a suitably qualified / experienced ecologist should be contacted for advice. Further assessment and/or protection measures have been suggested within this report, however, should any new information come to light at any time, advice should be sought and this report should be updated.

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APPENDIX A
Site Location and Existing Site Plans

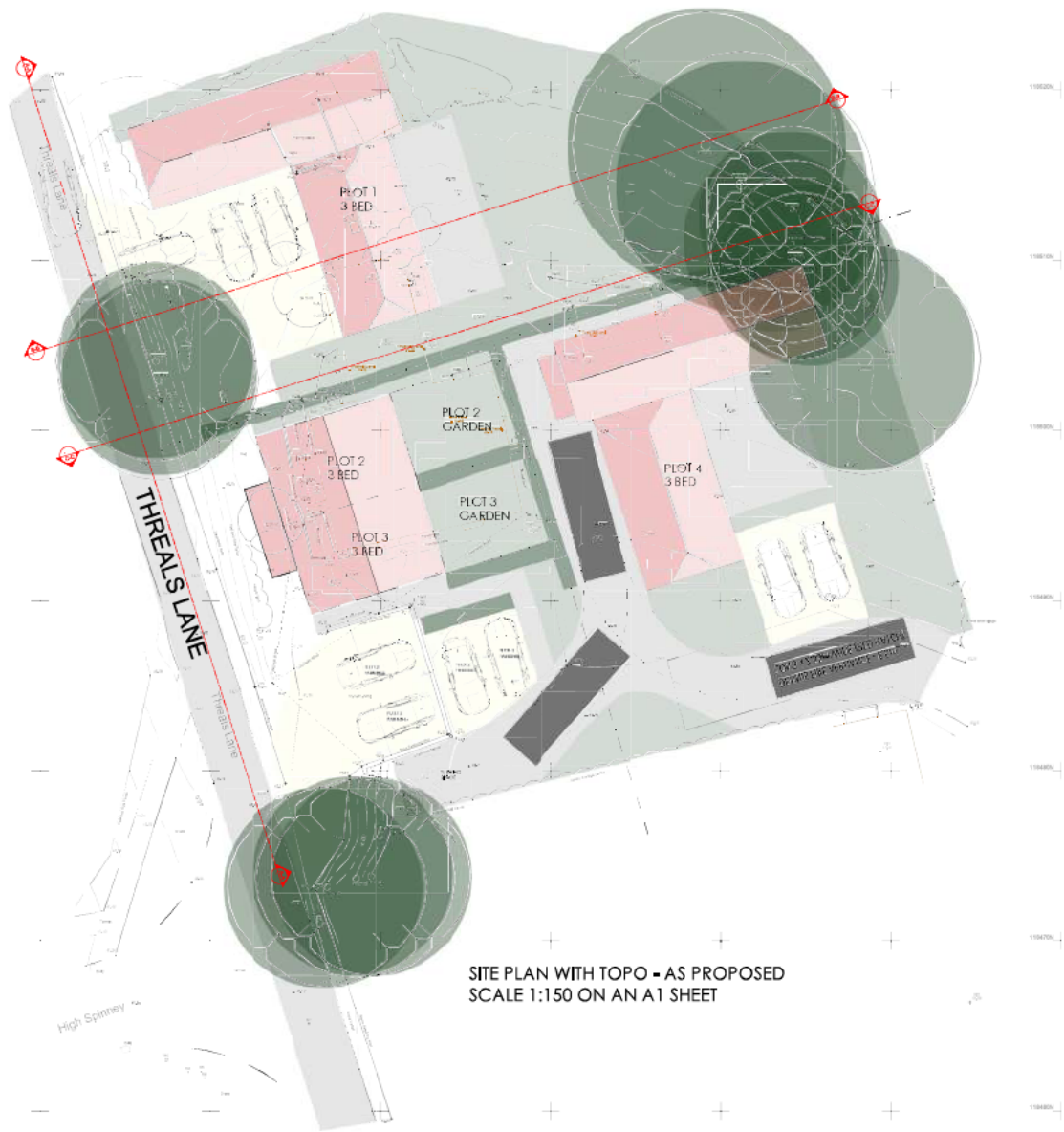
APPENDIX B
Proposed Site Plans



KEY
RED DASHED LINE DENOTES THE EXISTING COTTAGE
BLACK DASHED LINE DENOTES APPROVED EXTENSION PLUS THE COTTAGE REF. DC/22/1122

FLOOR AREAS

- PLOT 1**
3-4 bed plus study
Ground Floor = 122m²
First Floor = 54m²
Total = 176m²
- PLOT 2**
2-3 Bed
Ground Floor = 39m²
First Floor = 39m²
Second Floor = 24m²
Total = 102m²
- PLOT 3**
2-3 Bed
Ground Floor = 39m²
First Floor = 39m²
Second Floor = 24m²
Total = 102m²
- PLOT 4**
3-4 bed plus study
Ground Floor = 122m²
First Floor = 54m²
Total = 176m²



SITE PLAN WITH TOPO - AS PROPOSED
SCALE 1:150 ON AN A1 SHEET

REV.	DATE	BY	AMENDMENT	CHK.

FEASIBILITY

2 Lucan Way, Tadworth Road,
Haywards Heath,
West Sussex, RH12 1JE
01444 452454
info@goald-baxter.co.uk
www.goald-baxter.co.uk

NOTE:
DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING UNLESS FOR PLANING PURPOSES.
CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON DRAWING BEFORE ANY WORK COMMENCED.
ALL DIMENSIONS AND INFORMATION MUST COMPLY WITH CURRENT
LATEST REGULATIONS, BEYOND STANDARD AND CODES OF PRACTICE.
COPYING OF THIS DRAWING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED WITHOUT THE WRITTEN
CONSENT OF GOULD BAXTER AND IS NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT WRITTEN
CONSENT.

CLIENT:
Marlin Call

PROJECT:
Land at Threals Cottage
Threals Lane
West Chillington

DRAWING:
Site Plan with Topo
As Proposed

DATE: 31.07.2024	SCALE AT A1: 1:150	DRAWN BY: CS
		CHECKED BY: MC

JOB NO. GH765	DRAWING NO. FE.02	REV. -
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APPENDIX C
Photographs



Photographs 1 and 2:

The site lies to the east of Threals Lane. Access to the site is via a driveway to a parking area within the northeast corner of the site.

Northern façade pictured below.



Photograph 3:

To the rear (north) the properties have been extended. This includes a single storey flat roof section which adjoins a single storey brick outbuilding with pitched roof section, and a lean-to on the northern facade.



Photograph 4:

To the east of the house is a small outbuilding / shed of concrete block construction with a pitched roof clad in corrugated cement roofing sheets.



Photograph 5:

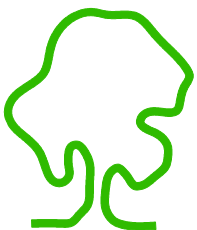
To the north of the cottages is a second outbuilding of concrete block construction with a pitched roof clad in profiled metal sheets.



Photograph 6: Internally the cottages have been gutted, and are presently disused.



Photographs 7, 8 and 9: Peacock butterfly wings on the ground floor within the Cottages. Suspected feeding waste.



eas ltd

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