



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Woodside Lodge, Picts Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AT

January 2026



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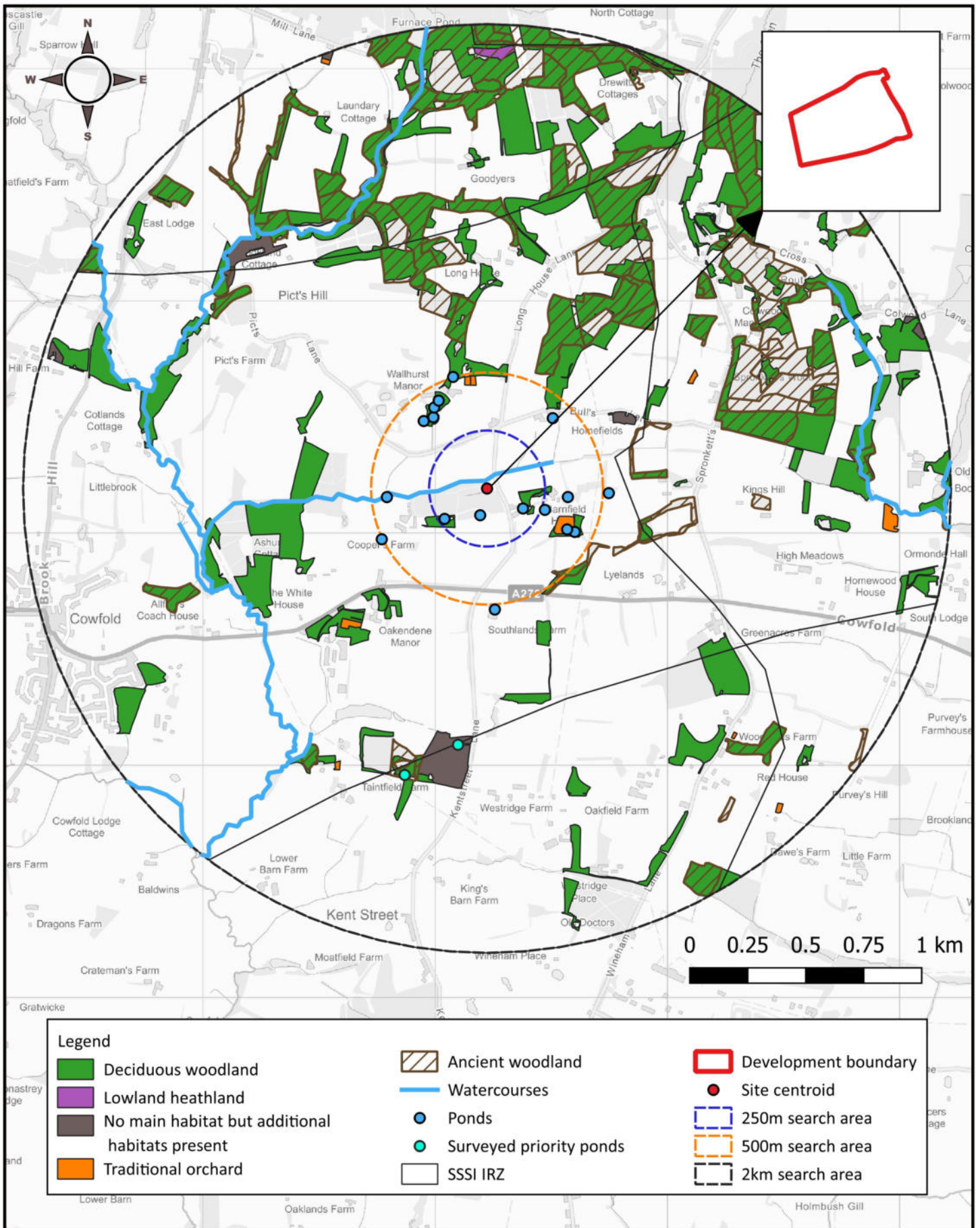
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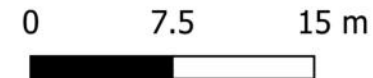
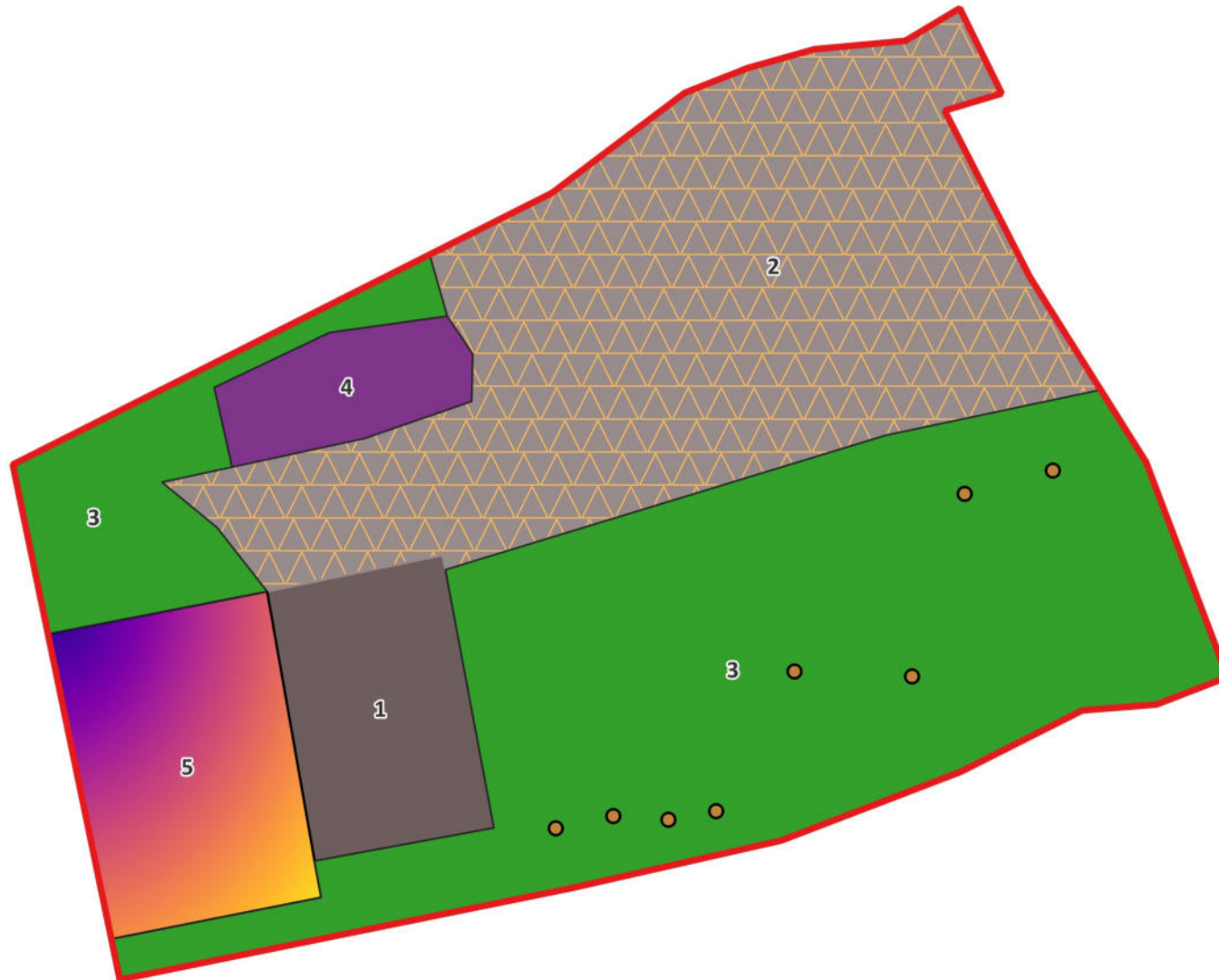
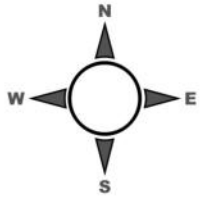


Legend

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Deciduous woodland | Ancient woodland | Development boundary |
| Lowland heathland | Watercourses | Site centroid |
| No main habitat but additional habitats present | Ponds | 250m search area |
| Traditional orchard | Surveyed priority ponds | 500m search area |
| SSSI IRZ | | 2km search area |

Figure title: Site Location and Desk Study Results			Client: Tom White C-NJA-081
Site location: Woodside Lodge, Picts Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AT			
Figure number: 1	Date drawn: 20/10/25	Scale at A4: 1:22000	
Revision: 1	Cartographer: AM	Approver: HB	





Legend








-  Development boundary
- UKHab Baseline
 -  g4 - Modified grassland
 -  h3d - Bramble scrub
 -  h3h - Mixed scrub
 -  u1b5 - Buildings
 -  u1f - Sparsely vegetated urban land
 -  g - 32 - Scattered trees

Figure Title:
UK Habitat Classification Survey Results

Client/ Project Reference:
Tom White
C-NJA-081

Figure number: 2	Revision: 1	Scale at A4: 1:400
Cartographer: AM	Date drawn: 12/01/2026	Approver: HB

Photo 1: Displaying building B1, within the development boundary.



Photo 2: Displaying the area of sparsely vegetated urban land habitat, within the development boundary.



Photo 3: Displaying an area of modified grassland habitat, within the development boundary.



Photo 4: Displaying the area of bramble scrub habitat, within the development boundary.



Photo 5: Displaying the area of mixed scrub habitat west of building B1, within the development boundary.



Photo 6: Displaying some scattered trees, within the development boundary.



Figure Title: UK Habitat Classification Survey - Photographs			Client: Tom White
Site Location: Woodside Lodge, Picts Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex RH13 8AT			Project Ref: C-NJA-081
Figure No: 3	Revision No: 1	Scale: n/a	
Cartographer: AM	Date Drawn: 12/01/2026	Reviewed By: HB	



1. Summary and Recommendations

Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom White is proposing a development at Woodside Lodge, Picts Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AT (see Figure 1). • The proposals include the demolition of the existing residential building, which will be replaced by a new residential dwelling.
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A desk study was conducted that included the purchase of records from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. • A site visit was completed that included a UK Habitat Classification Survey and an appraisal of the habitats within the development boundary to act as ecological receptors.
Impact Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development will not result in any adverse impacts on any designated sites of international, national or local importance. • The development will not adversely impact any habitats of principal importance (HPI) or irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland. • Based upon the desk study results, the habitats recorded within the development boundary and the development proposals, badgers and other mammal burrows, bats (commuting and foraging), nesting birds, great crested newts, hedgehogs and reptiles are a material consideration for the development. • Building B1, was classified as having negligible potential for roosting bats. As such, no further bat emergence surveys are required. • No other structures or trees with features suitable for roosting bats will be adversely impacted by the development. • It is not anticipated that the development will generate significant levels of pollution due to its small scale, however, mitigation will be required during the construction phase of the development to ensure there is no on-site or off-site pollution to habitats or water sources. • In line with national and local policy, the development will be required to incorporate ecological enhancements into the design. It is our understanding, however, that measurable net gains as defined by The Environment Act, 2021 will not be required, as the proposed development is in relation to a self-build planning application.



Recommendations	<p style="text-align: center;">The recommendations below represent a summary only. The full recommendations of this report are outlined in section 6.</p> <p>Further Surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In line with Natural England’s standing advice for GCN, presence or probable absence surveys for GCN at the pond within the development boundary and ponds up to 250 m from the development boundary should be undertaken, to determine if any adverse impacts will arise on GCN as a result of the development.• Reptile surveys within the development boundary should be undertaken to determine the presence/ absence of reptiles and to provide an indicative estimate of reptile population density and characterise the use of the site by reptiles (if present). <p>Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The mitigation measures outlined in this report for badgers and other mammal burrows, bats (foraging and commuting), hedgehogs, nesting birds, and pollution prevention should be followed during the design and construction phase of the development. <p>Ecological Enhancements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ecological enhancements outlined within this report should be incorporated into the design of the development.
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2. Introduction

2.1 Development Location

2.1.1 Tom White is proposing a development (grid reference: TQ 23225 23194) at Woodside Lodge, Picts Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AT (see Figure 1). The above address is hereafter referred to as ‘the site’ and Tom White as the ‘applicant’.

2.1.2 The local planning authority for the site’s location is Horsham District Council (CDC).

2.2 Development Proposals

2.2.1 The applicant seeks planning consent for the redevelopment of a residential site (as shown on DMA Building Designs Ltd, Drawing No. NJA023 - PL02, November 2025). The proposals include:

- Demolition of the existing residential building; and
- Construction of a new residential dwelling and parking area.

2.2.2 The proposals above are hereafter referred to collectively as ‘the development’ in this report. The footprint of the works and their immediate surroundings are hereafter referred to as the ‘development boundary’.

2.3 Ecology Background

2.3.1 It is our understanding that no previous ecology reports have been completed for the proposed development.

2.4 Brief and Objectives

2.4.1 Arun Ecology Ltd were commissioned by the applicant to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for the development.

2.4.2 The key objectives of a PEA, as per CIEEM guidance (CIEEM, 2017) are as follows:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the development;
- Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the ‘mitigation hierarchy’, as per BS42020:2013 Clause 5:2 (BSI, 2013);
- Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (ECiA); and
- Identify the opportunities offered by the development to deliver ecological enhancements and net gains for biodiversity.



2.4.3 The brief agreed with the applicant included:

- The undertaking of a desk study search obtaining records of designated sites, Habitats of Principle Importance (HPI) and ancient woodland as well as purchasing records of protected species and species of conservation concern;
- Undertake a UK Habitat Classification Survey (hereafter UKHab Survey) to record the habitats within the development boundary, assess their conservation value and suitability to act as ecological receptors for protected species and species of conservation concern, including a detailed assessment of the suitability of structures and trees to support roosting bats; and
- Provide a PEA report supported by digitized mapping that presents the methods and results of the desk study and the UKHab Survey within the development boundary. The report will also include an initial impact assessment of the development and any recommendations, including opportunities for ecological enhancement.



3. Method

3.1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

General Approach

3.1.1 The PEA was carried out in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) and the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018).

3.2 Desk Study

3.2.1 The study area for the desk study at this stage of the development is based upon a provisional 'zone of influence'. 'The 'zone of influence' is defined as per CIEEM guidance as 'the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities' (CIEEM, 2018).

3.2.2 The provisional zone of influence for the development where data was sought is set as the following:

- RAMSAR, Special Conservation Areas (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), (including potentially designated sites), Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) and locally designated sites – 2 km;
- All other non-statutory designated sites – 1 km;
- Habitats of Principle Importance (HPI), Ancient woodland and Main Rivers – 2 km;
- Ponds – 0.5 km; and
- Protected Species, Species of Principle Importance (SPI) and other species of conservation concern – 1 km (from the last 20 years).

3.2.3 Sources of information within the study area for the desk study were as follows;

- The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC);
- Government open-source GIS datasets;
- Horsham District Council Adopted Local Plan (2015);
- Satellite images (powered by google via QGIS 3.38); and
- Purchased records from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC).



3.3 Field Habitat Survey

UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.3.1 The field survey was undertaken using the UKHab Survey methodology (UKHab, 2023a) to record the habitat types within the development boundary. The study area for the UKHab Survey was defined as all of the land within the development boundary (see Figure 2).
- 3.3.2 The UKHab Survey has 5 hierarchical levels of habitat classification that aligns with those outlined under national legislation and planning policy. Habitats were mapped in the field using the primary habitat codes described in the UKHab Survey Professional Edition to levels 3, 4 or 5 (UKHab, 2023b).
- 3.3.3 Secondary habitat codes and target notes were assigned along with primary habitat codes to provide additional context where the habitat contained additional features that deviate from the primary classification.
- 3.3.4 To identify each habitat, the dominant plant and other readily identified species were recorded and their abundance within the development boundary was measured using the DAFOR scale (Stace, 2019).

3.4 Site Habitat Suitability Assessment

General Approach

- 3.4.1 The habitat within the development boundary was appraised for its suitability to support protected species and species of conservation concern at the time of the field habitat survey with regard to the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) and BS42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BSI, 2013). The species-specific guidance and references used in the appraisal are outlined in Table 1 below.



Table 1 – References used to assess the suitability of habitat within the development boundary to support protected species and species of conservation concern.

Group/ taxa	Habitat Appraisal References
Amphibians/ GCN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCN Habitat Suitability Index (Oldham et al. 2010); and Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook (Langton et al, 2001).
Bats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Field Guide to Monitoring Nests (Ferguson-Lees et al, 2011); and Barn Owl Tyto alba Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessment (Shawyer, 2011).
Mammals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveying Badgers (Harris et al, 1989) and Badger Trust Best Practice Guidelines (Badger Trust, 2023); The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright et al, 2006); UK BAP Mammals Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation (Cresswell, et al, 2012); Otter (Woodroffe, 2007), Hedgehog (Morris, 2011); Water shrew (Carter, 2006) - Mammal Society Species Series; and Water Vole Field Signs and Habitat assessment (Dean, 2022) and Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Dean et al, 2016).
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent & Gibson, 2003); and Reptile Habitat Management Handbook (Edgar, 2010).
Invertebrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Planning Practice for Invertebrates (Buglife, 2015); and Organising Surveys to Determine Site Quality for Invertebrates (English Nature, 2005).

Bats – Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.4.2 A bat preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of structures and trees as well as an assessment of the habitat within the development boundary for bats was carried out in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines for Ecologists (Collins, 2023).
- 3.4.3 A ground level inspection of the exterior of any structures within the development boundary, and any trees that will be adversely impacted by the development, was undertaken with the aid of torchlight and binoculars to search for bat PRFs that might provide suitable crevices or access/egress points to voids or cavities for roosting bats.
- 3.4.4 Where accessible and safe to do so, a search for signs of bats such as bat specimens, droppings, urine staining and audible sound (such as social calls) was undertaken at each structure or tree. This included an internal inspection of roof voids at structures and the use of an endoscope to inspect any accessible bat PRFs.
- 3.4.5 A classification based upon the roosting suitability for bats was assigned for each structure and tree that was inspected within the development boundary as well as



the overall suitability of habitat. The classification descriptions are detailed below in Table 2 for structures and Table 3 for trees.

Table 2 – Suitability assessment for a proposed development site for bats, as adapted from BCT Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Potential Suitability	Definition	
	Roosting Habitat	Potential Flight Paths and Foraging Habitat
None	No habitat features on-site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/ suitable shelter at all ground/ underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/ protection for flight lines or that generates shelter for insect populations that is available to foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats, however, small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roosting sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	Habitat that can be used by a small number of bats as flightpaths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats. Suitable, but isolated habitat that can be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status, with respect to roost type only, such as maternity or hibernation roosts.	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight paths such as lines of trees, scrub and linked back gardens and for foraging such as trees, scrub grassland and water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roosting sites that are obviously suitable for use by a larger number of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined water courses and grazed parkland. The site is close to and connected to known bat roosts.



Table 3 – Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees for bats, adapted from BCT Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Suitability	Definition
None	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any present.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with a least one PRF present.

3.5 Survey Dates and Conditions

3.5.1 Details on the date, timing and weather conditions recorded during the survey are provided below in Table 4.

Table 4– Field Survey Information.

Date	Survey Type	Survey Timings		Temperature (°C)		Rain	Wind (Beaufort scale)
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish		
15/10/2025	UK Hab Survey and bat PRA.	11:00	12:00	13	13	None	1

3.6 Surveyors

3.6.1 The field survey was undertaken by Alice Motola BSc, MSc (Hons) and Hannah Baker BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM. Alice Motola has 1 year and 10 months of professional consultancy experience and is adequately trained to carry out UKHab Surveys. Alice Motola is also registered to use the Level 1 Class Licence to survey Great Crested Newts and a MoRPh river accredited surveyor.

3.6.2 Hannah Baker has over 11 years of professional consultancy experience and is adequately trained to carry out UKHab Surveys. Hannah Baker is also registered to use the Level 2 Class Licence to survey bats and Level 1 Class Licence to Survey GCN. Hannah Baker was assisted by Amy Oldham BSc (Hons).

3.7 Limitations

3.7.1 No survey limitations were recorded during the UKHab Survey.



4. Results

4.1 Desk Study

Designated Sites

4.1.1 No designated and non-designated sites were identified within the search area. As such, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in any adverse impacts on statutorily or non-statutorily designated sites. Consequently, designated sites are not considered further within this report.

Ancient Woodland

4.1.2 There were sixty-seven ancient woodland parcels returned within 2 km of the development boundary (see Figure 1). The nearest ancient woodland parcel was 0.43 km southeast of the development boundary.

Habitats of Principle Importance

4.1.3 Details on the number of HPI, the habitat type and the distance from the development boundary to the closest HPI parcel are detailed in Table 5 and displayed in Figure 1.

Table 5 - Habitats of Principle Importance returned from the desk study search within 2 km of the development boundary.

Habitat of Principle Importance		
Habitat Type	Number of HPI parcels within 2 km	Distance and direction of nearest HPI parcel and other notable parcels
Deciduous woodland	104	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nearest deciduous woodland parcel is located 0.08 km southeast of the development boundary.
Lowland heathland	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nearest lowland fens parcel is 1.81 km north of the development boundary.
Traditional orchard	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nearest traditional orchard is 0.31 km southeast of the development boundary.
No main habitat but additional habitats present	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These parcels overall include deciduous woodland, traditional orchard and pond. The nearest parcel of this type is 0.57 km northeast of the development boundary and corresponds to traditional orchard.



Priority ponds	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Both priority ponds are located southwest of the development boundary and the closest is at a 1.09 km distance from site.
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4.1.4 Seventeen ponds were recorded within 0.5 km of the development boundary (see Figure 1). Three of these ponds are located within 0.25 km of the development boundary and the nearest pond is located 0.1 km southwest of the development boundary. There were no surveyed priority ponds within 0.5 km of the development boundary.

4.1.5 Twenty-nine main river parcels were returned within 2 km of the development boundary (see Figure 1). None of the parcels were listed as priority river habitats under the national inventory. The nearest main river parcel is located 0.005 km north of the development boundary and directly adjacent to it.

Protected Species and Other Species of Conservation Concern

4.1.6 No European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) has been granted within 1 km of the site for any protected species.



4.2 UK Habitat Classification Survey Results

4.2.1 The habitats recorded during the UKHab Survey within the development boundary are described below in Table 6 (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Table 6 – Habitats recorded within the development boundary during the UK Habitat Classification Survey.

Habitat Reference (Figure 2)	UK Hab Survey Classification Code	Approx. Area sqm	Summary and Species List
Urban			
1	Primary: Developed land; sealed surface Code: u1b5	170	One residential building (B1) was recorded within the southwestern section of the development boundary. Building B1 is currently used as a living home space by the applicant. A detailed description of building B1 is provided in Table 9, Appendix I.
2	Primary: Sparsely vegetated urban land Code: u1f	840	An area of sparsely vegetated urban land was recorded within the northeastern section of the development boundary, which is currently used as parking area. This parcel has a vegetation cover approximately 10-50%. Species recorded: Grasses: perennial ryegrass (D), Yorkshire fog (A), cocks' foot (F), red fescue (O), annual meadowgrass (O). Forbs and other plants: creeping thistle (O), dock (R), bramble (R), bristly oxtongue (R), broadleaf and ribwort plantain (R), common ragwort (R), and mosses belonging to the <i>Sphagnum</i> genus.
Grassland			
3	Primary: Modified grassland Secondary: active management, scattered trees Code: g4 - 516, 32	1070	Two main areas of modified grassland were recorded within the development boundary, characterised by varied sward height, ranging approximately between 5-30cm and an active management regime, which appears to be consisting of regular mowing. The grassland was classified as modified grassland due to being dominated by plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment (including white clover and plantain) and the low number of species recorded per meter square (approximately five). The grassland presented very small, scattered areas of disturbed ground which covered <10% of the total habitat area.



			<p>Species recorded:</p> <p>Grasses: perennial ryegrass (D), Yorkshire fog (A), cocks' foot (F), soft rush (O), red fescue (O), annual meadowgrass(O), pendulous sedge (R).</p> <p>Forbs and other plants: white clover (A), creeping buttercup (F), creeping cinquefoil (O), creeping thistle (O), dock (R), ground ivy (R), bramble (R), bristly oxtongue (R), bird's-foot-trefoil (R), hedge bindweed (R), <i>Geranium</i> species (R), broadleaf and ribwort plantain (R), common ragwort (R), Fungi (R) and mosses belonging to the <i>Sphagnum</i> genus.</p> <p>Scattered trees: Norway spruce, goat willow.</p>
Heathland and shrub			
4	<p>Primary: Bramble scrub Secondary: N/A Code: h3d</p>	80	<p>A parcel of bramble scrub was recorded within the northern section of the development boundary, growing above a slope.</p> <p>Species recorded: Bramble (D), old man's beard (O), hedge bindweed (R), wild teasel (R).</p>
5	<p>Primary: Mixed scrub Secondary: N/A Code: h3h</p>	230	<p>A parcel of mixed scrub was recorded adjacent to the western aspect of building B1, in the southwestern section of the development boundary. This habitat was densely vegetated and did not present any notable gaps or open areas within it.</p> <p>Species recorded: Norway spruce (D), goat willow (A), pendulous sedge (O), hedge bindweed (R), bramble (R).</p>



4.3 Site Habitat Suitability Assessment

4.3.1 An assessment of habitat within the development boundary to act as an ecological receptor for protected species and species of conservation concern, based upon the desk study results and the habitats recorded during the UKHab Survey is provided below in Table 7. The bat PRA results are summarised below and given in full in Table 9 in Appendix I.

Table 7 – Site habitat assessment for protected species and species of conservation concern.

Species/Group	Site Assessment and Rationale
GCN and Other Amphibians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of GCN were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. No records of other common amphibians were returned. • There are seventeen ponds within 0.5 km of the development boundary, of which four are within 0.25 km • The nearest pond is located 105 m southwest of the development boundary and is ecologically connected to the main development footprint through mixed scrub and plantation woodland habitat. • Likewise, the majority of the other ponds within 0.5 km are well connected to the development boundary via line of trees and deciduous woodland parcels. • No suitable breeding habitat for GCN was recorded within the development boundary. The development boundary included habitats with suitability for foraging and commuting GCN such as modified grassland, bramble scrub and mixed scrub. The mixed scrub habitat could also provide suitable resting places for GCN and approximately 60 m² of mixed scrub habitat will have to be removed to facilitate the construction of the replacement dwelling. • Based on the above points combined, it is reasonably likely that GCN could be encountered within the main footprint of the development boundary.
Bats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several records of bats were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. • Building B1, located within the southwestern section of the development boundary, was classified as having negligible potential to support roosting bats, during the PRA, given the lack of suitable PRFs (see Table 9 in Appendix I).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No other structures or trees were recorded within the development boundary with suitability for roosting bats, during the UKHab survey. The habitat immediately within the development boundary including mixed scrub, modified grassland, bramble scrub and scattered trees, was assessed as having suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Likewise, the habitats present within the wider site and directly surrounding it, such as plantation woodland, line of trees and deciduous woodland parcels, all provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat (flightlines) for bats and connect well to the habitats within the development boundary. As such, commuting and foraging bats could be encountered within the development boundary. Approximately 60 m² of mixed scrub habitat with suitability for foraging and commuting bats and 30 m² of modified grassland with suitability for foraging bats will have to be removed to facilitate the construction of the replacement dwelling and new parking area.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several records of birds including species of conservation concern were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. Building B1 has potential suitability for nesting birds under the canopy which extends from the western aspect of the dwelling. The habitat within the development boundary includes mixed scrub and scattered trees that provides suitable habitat for nesting birds and connect well with surrounding suitable habitats for birds within the wider landscape scale. Furthermore, approximately 60 m² of mixed scrub habitat with suitability for nesting and foraging birds will have to be removed to facilitate the construction of the replacement dwelling. Despite approximately 30 m² of modified grassland will be removed as part of the development proposals, this grassland is reasonably unlikely to be suitable for ground nesting birds due to its short sward height. The overall quantity and quality of available habitat for nesting birds within the footprint of the development is insufficient to support important bird assemblages and populations of conservation concern.
Terrestrial mammals (non-bats)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Badgers: No evidence of badgers, including badger setts or field signs were recorded within the development boundary at the time of the UKHab survey. The habitats described immediately within the development boundary broadly could provide foraging and burrowing opportunities for badger given the rural location of the site and the presence of soil mounds and slopes across the development boundary and wider site. Hazel dormice: Records of hazel dormice were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. The habitats described immediately within the development boundary are not suitable to support dormice. Although mixed scrub is



	<p>generally regarded as potentially suitable habitat for dormice, the mixed scrub present within the development boundary does not present a species composition and structure appropriate to support dormice. However, the plantation woodland outside of the development boundary, within the wider site ownership boundary is well connected with the surrounding line of trees and deciduous woodland parcels which on the wider landscape scale and may provide suitable habitat for hazel dormice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgehogs: Records of hedgehog were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. Both the habitats described within the development and those found immediately surrounding the site, are reasonably likely to provide foraging and resting places for hedgehogs. As such, it is reasonably likely that hedgehog could be encountered within the development boundary and the immediate footprint of the development. • Otters and water voles: No records of otter or water vole were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. The nearest lotic waterbody is located only 25 m north of the development boundary and 12 m north of the northern development boundary. Along both of the banks of the river flowing parallel to the northern development boundary grows a well-established riparian vegetation. However, the riparian habitat will not be impacted by the development and the habitats recorded immediately within the development boundary are unsuitable to support otter and water vole and as such it is reasonably unlikely otter or water vole will be encountered within the development boundary or that the habitat will be associated with any population of these species. • Other mammals: Mammal burrows such as those of rabbit or fox and mammal runs were recorded within the development boundary at the time of the UKHab Survey. Additionally, given the rural location of the site it is reasonably likely that the above species could be found in or near to the main footprint of the development prior to its commencement.
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No records of common or rare reptiles were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. • Although approximately 30 m² of modified grassland will be removed as part of the development proposals, the grassland within the immediate development footprint presented a short sward height which that is subject to regular mowing and as such provides insufficient structure and cover to support a permanent reptile population. • Approximately 60 m² of mixed scrub habitat with suitability for reptiles will have to be removed to facilitate the construction of the replacement dwelling. • Based on the above points combined, it is possible that reptiles could be encountered within the development boundary and in close proximity to the footprint of the development.



Invertebrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several records of invertebrates including species of conservation concern were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary.• The development boundary includes habitats with suitability for invertebrates such as mixed scrub, bramble scrub, scattered trees, whereas the modified grassland which formed the main extent of the area within the main development footprint provides only limited value for invertebrates.• Despite part of the existing mixed scrub will be removed to facilitate the development, is it reasonably unlikely that any important invertebrate assemblages or populations of conservation concern will be encountered within this habitat parcel and within the development boundary.
Plants, Lichens and Fungi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several common lichen species were observed growing on the trees within the development boundary.• However, no European or nationally protected plants, SPI or other species of conservation concern were recorded within the development boundary.
Non-native and Invasive Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No invasive non-native species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 or the Invasive Alien Species Order, 2019 were recorded within the development boundary at the time of the UKHab Survey.



5. Legislation and Planning Policy

5.1.1 A summary of the relevant legislation and planning policy that could be a material consideration to the development is provided below in Table 8. Further details of the UK legislation and planning policy relevant to the qualifying features in this section are detailed in Appendix II.

Table 8 – Legislation and planning policy evaluation of the development.

Ecological Feature	Relevant Legislation & Planning Policy	Impact Assessment and Legal Compliance	Rationale and Comments
Habitats			
Irreplaceable habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; and HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity. 	Compliant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No ancient woodland parcels or any other type of irreplaceable habitat are located within the development boundary or will be directly lost as part of the development. Based upon the scale, extent and magnitude of the development and its distance to the nearest ancient woodland/ irreplaceable habitat parcel it is reasonably unlikely that there will be any adverse impacts as a result of degradation from increased recreational pressure or construction related pollution.
Habitats of Principle Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 41; National Planning Policy Framework, 2024. 	Compliant/ adverse impacts reasonably unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Habitats of Principal Importance are located within the development boundary or will be directly lost as part of the development. For the reasons outlined above for ancient woodland, it is not anticipated that there will be any adverse impacts on HPI located outside of the development boundary.



Pollution Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Protection Act, 1990; and National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; and HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 24: Environmental Protection. 	Mitigation required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pollution prevention measures should be incorporated into the construction phase of the development to avoid onsite and offsite pollution to habitats and the nearby waterbodies. Mitigation measures will be required within the design of the development to ensure that there are no significant increases in the levels of light pollution as a result of the installation of artificial lighting as part of the development. The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Enhancements			
Biodiversity Net Gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environment Act, 2021; and National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; and HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity; Strategic Policy 24: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character. 	Exempt development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development will be exempt from the mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements as defined under The Environment Act, 2021, as the development proposals comprises a self-build dwelling and the development boundary is below 0.5 hectares, meeting the criteria for the self-build exemption. <p>No further recommendations are outlined in this report with respect to BNG.</p>
Ecological Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Policy Framework, 2024. 	Further action required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development will be required to implement ecological enhancements into the design of the development to ensure it is compliant with national and local planning policy. The recommendations outlined in section 6 of this report should be followed to ensure the development is compliant with national and local planning policy.
Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern			
Badgers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Badger Protection Act, 1992. 	Mitigation required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No badger setts or evidence of badgers were recorded within the development boundary, however, due to the habitats within the development boundary, its rural location and proximity to typical badger habitats (such as mixed scrub and



			<p>deciduous woodland), it is possible that badger setts could be created within close proximity to the main footprint of the development and potentially be encountered prior to the commencement of the development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Bats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation of Habitat & Species Regulation, 2017; Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41; and HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity. 	Mitigation required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building B1, was classified as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. As such, no further bat emergence surveys are required. No buildings, trees or other structures were recorded within the development boundary with suitability for roosting bats. The development will result in the loss of a small amount of modified grassland and mixed scrub within the development boundary that provides low to moderate quality foraging habitat for bats. Despite this, it can be reasonably predicted that the favourable conservation status of bats will not be adversely impacted by such actions without the need for further bat activity surveys, as the area of habitat loss will be small and due to the quality and quantity of habitat available within and adjacent to the development boundary. For the reasons outlined in the pollution prevention section, the development should aim to reduce light pollution from the installation of artificial lighting to ensure it does not adversely impact potential bat flightlines within the site. The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – Section 1 and Schedule 1; and Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41. 	Mitigation required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building B1 with potential suitability for nesting birds will be demolished as part of the development proposals and a portion of mixed scrub habitat with suitability for nesting birds will be removed to facilitate the construction of the new dwelling.



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the available habitat within the development boundary, it is reasonably unlikely that important assemblages or populations of birds of conservation concern will be adversely impacted by the development. • Mitigation will be required during the construction phase to avoid adverse impacts to nesting birds. • The recommendations outlined in section 6 of this report should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Great crested newts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of Habitat & Species Regulations, 2017; • Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and • Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41. 	Further assessment required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No potential GCN breeding habitat will be directly impacted as part of the development. • However, it is possible that GCN could be encountered and inadvertently harmed during the enabling and the construction phase of the development, given the below points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The presence of four potential GCN breeding ponds within 250 m of the development boundary; ○ The closest pond being only 100m southwest of the wider ownership boundary and ecologically connected continuously to the main development footprint; ○ The habitat within the development boundary having continuous connectivity to other suitable GCN terrestrial habitat (as viewed from aerial imagery) within 500 m of the development boundary. ○ The development will also result in the removal of a small amount of potential GCN terrestrial habitat (mixed scrub and modified grassland). • Despite this, the scale of habitat removal is reasonably unlikely to adversely impact GCN at a population level. • To ensure the development proceeds lawfully the recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed.



Hazel dormice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of Habitat & Species Regulations, 2017; • Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and • Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41. 	Compliant/ adverse impacts reasonably unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development is reasonably unlikely to result in harm to individual hazel dormice or adversely impact any habitat associated with any hazel dormouse populations.
Hedgehogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 - Section 40/41; and • Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996. 	Mitigation required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is reasonably likely that individual hedgehogs could be encountered within the development boundary, and as such, it is possible that they could be inadvertently killed with methods prohibited under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996 without appropriate mitigation. • The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Reptiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of Habitat & Species Regulations, 2017 (Sand Lizard & Smooth Snake only); • Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and • Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41. 	Further assessment required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is bramble scrub and mixed scrub within the development boundary that has suitable structure to support common reptile species and is situated next to favourable reptile habitats. As such, it is possible that individual reptiles could be encountered within the site. • The development proposal includes the removal of mixed scrub habitat with suitability for common reptiles. As such, the proposal could result in adverse impacts to reptile populations, if present. <p>The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.</p>
Other Mammal Burrows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Mammals Protection Act, 1996. 	Mitigation required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is possible that mammals could be inadvertently harmed with methods prohibited under the Wild Mammals Act, 1996 whilst inhabiting their burrows without appropriate mitigation. • To ensure the development proceeds lawfully the mitigation outlined in section 6 should be followed.



Otters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of Habitat & Species Regulation, 2017; • Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and • Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41. 	Adverse impacts/ offence reasonably unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development is reasonably unlikely to result in harm to individual otters or adversely impact their habitat (including resting and breeding places), and therefore, will not adversely impact the favourable conservation status of this species.
Water Voles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and • Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41. 	Adverse impacts/ offence reasonably unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development is reasonably unlikely to result in harm to individual water vole or adversely impact their burrows or habitat, and therefore, will not adversely impact the conservation status of this species.
Invertebrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation of Habitat & Species Regulations, 2017 – Schedule 2; • Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – Schedule 5; and • Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41. 	Adverse impacts/ offence reasonably unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of habitats of value for invertebrates within the development boundary, including scattered trees, mixed scrub and bramble scrub will be retained as part of the development. A small area of mixed scrub and modified grassland will be removed as part of the development. • Based on the above point and the small scale of the development, the development is reasonably unlikely to result in any adverse impacts to any European protected invertebrate species, nationally protected species, important populations of SPI or nationally or locally important assemblages of conservation value.
Invasive non-native species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – Schedule 9; and • Invasive Alien Species Order, 2019. 	Adverse impacts/ offence reasonably unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development is reasonably unlikely to result in an act that would constitute an offence for a species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 or Invasive Alien Species Order, 2019 (i.e. intentional release or spreading).



<p>Protected Plants, Fungi and Lichens</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conservation of Habitat & Species Regulations, 2017 – Schedule 5;• Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 - Schedule 8; and• Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	<p>Adverse impacts/ offence reasonably unlikely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The development is reasonably unlikely to result in intentional picking, uprooting, destruction, or intentional clearance of any wild plant, fungi or lichen, including, European protected species, nationally protected species, SPI or those of national or local conservation concern.
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6. Requirements and Recommendations

6.1 Background

6.1.1 The recommendations included in this section are based upon the mitigation hierarchy (avoidance, mitigation, and compensation; BSI, 2013) and takes consideration of government circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Circular 06/2005.

6.1.2 Mitigation is not discussed where further surveys are required to inform such mitigation or compensation, unless in our professional judgement it would not be proportionate to request further surveys as the risk of a legal offence being committed as a result of the development is acceptably low.

6.2 Ecological Enhancements

6.2.1 The following ecological enhancements relevant to the development are recommended:

- Installation of artificial habitat provisions to include:
 - One bat box to be installed on a suitable mature tree within the development boundary or wider site;
 - One integrated bird box to be installed as part of the new residential dwelling;
 - One solitary bee box to be installed within a sunny grassland location within the development boundary; and
 - One small refugia/hibernacula log pile to be created along the northern wider ownership boundary for the benefit of amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates.

6.3 Habitat Mitigation

Pollution Prevention

6.3.1 The following pollution prevention measures should be incorporated during the construction phase of the development to ensure that there is not any on-site or offsite pollution, with particular regard to the protection of the offsite stream;

6.3.2 Both the offsite stream and its adjacent riparian habitat will be protected by installing Heras fencing along its full perimeter corresponding to the development boundary



length and appropriate signage will be affixed to prohibit the workers from accessing the riparian and stream habitat;

- All fuels, oils, lubricants, chemicals, and potentially polluting substances shall be stored securely within designated, bunded areas on an impermeable surface, with spill kits of an appropriate size and specification available on site at all times. All operatives shall be briefed in the use of spill response procedures;
- Construction materials, plant, and equipment shall be stored and operated only within designated areas and shall be located outside the Root Protection Areas of retained trees and woodland, and away from drainage pathways leading towards the offsite stream;
- Any mixing of concrete, cement, mortar, or other potentially contaminating materials shall be undertaken only within designated mixing areas located as far as practicable from the offsite stream and any surface water features. Washout of concrete or cementitious materials shall be strictly prohibited on bare ground or within drainage routes;
- Measures shall be implemented to prevent the generation and spread of dust and airborne particulates where required, including damping down during dry conditions, particularly where there is potential for deposition into nearby watercourses;
- All contaminated water, soil, and construction waste shall be managed and disposed of in accordance with relevant waste management legislation, either within designated on-site facilities or via appropriately licensed off-site contractors. No contaminated materials shall be discharged to ground, surface water, or drainage systems;
- Surface water runoff from construction areas shall be monitored and controlled at all times. Where there is a risk of sediment-laden runoff reaching the stream, appropriate mitigation measures such as silt fencing, sediment traps, or temporary bunding shall be installed and maintained for the duration of the works;
- The use of fertilisers, herbicides, and pesticides as part of ongoing site management shall be minimised and, where necessary, carried out strictly in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and best practice guidance to avoid runoff or leaching into adjacent habitats and watercourses.



6.4 Protected Species Mitigation

Badger and Other Mammal Burrows

- 6.4.1 In the unlikely event that a burrow entrance of a mammal is discovered within the development boundary that could be of a suitable size for badgers, the following actions should be taken:
- Works paused and an ecologist consulted regarding any likely burrow or badger sett;
 - A suitable buffer (as advised by an ecologist) established and clearly marked around the suspected badger sett; and
 - Any badger sett or mammal burrow that could be in use by badgers that is reasonably likely to be impacted by the development should be monitored for an appropriate period by an ecologist and the appropriate licencing requirements obtained.
- 6.4.2 To ensure the development proceeds lawfully, any rabbit or fox burrows found within the immediate area of the development should not be tracked over by machinery and safeguarded with a clearly marked buffer zone. Burrows that will be impacted as part of the development should be dug out with hand tools to prevent unlawful methods of killing (such as those outlined under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996).

Bats

Lighting Strategy

- 6.4.3 To ensure that the development avoids adverse impacts on bat foraging and commuting habitats within the development boundary, any lighting as part of the proposed development should be installed in line with current guidance issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals: Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night (BCT & ILP 2023).
- 6.4.4 The lighting strategy for the site as a minimum should aim to:
- Avoid illumination of the retained mixed scrub and scattered trees within development boundary; and
 - Minimise the overall levels of light pollution within the site as a result of the development by:



- Selecting appropriate lighting sources such as LED lighting that lack UV components, have peak wavelengths higher than 550 nm and that have a warm white light (2,700 kelvin or lower);
- Appropriate fitting of lighting to include horizontal mounting with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt, or as a last resort the use of baffles, hoods or louvres to reduce light spill and direct lighting to only where it is needed;
- Using light only when necessary within the site, by using timers and motion sensors;
- Providing natural screens in landscaping plans to break up artificial light where light spill cannot be avoided.

Nesting Birds

- 6.4.5 To ensure that the development is compliant with the legislation and planning policy relating to nesting birds, the removal of building B1 and mixed scrub should ideally be completed outside of the breeding bird season (typically March – September). If it is not possible to avoid the breeding bird season to complete these works, a pre-works inspection by an appropriately qualified ecologist should be undertaken.
- 6.4.6 If an active bird nest or nesting activity is recorded within the development boundary during the pre-works inspection or at any other time during the development (such as the storage of building materials) the nest should be protected from damage and destruction (including disturbance that may cause the nest to be abandoned). A protective buffer should be implemented around any active nests (the size to be determined based on the professional judgement of an ecologist or environmental manager) and works in and around these areas should be controlled or delayed until the chicks have fledged.

Hedgehogs

- 6.4.7 Where reasonably practical, measures should be taken to avoid the unnecessary killing or injuring (that could result in undue suffering and harm) of hedgehog as a result of the developments construction-based activities. Stakeholders and contractors should remain vigilant for the presence of hedgehogs around any vegetation, debris or stored materials. A reasonable action would be to move an individual hedgehog to a safe location either within retained habitat on-site or off-site. During the construction phase of the development, any excavations on site should be covered nightly or include a suitable escape ramp to prevent nocturnal mammals (including hedgehog) from becoming trapped.



6.5 Further Surveys

Great Crested Newts

- 6.5.1 In line with Natural England's standing advice, further surveys to establish the presence/ probable absence (and class population size, where appropriate) of GCN at ponds within the development boundary and up to 500 m from the development boundary should be undertaken to inform any mitigation and licensing requirements for GCN (if applicable). The further surveys for GCN, should be undertaken at an appropriate time of year and follow industry best practice guidelines.
- 6.5.2 Natural England's standing advice states 'surveys up to 250 metres are usually sufficient' for GCN from the development boundary. As such, the professional judgment of an ecologist should be used to determine the required level of survey effort for GCN.

Reptiles

- 6.5.3 To fully inform the impacts of the development on reptiles, further surveys will be required to determine the presence/ absence of reptiles and to provide an indicative estimate of reptile population density and characterise the use of the site by reptiles (if present).
- 6.5.4 Reptile presence/absence surveys should include the placement of artificial refugia within the site and include a minimum of seven survey visits. Surveys should take place between April – October in suitable weather conditions for reptiles. Artificial refugia should be deployed and left on site for a minimum of 14 days prior to the commencement of the first survey visit.



7. Conclusion

- 7.1.1 To ensure the development can proceed lawfully, further assessment to ascertain the ecological impacts of the development will be required. Mitigation will also be required within the design and construction phase to ensure the development proceeds lawfully. Furthermore, the development will be required to implement ecological enhancements as part of the development.
- 7.1.2 The recommendations outlined within this report demonstrate how the above can be achieved as part of the development.



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Appendix I - Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment Results

Table 9 – Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment Results.

Building no.	Description	External Inspection	Internal inspection	Evidence of bats	Bat roost potential	Rational and potential roosting features recorded
B1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building B1 is a wooden cladded residential house, with corrugated metal roofing sheets. • Additionally, a wooden cladded canopy with corrugated metal roofing sheets, extends from the western aspect of the building. 	Yes	Yes	None	Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No bat PRFs or potential access/ egress points were recorded on the exterior of building B1. • The internal area of the wooden cladded canopy area is reasonably unlikely to provide adequate cover or conditions that are typically used by roosting bats.



Appendix II – Legislation & Planning Policy

8.2 Background

- 8.2.1 This section provides a summary of the legislation and planning policy that could be relevant to the development. Where possible we have limited this section to the areas relevant to this report. This means the legislation and planning policy outlined below is not included in its entirety.
- 8.2.2 This section does not constitute legal advice, and only, represents the interpretation and professional judgement of the ecologists named in this report, on the legislation and planning policy deemed relevant to the development.

8.3 RAMSAR Convention

- 8.3.1 RAMSAR sites are wetlands of international importance that have been designated under the criteria of the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands for containing representative, rare or unique wetland types or for their importance in conserving biological biodiversity (JNCC, 2019).
- 8.3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) outlines the level of consideration that should be given to RAMSAR sites in Planning. Paragraph 187 states that RAMSAR and potential RAMSAR sites should be given the same protection as ‘habitat sites’ defined as those afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2017), such as Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation.

8.4 Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations, 2017

- 8.4.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 transposes the EC Habitats Directive and some elements of the EC Bird Directive into national law in England and Wales. The objective of the Habitats Directive is to protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora. The directive lays down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species.

Protected Species

- 8.4.2 The regulations include provisions that prohibit certain actions from the protection of species listed under Annex II of the Habitat Directive. It is a criminal offence for a person to ‘intentionally or recklessly’ take the following action:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species (EPS);



- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they are likely to belong;
- Deliberately take or destroy eggs of any such wild animal;
- Deliberately pick, collect, uproot or destroy a wild plant of an EPS; and
- Keep transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead wild animal or plant of an EPS, or any part of or anything derived from such an animal or plant.

8.4.3 The disturbance of such animals includes in particular; any disturbance that is likely to impact their ability;

- To survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young;
- In case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Protected Sites

8.4.4 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 puts an obligation on the appointed appropriate authority for England & Wales to establish priorities for a network of nationally important sites.

8.4.5 The aforementioned sites, often referred to as European protected sites are formed of two types of sites, Special Protection Areas (sites specifically designated for birds) and Special Areas of Conservation (specifically designated for fauna and flora). The objective is for all species and habitats covered by these sites to contribute towards the maintenance and restoration of their favourable conservation status.

8.4.6 Designation can include but is not limited to the following reasons:

- A natural habitat type specified in Annex I of the Habitat Directive;
- A species specified in Annex II of the Habitats Directive;
- For the coherence of the national network of protected sites; and
- For threats of degradation or destruction to which the sites are exposed.



8.5 Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended)

8.5.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) primarily transposes the UK Governments obligations under the Bird Directive and Bern Convention into law. The act outlines provisions for the protection of nationally important sites for nature conservation and provides protection at different levels for certain animals and plants, including certain prohibitions.

Protection of Birds

8.5.2 Part 1 – Section 1 includes certain prohibitions for the protection of birds which make it a criminal offence for a person to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built;
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;
- Have in any one's possession or control any egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act, 1954;
- Use traps or similar items to kill, injure or take wild birds;
- Have in one's possession or control any bird of a species occurring on schedule 4 of the Act unless registered, and in most cases ringed, in accordance with the secretary of state's regulations; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the independent young of such a bird.

Protection of Animals

8.5.3 Part 1 – Section 9 of the act includes certain prohibitions for the protection of certain animals named in schedule 5. In summary offences include:

- If any person intentionally or recklessly kills, injures or takes any wild animal included in schedule 5;
- If any person has in his possession or control any live or dead wild animal included in schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal;



- If any person intentionally or recklessly damages or destroys, or obstructs access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose; and
- Sells, offers or exposes for sale, or has in their possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal included in schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal, or publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that they buy or sell, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things.

Protection of Plants

8.5.4 Part 1 – Section 13 includes certain prohibitions for the protection of certain wild plants named in schedule 8. In summary offences include if any person:

- Intentionally picks, uproots or destroys any wild plant included in schedule 8, or not being an authorised person, intentionally uproots any wild plants not included in that schedule;
- Sells, offers or exposes for sale, or has in their possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild plant included in schedule 8, or any part of, or anything derived from, such a plant; or
- Publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that they buy or sell, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things.

Invasive Species

8.5.5 Part 1 – Section 14 includes certain prohibitions for the introduction of certain invasive species named in schedule 9 of the act. In summary offences include if any person:

- Subject to the provisions of this part, (a) if any person releases or allows to escape into the wild any animal which is of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state; or (b) is included in Part of Schedule 9; and/ or
- Subject to the provisions of this part, any person who plants, or otherwise causes to grow, any plant in the wild at a place out with its native range is guilty of an offence.



Sites of Specific Scientific Interest

- 8.5.6 Part 2 – Sections 28-33 of the act set out the law regarding Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the conservation bodies in England (Natural England) and Wales (Natural Resource Wales) and outlines the offences with respect to SSSI.
- 8.5.7 The offences outlined in the act apply to any person(s), public body, landowner or occupier as well as statutory undertakers or permitted developments. Examples of offences include (but are not limited to):
- Any person intentionally or recklessly damaging or destroying any of the features of special interest of an SSSI, or disturbing wildlife for which the site was notified;
 - Public bodies are not allowed to carry out damaging operations on an SSSI, except where they notified the relevant conservation agency. It is also an offence for a public body to fail to minimise damage on an SSSI or – if damage occurs – to fail to restore a SSSI to its former state; and
 - Statutory bodies have a general duty to take reasonable steps to further to conservation and enhancement of the special feature of SSSI's;
 - Where statutory bodies propose to undertake or permit activities that could affect a SSSI they must consult the relevant statutory nature conservation agency. If the activity cannot be avoided it must be undertaken in a way least damaging to the SSSI; and
 - If you are the owner or occupier of a SSSI, it is an offence to carry out any activity that may likely damage the SSSI without consent from the relevant conservation agency. The law requires that you inform the conservation agency of any changes in the ownership or occupancy.

Other Protected Areas

- 8.5.8 Part 2 – Section 34 to 52 of the act deals with other protected areas within the UK such as limestone pavements, national nature reserves and marine nature reserves. The act allows designation of these sites by the appropriate authority for the purpose of conserving flora and fauna or geological or physiological features of specific interest in an area to protect the site. Furthermore, the act prohibits certain actions in National Parks for certain habitats without consent from local authorities.

8.6 Countryside Right of Ways Act, 2000

- 8.6.1 The Countryside Right of Ways Act, 2000 (CRoW Act, 2000) makes provisions for public access, amends the law for public rights of ways and amends existing law on



nature conservation and the protection of wildlife as well as makes further provisions for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Wildlife Legislation

- 8.6.2 Part III of the CRoW Act, 2000 includes provisions for wildlife protection and nature conservation and includes amendments to the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981.
- 8.6.3 Schedule 9 of the CRoW Act, 2000 increases powers for the protection and management of SSSI. There are increased powers for appropriate authorities to secure management agreements for SSSI. A duty is placed on public bodies to have regard for the continued conservation and enhancement of SSSI. Furthermore, there are increased penalties for the prosecution of wildlife crime, including for third parties that damage SSSI.
- 8.6.4 Schedule 12 of the CRoW Act, 2000 makes certain offences under the provision of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 arrestable. Greater powers are given to police and appointed wildlife inspectors under the CRoW Act, 2000 and enables heavier penalties for the prosecution of wildlife crime.

8.7 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949

- 8.7.1 This act makes provisions for National Parks and the establishment of a National Parks Commission; to confer on the Nature Conservancy and local authorities' powers for the establishment and maintenance of nature reserves. Part III of the act specifically outlines provisions for the designation of nature reserves.

8.8 Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006

- 8.8.1 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC), 2006 is primarily intended to implement key aspects of the governments rural strategy published in July 2004. It also addresses a wider range of issues relating broadly to the natural environment.

Section 40

- 8.8.2 Section 40 of the NERC Act, 2006, places a duty on any public authority and statutory undertaker to have due regard for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity when delivering their functions, extending the provisions outlined under section 74 of the CRoW Act, 2000.
- 8.8.3 The policy goes on to state that conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population of that habitat.



Section 41

8.8.4 Section 41 of the NERC Act, 2006 requires the secretary of state in consultation with Natural England to outline Species of Principle Importance (SPI) and Habitats of Principle Importance (HPI) that in their opinion are important for the conservation of biodiversity.

8.8.5 The secretary of state is required to:

- Take such steps as appear to the secretary of state to be reasonably practicable to further the conservation of the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under this section; or
- Promote the taking by other of such steps.

8.8.6 The NERC Act, 2006 also provides some amendments to the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and includes provisions for enforcement powers and the protection of SSSI.

8.9 Protection of Badgers Act, 1992

8.9.1 The Protection of Badgers Act, 1992 makes it a criminal offence to wilfully kill, injure or take any badger, or attempt to do so. It also makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett.

8.10 Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996.

8.10.1 The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996 makes provision for the protection of wild mammals from certain cruel acts, and for connected purposes. It would be an offence for any person that mutilates, kicks, beats, nails or otherwise impales, stabs, burns, stones, crushes, drowns, drags or asphyxiates any wild animal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

8.11 The Environment Act, 2021

8.11.1 The Environment Act, 2021 gained royal ascent on the 9th November, 2021. The act is wide ranging and broadly has the following aim:

‘a bill to make provision about targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment, for statements and reports about environmental protection; for the office of environmental protection; about waste and resource efficiency; about air quality; for the recall of products that fail to meet environmental standards, about water, about nature and biodiversity; for conservation covenants; about the regulation of chemicals, and for connected purposes’.



Nature and Biodiversity

- 8.11.2 Part 6 – Sections 98 - 101 of the act outlines provisions for biodiversity gain in planning.
- 8.11.3 Schedule 14 makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England.
- 8.11.4 Schedule 14 states that, the biodiversity gain objective is met in relation to development for which planning permission is granted if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat by at least the relevant percentage.
- 8.11.5 It goes on to state that the biodiversity value attributable to the development is the total of:
- The post development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat;
 - The biodiversity value, in relation to the development, of any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development; and
 - The biodiversity value of any biodiversity credits purchased for the development.
- 8.11.6 The relevant percentage is set at 10% for biodiversity gain.
- 8.11.7 Part 6 – Section 100 of the act outlines provisions by regulation for the secretary of a register of biodiversity gain sites (known as the biodiversity gain site register).
- 8.11.8 A biodiversity gain site is land where:
- A person is required under the conservation covenant or planning obligation to carry out works for the purpose of habitat enhancement;
 - That or another person is required to maintain the enhancement for at least 30 years after the completion of the works; and
 - For the purpose of schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 the enhancement is made available to be allocated (conditionally or unconditionally, and whether for consideration or otherwise) in accordance with the terms of the covenant or obligation to one or more developments for which planning permission is granted.
- 8.11.9 Part 6 – Section 101 states that the secretary of state may make arrangements under which a person who is entitled to carry out the development of any land may purchase a credit from the secretary of state for the purpose of meeting the



biodiversity gain objective referred to in schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 and Schedule 2A of the Planning Act, 2008.

8.11.10 A credit is to be regarded for the purpose of that schedule as having such biodiversity value as is determined under the arrangements.

8.11.11 The arrangements may in particular include arrangements relating to:

- Applications to purchase credits;
- The amount payable in respect of a credit of a given value;
- Proof of purchase; and
- Reimbursement for credits purchased for development which is not carried out.

8.12 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

8.12.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework which locally prepared plans for housing and other developments can be produced.

8.12.2 The NPPF supplements Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation 06/2005 (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005).

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

8.12.3 Paragraph 187 states: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened



species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

- 8.12.4 e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- 8.12.5 f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 8.12.6 Paragraph 188 states: Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
- 8.12.7 Paragraph 189 states that: Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- 8.12.8 Paragraph 190 states that: When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:
- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
 - b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
 - c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.



8.12.9 Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 189), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.

Habitats and Biodiversity

8.12.10 Paragraph 192 states that: To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

8.12.11 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around



developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

8.12.12 The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

8.12.13 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Ground Conditions and Pollution

8.12.14 Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;
- b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and
- c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

8.13 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Circular 06/2005

8.13.1 Biodiversity and geological conservation circular 06/2005 provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. It complements the national planning policy in the NPPF, 2024 and the Planning Practice Guidance. Broadly the guidance covers designated



sites, the conservation of habitats and species, including outside of designated sites, protected species by law and the duties and powers used by planning authorities.

- 8.13.2 Paragraph 82 of the guidance states that ‘in determining the application for development that is covered by up-to-date standing advice, a planning authority must take into account this standing advice’.

Protected Species and Planning

- 8.13.3 Paragraph 98 of the guidance states ‘the presence of a protected species is a material planning consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat’.
- 8.13.4 Paragraph 98 also states that ‘they (the planning authority) should consider attaching appropriate planning conditions or entering into planning obligations under which the developer would take steps to secure the long-term protection of the species’.
- 8.13.5 Paragraph 99 of the guidance goes on to state: ‘it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision’. Paragraph 99 also states that ‘this is justified only, where there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development.’

8.14 Horsham District Council Adopted Local Plan (2015)

Policy 25

- 8.14.1 Policy 25 sets out Horsham District Councils (HDCs) commitment to protecting the Natural Environment and Landscape Character. Policy 25 states:
- 8.14.2 The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:
- 8.14.3 Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.



- 8.14.4 Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.
- 8.14.5 Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.
- 8.14.6 Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.

Policy 31

- 8.14.7 Policy 31 sets out Horsham District Councils (HDCs) commitment to protecting biodiversity in the district. Policy 31 states:
- 8.14.8 1) Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.
- 8.14.9 2) Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks.
- 8.14.10 3) Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required.
- 8.14.11 4. a) Particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats in the district as follows:
 - i. Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
 - ii. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs); and
 - iii. Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and any areas of Ancient woodland, local geodiversity or other irreplaceable habitats not already identified in I & II above.



8.14.12 b) Where development is anticipated to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on sites or features for biodiversity, development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. The reason for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and,
- ii. That appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are provided.

8.14.13 5. Any development with the potential to impact Arun Valley SPA or the Mens SAC will be subject to a HRA to determine the need for an Appropriate Assessment. In addition, development will be required to be in accordance with the necessary mitigation measures for development set out in the HRA of this plan.

8.15 Birds of Conservation Concern

8.15.1 Birds of Conservation Concern is a report compiled by a coalition of the UK's leading bird conservation and monitoring organisations and reviews the conservation status of all regularly occurring birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The report was first released in 1996 and is currently in its 5th edition, released in 2021.

8.15.2 The bird species that breed and overwinter in the UK are assessed against a set of objective criteria and placed on the Green, Amber or Red lists that indicate the levels of conservation concern. The quantitative criteria collected is assessed against the historical decline, recent trends in population and range, population size, localisation, and the level of international importance of each species, as well as its global and European threat status.

8.16 IUCN Red List

8.16.1 The international Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species (also known as the IUCN Red List or Red Data Book) is an inventory of the global conservation status of biological species. The inventory is based upon internationally accepted criteria that evaluates the extinction risk of species in all regions of the world. There are two types of red list, the global and national lists. In the UK the IUCN Red List is overseen by an interagency working group that is coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Commission.

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