# LAND NORTH-WEST OF SOUTHWATER, HORSHAM

# ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT, VOLUME II, APPENDIX 8.4 2025 ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL - CHRIST HOSPITAL

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Landscape Architecture
Masterplanning
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hda

# LAND NORTH-WEST OF SOUTHWATER, HORSHAM: CHRIST'S HOSPITAL

# 2025 ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

**Prepared for Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd**

**by**

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**APPENDICES**

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report describes an updated Ecological Appraisal, including [redacted] Phase 1 bat scoping survey, of approximately 1.35ha of land north of Christ's Hospital, West Sussex, hereinafter referred to as 'the site'. The site centre is located by National Grid Reference TQ 14898 29179. The study was commissioned by Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd in April 2025. This report updates a previous Ecological Appraisal carried out in 2022 (HDA 2022).

1.2 The site is located to the north of Christ's Hospital railway station and comprises part of a grassland field. The site is bordered to the north by woodland; to the east by the remainder of the grassland field; to the west by a public right of way and access road with residential properties and Christ's Hospital Station car park beyond; and to the south by residential properties. The location and boundary of the site are shown in *Appendix A*.

1.3 In conjunction with approximately 116ha of land to the east hereinafter referred to as the 'wider site', the Christ's Hospital site is to be subject to a outline planning application, with all matters reserved (except for primary access to the highway) for a phased development comprising: the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of residential dwellings (including affordable housing) (Use Classes C2 and C3); a mixed-use neighbourhood centre (Use Classes E and F); education facilities (Use Class F1(a)); business and employment floorspace (Use Classes B2, B8 and E(g)); redevelopment of existing agricultural buildings including construction of a building for community use (Use Class F2); improvements to public rights of way; sports pitches; gypsy and traveller pitches/plots; public open space; landscaping, and associated infrastructure.

1.4 The aims of this study are:

i. To assess the likely nature conservation importance of habitats within the site;
ii. To assess the likely presence of protected species and Habitats and Species of Principal Importance identified under Section 41 of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act;
iii. To identify any potential constraints to development due to the above;
iv. To identify requirements for any additional ecological surveys in support of a planning application; and
v. To identify measures to avoid and mitigate potential effects of development on identified features of ecological interest.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 Existing ecological and nature conservation data relevant to the site was collated from various sources including the 'Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside'

(MAGIC) online database (http://magic.defra.gov.uk) and Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC). All relevant protected species records were obtained for an area of approximately 2km around the site and a check for statutory designated areas within up to 10km of the site was carried out using the MAGIC database. The findings of the desk study are summarised in *Section 3* below and publicly accessible results are given in *Appendix A*.

## 2.2 Field survey

2.2.1 The field survey comprised a UK Habitat Classification Survey (UKHAB, 2023), carried out by Nick Chambers of HDA on 28th November 2025, [redacted] and a Phase 1 Bat Scoping Survey carried out by Fiona Muir of HDA on the 11th February and 22nd April 2022.

*UK Habitat Classification Survey*

2.2.2 The UK Habitat Classification Survey involved walking over the site, mapping the main habitat types and compiling detailed 'target notes'. Target notes record habitat features, and a list of vascular plant species noted, together with a qualitative assessment of relative abundance where appropriate. An initial assessment was also made of the potential for the site to support protected and notable species based on the character of habitats present. The full results of the UK Habitat Classification survey are given in *Appendix B*. Botanical names follow Stace (2019) for higher plants.

*Phase 1 bat scoping survey*

2.2.3 All trees located within and immediately adjacent to the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and classified accordingly. No buildings are present therefore the Phase 1 bat scoping survey was restricted to trees only.

2.2.4 All trees within the site were inspected from ground-level, with the aid of binoculars and a powerful torch, to identify potential features suitable for use by roosting bats. Potential features include splits, cracks and cavities, peeling bark, woodpecker holes, broken branches and a covering of Ivy where this is of a sufficient age to provide a suitable microclimate between the tree and Ivy stem(s).

2.2.5 In accordance with current best practice guidelines at the time of the survey (BCT, 2016), trees were placed into one of the following five categories based on the nature, size, location and quality of features present in each tree and surrounding habitat:

- Negligible suitability - Trees with no or negligible features for roosting bats;
- Low suitability - Trees of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential;

- Moderate suitability - Trees with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats but are unlikely to support roost types of high conservation status;
- High suitability - Trees with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time; or
- Known or confirmed bat roost.

2.2.6 The results of the Phase 1 bat scoping survey determine the need for further surveys in relation to bats.

[redacted]

*Other species*

2.2.8 Observations on the presence, or potential presence, of other protected species were recorded as incidental information to the UK Habitat Classification Survey and this information should not be relied on as a comprehensive assessment of the presence or otherwise of all protected species on the site. This is because there is a wide range of protected species, many of which can occur on one site and most require specialist expertise to locate them and/or season-critical survey techniques to confirm their presence, and this is outside the scope of the present report.

**2.3 Evaluation criteria**

2.3.1 The evaluation of the site, and the habitats within it, is based on the results of the field surveys described above, any designations pertaining to the site, and existing ecological information collected during the desk study.

2.3.2 Each ecological resource (site, habitat, species or feature) was assigned a value at the following geographic scales (CIEEM, 2018):

- International
- National
- Regional
- County
- District
- Local

- within immediate zone of influence only (Site / Negligible)

2.3.3 Assigning value is relatively straightforward in the case of designated sites, and undesignated sites meeting designation criteria. However, in most cases evaluation of ecological resources is not straightforward and requires a degree of knowledge, training, experience and professional judgement (Usher, 1986; Spellerberg, 1992). Evaluation of an ecological resource was based on a number of criteria (e.g. Ratcliffe, 1977; CIEEM, 2018). These are summarised in *Appendix D*.

2.3.4 The potential for protected species and Habitats and Species of Principal Importance identified under Section 41 of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act to be present within the site has been assessed on the basis of the habitats and features present and the results of the desk study.

**2.4 Limitations**

2.4.1 The optimal season for UK Habitat Classification Surveys is between April and October, and outside of these months some plant species may be absent or inconspicuous. This is not considered to be a serious impediment in the case of the Christ's Hospital site, given the limited ecological value of the habitats present, and the results confirming the findings of the previous habitat surveys undertaken in 2022 (HDA, 2022a).

[redacted]

**3 DESK STUDY**

**Designated sites**

3.1 No statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations pertain to the site. This is confirmed by information from the MAGIC online database and SxBRC.

*Statutory designated areas*

3.2 No internationally designated areas such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are located within 10km of the site.

3.3 Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located within 5km of the site boundary. These are:

- Slinfold Stream and Quarry SSSI located approximately 3.1km to the north-west of the site at its closest point. This 1.93ha SSSI is designated for its geological interest; and
- St Leonard's Park Ponds SSSI located approximately 4.9km to the east of the site. This 4ha SSSI supports species-rich ponds along a wooded stream. Fen and marginal vegetation bordering the ponds support diverse botanical communities, and the ponds and adjacent woodland provide habitat for a diverse range of dragonflies and damselflies, including several rare species.

3.4 The site falls within the 3-5km Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the Slinfold Stream and Quarry SSSI and St Leonard's Park Ponds SSSI, as identified from the MAGIC online database. IRZs are used by Natural England to identify development activities in the vicinity of SSSIs, SPAs and SACs which may in the absence of avoidance or mitigation measures adversely affect designated features, thereby requiring planning authorities to consult with Natural England where potentially damaging activities are proposed. The IRZs in which the site is located do not reference development of the nature proposed (i.e. car parking) as a type of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts on these protected sites. Natural England would therefore not be expected to be consulted in this regard.

3.5 No National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are located within 5km of the site and no Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are located within 2km of the site.

*Non-statutory designated areas*

3.6 SxBRC provided details of three Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within 2km of the site, the closest of which is Sparrow Copse LWS located on the northern site boundary (see *Appendix B*). This 8.5ha LWS comprises an Ash/Maple woodland with a diverse shrub layer situated on the slopes of a stream valley. It has a species rich ground flora and supports a good variety of mosses and liverworts.

3.7 Twenty-seven areas of woodland included on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory are located within 2km of the site. The closest area of woodland listed comprises Sparrow Copse LWS located on the northern site boundary (see *Section 3.6*).

**3.8 Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and 2006 NERC Act Habitats and Species of Principal Importance**

3.8.1 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BRIG, 2011) lists habitats and species which have undergone significant declines in recent years and for which conservation is a priority in

order to preserve biodiversity in the UK. The BAPs provide a list of actions to be implemented to halt or reverse these declines.

3.8.2 These habitats and species are identified as Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England under Section 41 of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. Together with the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and underpinning guidance (ODPM, 2005), Section 40 of the 2006 NERC Act requires that these species are a material consideration in the planning process.

3.8.3 The Sussex Local Nature Partnership (2019) uses the Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) approach to deliver BAP habitat targets. A total of 75 BOAs identify the areas of the county with the best opportunities for habitat creation and restoration and the main aim within BOAs is to restore biodiversity at a landscape-scale. The site itself is not located within a BOA, with the closest BOA to the site being the 'Knepp Estate with fluvial extensions' Biodiversity Opportunity Area located approximately 4km south of the site at its closest point.

**3.9 Protected species**

3.9.1 The information provided during the desk study indicates that there are no records of protected or notable species occurring within the site.

3.9.2 Data provided obtained during the desk study has however shown that there are records of protected and notable species occurring in the vicinity of the site including bats, Great Crested Newts, Hazel Dormouse, Water Vole, birds, reptiles and invertebrates, in addition to other notable plant and animal species.

3.9.3 **Bats**

3.9.3.1 SxBRC provided 331 records of twelve bat species occurring within 2km of the site, namely Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Nathusius's Pipistrelle, Barbastelle, Brandt's bat, Daubenton's bat, Whiskered bat, Natterer's bat, Brown Long-eared bat, Bechstein's Bat, Serotine and Noctule. Records were also provided for unidentified *Pipistrellus*, *Myotis, Plecotus* and bat species within the area. The closest bat records relate to a record of a Brown Long-eared bat dating from 1991 from a location approximately 175m south of the site and 68 *Pipistrellus* bats dating from 2005 from a location approximately 210m south-west of the site.

3.9.3.2 A review of granted European Protected Species applications listed on MAGIC, shows six licences for Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared bat, Natterer's bat and Soprano Pipistrelles within 2km of the site boundary. The most recent record, dating from 2020,

relates to a licence for Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Natterer's bat and Brown Long-eared bat located approximately 1.5km north-west of the site.

3.9.3.3 All UK bat species are 'European Protected Species' under the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended). In relation to 'European Protected Species' (EPS), the 2017 Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species, in particular any disturbance which is likely to: (i) impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or to hibernate or migrate; (ii) affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; and/or
- To (a) be in possession of, or to control; (b) to transport any live or dead animal or any part of an animal; (c) to sell or exchange or (d) offer for sale or exchange any live or dead animal or part of an animal of an EPS.

3.9.3.4 In addition, all UK bats are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). All species are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act and are subject to the provisions of Sections 9.4b and 9.4c, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat.

3.9.3.5 If works are planned that are likely to constitute an offence under the current legislation, then works should be carried out under an appropriate Natural England licence.

3.9.3.6 Seven species of bat (Barbastelle, Bechstein's, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Greater Horseshoe and Lesser Horseshoe) are also identified as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act.

3.9.3 *Otter*

3.9.3.1 No records of Otter were provided for the desk study area due to the sensitivity of the status of this species within Sussex. It is understood that there are no recent breeding Otter records and very few resident Otters in Sussex; however, signs of Otter activity have been recorded in the majority of Sussex river catchments.

3.9.3.2 The Otter is protected through its inclusion on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (see *Section 3.4.3.4)* and is a EPS through the 2017 Conservation of

Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) (see *Section 3.4.3.3*). It is also listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act.

3.9.4 **Hazel Dormouse**

3.9.4.1 SxBRC provided 25 records of Dormouse for the desk study area. The closest record, dating from 2021, is of one adult and pertains to a location approximately 300m to the south-west of the site.

3.9.4.2 A review of granted European Protected Species applications listed on MAGIC, shows four licences for Hazel Dormouse within 2km of the site boundary. The most recent granted EPS licence, dating from 2020, is located approximately 1.8km to south-east of the site.

3.9.4.3 The Hazel Dormouse is protected through its inclusion on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) (see *Section 3.4.3.4)* and is a EPS through the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) (see *Section 3.4.3.3*). It is listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act.

3.9.5 **Water Vole**

3.9.5.1 SxBRC provided one record of Water Vole for the desk study area. The record pertains to a location approximately 900m to the south of the site in the grounds of Christ's Hospital School, dating from 1983.

3.9.5.2 The Water Vole is protected through its inclusion on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). Unless permitted under a licence issued by Natural England this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take Water Voles;
- possess or control live or dead specimens or anything derived from a Water Vole;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which Water Voles use for shelter or protection; and/or
- intentionally or recklessly disturb Water Voles while they are using such a place.

3.9.5.3 The Water Vole is also a priority species on the UKBAP and listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act.

[redacted]

[redacted]

3.9.7 **Birds**

3.9.7.1 SxBRC provided 3402 records of 63 bird species for the desk study area. Two records pertain to the site, one from 2016 of a Stock Dove and one from 2020 of a Kestrel. These are however low-resolution records relating to 1km² grid reference squares that only partially pertains to the site. All nesting birds are afforded a basic level of protection under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). Species included on Schedule 1 of the Act are afforded additional protection against disturbance when breeding. *Table 1* below details the notable bird species recorded within 2km of the site:

**Table 1:** Notable bird species recorded within desk study area

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Annex I[1] | WCA 1[2] | NERC 41[3] | BOCC4 (2015)[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barn Owl | *Tyto alba* | | | | Green |
| Bittern | *Botaurus stellaris* | | | | Amber |
| Black Redstart | *Phoenicurus ochruros* | | | | Amber |
| Black Tern | *Chlidonias niger* | | | | Conservation Concern |
| Black-headed Gull | *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* | | | | Amber |
| Bullfinch | *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* | | | | Amber |
| Cetti's Warbler | *Cettia cetti* | | | | Green |
| Common Scoter | *Melanitta nigra* | | | | Red |
| Corn Bunting | *Emberiza calandra* | | | | Red |
| Cuckoo | *Cuculus canorus* | | | | Red |
| Dunnock | *Prunella modularis* | | | | Amber |
| Firecrest | *Regulus ignicapilla* | | | | Green |
| Grey Partridge | *Perdix perdix* | | | | Red |
| Grey Wagtail | *Motacilla cinerea* | | | | Amber |
| Hawfinch | *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* | | | | Red |
| Herring Gull | *Larus argentatus* | | | | Red |
| Hobby | *Falco subbuteo* | | | | Green |
| House Martin | *Delichon urbicum* | | | | Red |
| House Sparrow | *Passer domesticus* | | | | Red |
| Kestrel | *Falco tinnunculus* | | | | Amber |
| Kingfisher | *Alcedo atthis* | | | | Green |
| Lapwing | *Vanellus vanellus* | | | | Red |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull | *Larus fuscus* | | | | Amber |
| Lesser Redpoll | *Carduelis cabaret* | | | | Red |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lesser Spotted Woodpecker | *Dendrocopos minor* | | | | Red |
| Linnet | *Carduelis cannabina* | | | | Red |
| Little Egret | *Egretta garzetta* | | | | Green |
| Mallard | *Anas platyrhynchos* | | | | Amber |
| Marsh Tit | *Poecile palustris* | | | | Red |
| Meadow Pipit | *Anthus pratensis* | | | | Amber |
| Merlin | *Falco columbarius* | | | | Red |
| Mistle Thrush | *Turdus viscivorus* | | | | Red |
| Nightingale | *Luscinia megarhynchos* | | | | Red |
| Pochard | *Aythya ferina* | | | | Red |
| Red Kite | *Milvus milvus* | | | | Green |
| Redstart | *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* | | | | Amber |
| Reed Bunting | *Emberiza schoeniclus* | | | | Amber |
| Ring Ouzel | *Turdus torquatus* | | | | Red |
| Sandpiper (Common) | *Actitis hypoleucos* | | | | Amber |
| Skylark | *Alauda arvensis* | | | | Red |
| Song Thrush | *Turdus philomelos* | | | | Amber |
| Spoonbill | *Platalea leucorodia* | | | | Amber |
| Spotted Flycatcher | *Muscicapa striata* | | | | Red |
| Starling | *Sturnus vulgaris* | | | | Red |
| Stock Dove | *Columba oenas* | | | | Amber |
| Swift | *Apus apus* | | | | Red |
| Tawny Owl | *Strix aluco* | | | | Amber |
| Tree Pipit | *Anthus trivialis* | | | | Red |
| Tree Sparrow | *Passer montanus* | | | | Red |
| Turtle Dove | *Streptopelia turtur* | | | | Red |
| Wheatear | *Oenanthe oenanthe* | | | | Amber |
| Whinchat | *Saxicola rubetra* | | | | Red |
| White-fronted Goose | *Anser albifrons* | | | | Red |
| Whitethroat | *Sylvia communis* | | | | Amber |
| Willow Tit | *Poecile montanus/ montana* | | | | Red |
| Willow Warbler | *Phylloscopus trochilus* | | | | Amber |
| Woodcock | *Scolopax rusticola* | | | | Red |
| Woodlark | *Lullula arborea* | | | | Green |
| Yellowhammer | *Emberiza citrinella* | | | | Red |

*Notes:*
*1 Species listed in Annex I of Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds.*
*2 Species specially protected under Schedule 1 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).*
*3 Species included in the UKBAP and Species of Principal Importance under the 2006 NERC Act.*
*4 Species included in the Birds of Conservation Concern Red and Amber lists (RSPB, 2021)* [1]

[1] **Red Listed** (RSPB, 2021): Red list species are those that are globally threatened according to IUCN criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery.
**Amber Listed** (RSPB, 2021): Amber list species are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; rare breeders; and those with internationally important or localised populations.

3.9.8 **Reptiles**

3.9.8.1 SxBRC provided 450 records of reptiles for the desk study area including Slow-worm, Common Lizard, Adder and Grass Snake. The closest records to the site relate to a Common Lizard and a Slow-worm recorded approximately 650m to the north of the site, dating from 2007.

3.9.8.2 A reptile survey of the site was undertaken by HDA in 2022 which recorded a low population of Slow-worm (HDA, 2022b).

3.9.8.3 All native reptiles are protected against killing and injuring under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and are listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act. Due to their rarity, Sand Lizards and Smooth Snakes have additional protection.

3.9.9 **Great Crested Newt**

3.9.9.1 SxBRC provided sixty-one records of Great Crested Newt for the desk study area. The closest record to the site is located approximately 875m to the east of the site, dating from 2016.

3.9.9.2 A review of granted European Protected Species applications listed on MAGIC, shows three licences for Great Crested Newts within 2km of the site boundary. The most recent granted EPS licence, dating from 2020, is located approximately 1.8km to south-east of the site.

3.9.9.3 A Great Crested Newt HSI and eDNA survey of the site was undertaken by HDA in 2022 which recorded a population of Great Crested Newts in a pond approximately 1.4km to the south-east of the site (HDA, 2022c).

3.9.9.4 The Great Crested Newt is protected through its inclusion on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) (see *Section 3.4.3.4*) and is a EPS through the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) (see *Section 3.4.3.3*). It is also listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act.

3.9.10 **Invertebrates**

3.9.10.1 SxBRC provided 1355 records relating to ninety-nine protected or notable invertebrate species for the desk study area. These include:

- Medicinal Leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*) which is protected against sale only through its inclusion on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). It is also included on the 1992 EC Habitats Directive: Annex II and V(a) which provides for the setting up of SACs where key populations exist. In addition, it is listed as 'Near Threatened'[2] in Great Britain;
- Records of 22 different beetle species, including Stag Beetle and *Pilemostoma fastuosum*. Stag Beetle is protected against sale only through its inclusion on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). Stag Beetle is also included on the 1992 EC Habitats Directive: Annex II and V(a) which provides for the setting up of SACs where key populations exist. In addition, it is a UKBAP priority species and listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act. *Pilemostoma fastuosum* is listed as Near Threatened in Great Britain;
- Records of six *Odonata* (dragonfly and damselfly) species, including Scarce Chaser and Brillant Emerald dragonflies, which are listed as Near Threatened and Vulnerable respectively, in Great Britain;
- Butterfly records for five species including Purple Emperor, Small Blue, Chalk Hill Blue, White-letter Hairstreak and Brown Hairstreak which are all protected against sale only through their inclusion on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). Small Blue, Brown Hairstreak and White-letter Hairstreak are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act. In addition, White-letter Hairstreak is listed as 'Endangered'[3], Brown Hairstreak is listed as Vulnerable and Purple Emperor, Small Blue and Chalk Hill Blue are all listed as Near Threatened; and
- Moth and butterfly records for 39 other species listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act. Of these species White Admiral, Dingy Skipper and Grizzled Skipper are also listed as Vulnerable in Great Britain and Small Heath and Wall are listed as Near Threatened.

3.9.11 **Plants**

3.9.11.1 SxBRC provided 302 records of 47 protected or notable plant species for the desk study area, including;

- Bluebell which has protection against commercial exploitation only under Schedule 8 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).
- Cut-grass which is protected under Schedule 8 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) against commercial exploitation only. It is also

[2] **Near Threatened** (IUCN Red List, 2012): A taxon is Near Threatened when it does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable now, but is close to qualifying for or is likely to qualify for a threatened category in the near future in Great Britain.
[3] **Endangered** (IUCN Red List, 2012): A taxon is Endangered when it is considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in Great Britain.

listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act, is a UKBAP Priority species and is listed as Endangered in Great Britain.

- White Helleborine and Spreading Hedge-parsley which are listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act and are UKBAP Priority species. In addition, Spreading Hedge-parsley is listed as Endangered and White Helleborine is listed as Vulnerable in Great Britain.
- Nine further species are listed as Vulnerable in Great Britain including Field Garlic, Stinking Chamomile, Rye Brome, Oak-leaved Goosefoot, Chicory, Dwarf Spurge, Oak-leaved goosefoot, Sainfoin and Lesser Spearwort.
- Nine species are also listed as Near Threatened in Great Britain including Wild Strawberry, Autumn Lady's Tresses, Wood-sorrel, Greater Butterfly Orchid, Lesser Water-plantain, Common Cow Wheat, Common Cudweed, Field Woundwort and Common Valerian.

3.9.12 **Other Species**

3.9.12.1 Other records of notable species within 2km of the site provided by SxBRC include records of Common Toad, Hedgehog, Polecat, Harvest Mouse, European Eel and Brown Trout all of which are BAP species for the UK and identified as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the 2006 NERC Act.

## 3.10 Planning Policy

3.10.1 Relevant policies from The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) (2015), relating to nature conservation and the environment include:

***'Policy 31 Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity***
*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.*

*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.*

*3. Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required.*

*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 Reserve (NNRs)*
*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.*

*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.*

*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.'*

3.10.2 Relevant policies from the draft Horsham District Local Plan 2023-40 (Regulation 19) (February 2020) include:

***'Strategic Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Green Infrastructure***

*1. Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains and enhances the existing network of green infrastructure and contributes to the delivery of public open space, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Nature Recovery Network, natural capital, ecosystem services and / or biodiversity. Green Infrastructure should be integral to the design and layout of development, and new provision, including green linkages, should be provided taking into account Natural England's green infrastructure guidance and the council's green infrastructure strategy. Provision should seek to optimise public access to open space and nature via foot, bicycle, wheeling, and also horse as appropriate.*

*2. Proposals that would result in any loss, degradation or harmful impacts to green infrastructure, or core areas of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Network will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that appropriately mitigates and / or compensates for the respective harm and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained and enhanced. Development proposals will be expected to remove invasive species.*

*3. Proposals will be expected to retain and enhance existing priority habitats and trees, and accord with the aims and objectives of the Green Infrastructure and Local Nature Recovery Strategies. Habitat enhancement including additional hedgerow and tree planting must take account of the local landscape and habitat context. It should seek to optimise biodiversity, ecological connectivity and function, and climate change resilience.*

*4. Development likely to affect a watercourse and its associated corridor should seek to conserve and enhance its ecological, landscape and recreational value. This should include providing adequate natural buffer zones to the watercourse.*

***Biodiversity***

*5. The Council will support appropriate new development which delivers at least 12% biodiversity net gain and:*

*a) Retains and enhances significant features of nature conservation value on development sites;*

*b) Makes a positive contribution to biodiversity and accords with the aims and objectives of the Green Infrastructure and Local Nature Recovery Strategies, through the creation of appropriate green spaces, that provide linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks that enable the movement of wildlife through development sites; and / or*

*c) Following the principle of 'right habitat in the right place', significantly increases woodland or other habitats for the purpose of appropriately enhancing biodiversity, carbon sequestration, pollution control, and / or flood mitigation.*

*6. Relevant development proposals will be expected to deliver 12% biodiversity net gain and must submit Biodiversity Net Gain information to show how this will be achieved using the mandated Biodiversity Metric or the Small Sites Metric as appropriate and must*

*abide by the metric trading rules. Submissions must make clear what will be provided to meet no net loss and what will deliver net gains. The net gain must be achieved through the delivery of appropriate on-site biodiversity net gain or, where this is not practicable, through off-site net gain within the District especially areas, as suitable to the habitats subject to gain, identified in the District's Green Infrastructure Strategy or the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, or as agreed by the Council. All such schemes, excluding any respective element using statutory biodiversity credits, must submit for approval by the Council a funded maintenance and management plan, including monitoring / reporting and appropriate enforcement processes, that secures the biodiversity net gains for at least 30 years.*

*7. All other development proposals must seek to demonstrate how measurable biodiversity net gains will be delivered.*

***Protected Sites and Species***

*8. Proposals must give appropriate consideration to protected and notable species. They will be expected to protect priority species and seek to aid their recovery, and must conserve, restore and enhance priority habitats, and should create and manage appropriate new habitats, taking into account pollination, where practicable.*

*9. Particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats, including buffer areas, within the District, or functionally linked to, as follows:*

*a) Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites;*

*b) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Veteran Trees, Ancient Woodland and other irreplaceable habitats;*

*c) Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and any areas of priority habitats including traditional orchards, local geodiversity, Core Sites in the emerging NRN and other irreplaceable habitats not already identified in a & b above.*

*10. An appropriate buffer around woodland will be required, this will be at least 15m around Ancient Woodland or greater in accordance with good practice, and consideration should be given to the potential for protected species, such as bats, and impacts on hydrology. Around ancient and veteran trees a minimum buffer zone of at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree, or 5 metres from the edge of the tree's canopy whichever is the larger, will be required.*

*11. Where the felling of a tree is necessary, for example due to disease, replacement planting with a suitable tree species, age and location to retain and enhance the link with the wider network of habitats and Green Infrastructure, will be required.*

*12. Where development is anticipated to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on sites or features of importance to nature conservation, development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that:*

*a) The mitigation hierarchy has been applied and the objectives of a site's designation, where applicable, and integrity of the area will not be undermined;*

*b) The reason for the development clearly outweighs the likely impact to notified features and / or the need to protect the value of the site; and*

*c) Appropriate mitigation and compensation measures will be provided alongside the delivery of measurable biodiversity net gain as relevant.*

*13. Any development with the potential to impact the Arun Valley SPA / SAC / Ramsar site, The Mens SAC and / or Ebernoe Common SAC will be subject to a Habitats Regulation Assessment 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 Habitat Regulation Assessment of this Plan.*

3.10.3 Relevant policies from the Southwater Development Neighbourhood Plan (June 2021) include:

*'SNP18 - A TREED LANDSCAPE*
*SNP18.1. Development proposals should produce measurable enhancements to the treed environment to ensure biodiversity net gains (regardless of land ownership). Where existing trees or an area of woodland is to be lost, it must be replaced with trees or new woodland of greater environmental value on site or elsewhere within the Plan Area. Trees planted should be suitably mature and, as a minimum, conform to British Standard BS 3936-1 / Standard 10-12cm girth.*

*SNP18.2. Development proposals affecting areas of Ancient Woodland in the Plan area, as shown on the Policies Map, should provide long-term and measurable enhancements to them. SNP18.3. Major development must provide a minimum of one new tree (conforming to British Standard BS 3936-1 / Standard 8-10cm girth) per 40m2 of floor space created. This should be provided on-site or off-site within the Plan Area if there is nowhere suitable within the site. Measures will be implemented on any permissions granted to secure these trees and their survival. If these trees cannot be provided on site, and the applicant is unable to deliver the trees at an alternative location within the Plan Area, a commuted sum may be paid in lieu of tree planting.'*

## 4 UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION SURVEY

4.1 The results of the UK Habitat Classification Survey are presented in map form with target notes (represented by numbered dots) in *Appendix B*. A brief non-technical description of the habitats and features present at the site is given below. Botanical names follow Stace (2019) for higher plants. Numbers in brackets refer to target notes.

4.2 In general terms, the site comprises the western part of a field of modified grassland containing several mature Ash and Oak trees. The site is bordered to the north by off-site ancient woodland associated with the Sparrows Copse LWS (see *Section 3* above); to the east by the remainder of the grassland field; to the west by a public right of way and access road with residential properties and Christ's Hospital Station car park beyond; and to the south by residential properties.

### 4.3 Grassland

4.3.1 The site is dominated by the western part of a wider field comprising modified grassland (3). Species present include Perennial Ryegrass, Cock's Foot, Common Bent, Creeping Thistle, Broad-leaved Dock, Common Nettle, Dandelion and Lesser Celandine with small patches of Bramble. The sward was up to 10cm high at the time of survey, with heavy poaching around the gateway in the west of the field.

4.3.2 Two other small areas of grassland are present at the site entrance on the south-western site boundary. These comprise:

- A small area of modified grassland (1) with three semi-mature Hawthorn trees; and
- Part of a small paddock (2) of modified grassland with herb species including Ribwort Plantain, Dandelion, Ragwort, Broad-leaved Dock, Wood Avens, Dove's Foot Cranesbill, Creeping Thistle and Bramble.

### 4.4 Scattered trees

4.4.1 A number of standard trees are present within the field. These include a veteran Ash tree on the western site margin (4), five mature Oak trees (5) and three semi-mature Hawthorn trees (1).

### 4.5 Scrub

4.5.1 Along the northern and western site boundaries are patches of scrub alongside a post and wire fence (6), largely dominated by Bramble with juvenile Sycamore, Hawthorn and Common Lime. Species present beneath the scrub include Ivy, Cleavers and Hedge Parsley. Bramble dominated scrub is situated along a fenceline in the south-west of the site (7).

4.5.2 Hazel coppice stools from off-site woodland overhang the northern boundary and a stand of Rhododendron is present on the western site boundary (2).

### 4.6 Hardstanding

4.6.1 A tarmac path is present along the south-western site boundary (7).

## 5 PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES

### 5.1 Bats

*Phase 1 bat scoping survey*

5.1.1 All trees within the site were inspected during the 2022 Phase 1 bat scoping survey. No buildings are present. The results of the Phase 1 bat scoping survey are summarised in *Table 2* below and a plan showing the locations of the trees described is provided in *Appendix C*. During the 2022 Phase 1 bat scoping survey, fifteen trees located within the site or with branches partially overhanging the site were identified as having potential to support roosting bats. These are:

**Table 2:** Results of the 2022 Phase 1 bat roost scoping survey

| Tree Ref. | Species | Findings | Bat Roost Potential |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Oak | Peeling bark and a branch wound on the southern aspect and 2x limited cracks in branches on the western aspect. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |
| 2 | Oak | 2x cracked branches on the southern elevation. A limited branch cavity on the northern elevation. Limited peeling bark on the eastern elevation and a trunk cavity on the eastern elevation. | **'Moderate'** bat roost potential |
| 3* | Ash | Limited branch cavity on snapped branch on southern aspect and 2x branch cavities on the western aspect. Heavily Ivy-clad in parts: Additional suitable roost features may have been present that were not visible from ground level. | **'Moderate'** bat roost potential |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **4*** | Oak | Peeling bark and a branch cavity into hollow branch. Heavily Ivy-clad in parts: Additional suitable roost features may have been present that were not visible from ground level. | **'High'** bat roost potential |
| **5*** | Ash | Heavily Ivy-clad in parts. Suitable roost features may have been present that were not visible from ground level. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |
| **6*** | Dead | Small, limited trunk cavities. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |
| **7** | Oak | Heavily Ivy-clad in parts. Suitable roost features may have been present that were not visible from ground level. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |
| **8*** | Oak | Limited branch cavity on the eastern aspect. Heavily Ivy-clad in parts: Suitable roost features may have been present that were not visible from ground level. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |
| **9*** | Oak | Heavily Ivy-clad in parts. Suitable roost features may have been present that were not visible from ground level. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |
| **10** | Oak | Snapped branch with a possible cavity on the northern and eastern aspect. Peeling bark on the eastern aspect. Occluded wood with potential branch cavity on the southern aspect. | **'Moderate'** bat roost potential |
| **11** | Oak | Large section of peeling bark. Cracks in the trunk on the northern aspect. Missing crown. | **'Moderate'** bat roost potential |
| **12** | Oak | Possible trunk cavity on western aspect. Peeling bark on all aspects. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |
| **13** | Ash | Branch cavity on the northern aspect. Occluded wood and a trunk cavity into hollow stem. Missing crown. | **'Moderate'** bat roost potential |
| **G1*** | Ash x 3 | Occluded wooded/ limited trunk cavity on the southern aspect and 2x small branch wounds on the southern aspect. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |
| **G2** | Hawthorn x3 | Heavily Ivy-clad in parts. Suitable roost features may have been present that were not visible from ground level. | **'Low'** bat roost potential |

** Offsite/ over-hanging site.*

*Foraging and commuting habitat*

5.1.2 The open area of modified grassland habitat provides limited opportunities for bats in isolation. Opportunities for foraging and commuting bats are however enhanced by the mature trees, scrub, and woodland edge habitats occurring around the site margins which also provide connective habitat with the wider area.

[redacted]

## 5.3 Birds

5.3.1 The mature trees and woodland and scrub boundaries within and bordering the site offer nesting and foraging opportunities for a range of common and widespread bird species. It is possible that the site supports a small number of breeding birds typical of woodland edge, farmland and garden habitats, although due to the abundance of similar and higher

quality habitat in the wider area the site is unlikely to be of local importance for this group. Notwithstanding this, the protection afforded to all nesting birds would apply during any site clearance works, and recommendations in this regard are provided in *Section 8* below.

**5.4 Reptiles**

5.4.1 A reptile survey conducted in 2022 recorded a low population of Slow-worm at the site (HDA 2022b). The modified grassland that dominates the site provides poor habitat for reptiles, however potential habitat for common and locally recorded reptiles such as Common Lizard, Slow-worm and Grass Snake is provided by the scrub and woodland edge habitats found around the site boundaries.

**5.5 Great Crested Newts**

5.5.1 There are no waterbodies within the site that could provide suitable breeding habitat for Great Crested Newts and this species is therefore not expected to breed at the site. The site does however provide a small amount of suitable terrestrial habitat for this species in the form of scrub habitats around the site boundary and grazed grassland.

5.5.2 A maximum routine migratory range of 250m from breeding ponds has been identified for Great Crested Newts outside the breeding season (Cresswell and Whitworth, 2004) and a review of the OS 1:10,000 scale map and aerial photographs suggests that there are two ponds located within 250m of the site, the closest of which is situated approximately 200m to the south of the site.

5.5.3 Records of Great Crested Newt were provided during the desk study and in view of the above it is therefore possible that Great Crested Newts are present within the site during terrestrial phases.

**5.6 Dormouse**

5.6.1 The modified grassland dominating the site provides unsuitable habitat for Dormice. The scattered scrub around the site boundary provides higher quality habitat for Dormice, albeit this is very limited in quality and extent with higher quality Dormouse habitat provided beyond the site boundary in association with Sparrows Copse LWS to the north. In addition, the closest Dormouse record obtained for the desk study was located over 1km south-west of the site, dating from 2007. It is therefore considered that Dormice are unlikely to be present at the site on a regular basis.

## 5.7 Otter and Water Vole

5.7.1 There are no waterbodies within or adjacent to the site capable of supporting a breeding population of either Otter or Water Vole and it is considered highly unlikely that either of these species are present at the site.

## 5.8 Invertebrates

5.8.1 The majority of the site is dominated by modified grassland which generally forms habitat of relatively limited interest for invertebrates. Habitats of greater interest for invertebrates occur in the form of the veteran Ash and other mature trees and scrub habitats, however, due to the limited extent of these habitats within the site and the abundance of similar and higher quality habitat in the wider area the site is unlikely to be of significant local interest for invertebrates.

## 5.9 Plants

5.9.1 No protected or notable plants were recorded during the UK Habitat Classification Survey. The site is dominated by modified grassland and it is considered unlikely that scarce or threatened native plant species are present.

# 6 NATURE CONSERVATION EVALUATION

6.1 The habitats within the site have been assessed with consideration given to the criteria summarised in *Appendix D* of this report (Ratcliffe 1977; CIEEM 2018). A summary of the site habitat evaluation is given in *Table 3* below.

**Table 3**: Site habitat evaluation

| Value | Habitats present |
|---|---|
| **International** | None |
| **National** | None |
| **Regional** | None |
| **County** | None |
| **District** | Sparrows Copse LWS (8) (off-site) |
| **Local** | **High:**<br>• None<br>**Moderate:**<br>• In-field potentially veteran Ash tree (4)<br>**Low:**<br>• In-field mature Oak trees (5) |
| **Site/Negligible** | All other habitats recorded |

6.2 No habitats of International, National, Regional or County value are present within or immediately adjacent to the site.

6.3 The habitat of highest nature conservation value associated with the site is the Sparrow Copse LWS, an area of off-site ancient woodland situated immediately to the north of the

site, which is considered to be of **district value**. The ancient woodland provides a long-standing habitat of value to a number of species and is noted as supporting a diverse shrub layer, a species-rich ground flora and a good variety of mosses and liverworts. The woodland also provides part of a network of ancient and other woodland habitats providing connectivity across the surrounding area.

6.4 Within the site itself, the habitat of highest ecological interest in its own right is the veteran Ash tree which is considered to be of up to **moderate local value** in its own right. Veteran trees are noted for their ability to support a variety of specialist flora and fauna as well as having cultural and landscape value. In addition, the mature Oak trees are considered in combination to be of **low local value**.

6.5 All other habitats within the site, including the modified grassland which dominates the site, small areas of scrub and hardstanding, have been assessed as being of negligible value for nature conservation at a local level in their own right. Where appropriate, consideration of the potential presence of protected or notable species is given below.

## 7 ADDITIONAL DATA REQUIREMENTS

7.1 In view of the findings of the ecological desk study and UK Habitat Classification Survey, additional survey work has been recommended in support of a planning application to identify species protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) where these have been identified as possibly occurring within the site and could potentially be impacted by development proposals. These further surveys have been instructed and will be the subject of separate reports.

*Reptiles*

7.2 The scrub and woodland edge habitat present on the site boundaries provides suitable habitat for locally recorded common and widespread reptiles such as Grass Snake, Slow-worm and Common Lizard. In addition, a reptile survey of the site conducted in 2022 recorded a low population of Slow-worm (HDA, 2022b). An updated reptile survey has been instructed to establish the status of this group within areas of the site to be affected by the proposed development, which is the subject of a separate report (HDA, 2026a).

*Great Crested Newt*

7.3 The woodland and scrub boundaries and grassland habitats present provide suitable habitat for Great Crested Newt during terrestrial phases, although limited in quality and extent. Potential Great Crested Newt breeding habitat is provided within the wider area by two off-site waterbodies which are located within the routine migratory range of this species during terrestrial phases. A Great Crested Newt HSI and eDNA survey of the site was

previously conducted in 2022 which did not record the presence of a Great Crested Newt population within 300m of the site (HDA, 2022c). An updated Great Crested Newt eDNA survey has subsequently been instructed to determine the status of this species in off-site waterbodies around the site and the likely presence of this species within habitats to be affected by the proposed development, which is the subject of a separate report (HDA, 2026b).

*Bats*

7.4 A number of trees within the site and on the site boundaries have the potential to support roosting bats. Updated bat surveys, including Phase 1 bat roost survey, Phase 2 bat surveys and bat activity surveys have been instructed at the site in accordance with the current best practice guidelines (BCT, 2023) and will be the subject of a separate report.

*Consideration of other species*

7.5 Dormice are considered unlikely to occur at the site on a regular basis due to the very limited extent and suitability of habitats present, and no further survey is proposed with regard to this species. Notwithstanding this, suitable habitat is present in association with the off-site Sparrows Copse LWS to the north and precautionary measures to be employed during any limited removal of scrub or hedgerow habitat within the site are included in *Section 8* below.

7.6 Although breeding birds are likely to occur at the site, it is unlikely that locally significant populations would be affected by the proposed works and no further survey is recommended at this stage. Nature conservation legislation relating to birds would however still apply and measures to ensure compliance during development works are set out in *Section 8* below.

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 This section provides a review of the possible implications of development proposals on identified features of ecological interest within the site and surrounding area and outlines recommended measures for the avoidance and mitigation of potential effects. In addition, opportunities are identified by which development of the site could enhance its current value for species of conservation concern in accordance with planning policy and the 2006 NERC Act.

### 8.2 Designated sites and ancient woodland

*Sparrows Copse Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and associated ancient woodland*

8.2.1 Sparrows Copse LWS is located on the northern site boundary and is listed on Natural England's Inventory of Ancient Woodland. Ancient woodland is defined as any wooded area that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD. Ancient woodland

habitats are regarded as irreplaceable under the 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Natural England and the Forestry Commission have provided Standing Advice for ancient woodland to guide Planning Authorities' considerations in relation to developments in proximity to this habitat (Natural England, 2022). The Standing Advice is a material consideration which should be taken into account when determining planning applications. The advice states:

*"Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees are irreplaceable."*

*"You should refuse planning permission if development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees unless both of the following applies:*

- *there are wholly exceptional reasons*
- *there's a suitable compensation strategy in place (this must not be a part of considerations of wholly exceptional reasons)"*

8.2.2 The standing advice goes on to identify potential effects of development on ancient woodland including indirect loss, damage to rooting zones of woodland trees, pollution, effects on hydrology, fragmentation, loss of supportive habitat, disturbance and introduction of invasive species. The advice goes on to identify possible mitigation measures:

*'Mitigation measures will depend on the type of development. They could include:*

- *putting up screening barriers to protect ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees from dust and pollution*
- *measures to reduce noise or light*
- *designing open space to protect ancient or veteran trees*
- *rerouting footpaths and managing vegetation to deflect trampling pressure away from sensitive locations*
- *creating buffer zones.*

***Use of buffer zones***

*Buffer zones can protect ancient woodland and individual ancient and veteran trees and provide valuable habitat for woodland wildlife, such as feeding bats and birds. The size and type of buffer zone should vary depending on the:*

- *scale and type of development and its effect on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees*
- *character of the surrounding area*

*For example, larger buffer zones are more likely to be needed if the surrounding area is:*

- *less densely wooded*
- *close to residential areas*
- *steeply sloped*

***Buffer zone recommendations***

*For ancient woodlands, the proposal should have a buffer zone of at least 15 metres from the boundary of the woodland to avoid root damage (known as the root protection area). Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, the proposal is likely to need a larger buffer zone. For example, the effect of air pollution from development that results in a significant increase in traffic.*

*For ancient or veteran trees (including those on the woodland boundary), the buffer zone should be at least 15 times larger than the diameter of the tree. The buffer zone should*

*be 5 metres from the edge of the tree's canopy if that area is larger than 15 times the tree's diameter. This will create a minimum root protection area.*

*Where assessment shows other impacts are likely to extend beyond this distance, the proposal is likely to need a larger buffer zone.*

*Where possible, a buffer zone should:*

- *contribute to wider ecological networks*
- *be part of the green infrastructure of the area*

*A buffer zone should consist of semi-natural habitats such as:*

- *woodland*
- *a mix of scrub, grassland, heathland and wetland*

*The proposal should include creating or establishing habitat with local and appropriate native species in the buffer zone.*

*You should consider if access is appropriate. You can allow access to buffer zones if the habitat is not harmed by trampling.*

*You should not approve development proposals, including gardens, within a buffer zone.*

*You should only approve sustainable drainage schemes if:*

- *they do not affect root protection areas*
- *any change to the water table does not negatively affect ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees."*

8.2.3 Sparrows Copse's designation as an LWS relates to its woodland interest. Although LWSs are non-statutory designated sites and Sparrows Copse LWS is not considered to be of more than district value, LWSs are also protected through planning policy.

8.2.4 Due to its location beyond the site boundary, it is highly unlikely that the proposed development would result in loss of ancient woodland habitat. Notwithstanding this, in accordance with Natural England's Standing Advice and as indicated in the emerging proposals shown on the *Indicative Christs Hospital Car Park and Bust Stop* plan (WSP, 2022) a buffer should be afforded to the woodland along with wider measures to avoid damage to rooting zones and adverse effects of lighting, noise disturbance or introduction of invasive species. Measures are set out below for avoidance of adverse effects on the off-site ancient woodland LWS to ensure that no loss or deterioration of ancient woodland habitat would arise as a result of the proposed development of the Christ's Hospital site.

8.2.5 Development proposals should avoid any direct and/or indirect damage to habitat within the off-site ancient woodland and LWS during the construction and operational phases. In order to achieve this, as reflected on the emerging development proposals (WSP, 2022), a minimum buffer of 15m should be provided between new development and the off-site ancient woodland LWS. Measures to ensure its efficacy are described below.

- The buffer zone should predominantly comprise semi-natural habitats such as scrub, rough grassland and trees.

- Although hardstanding within the buffer zone should be avoided, it is usually acceptable to provide opportunities for water attenuation and informal recreation in the buffer such as sensitively designed water attenuation features and unsurfaced or loose-bound paths.
- The off-site ancient woodland and LWS are privately owned with no public access. Access to the off-site woodland should be further restricted through maintenance and enhancement of the existing fences and provision of scrub planting where appropriate.

8.2.6 Any lighting proposals should also be designed to avoid light spill from the site onto the woodland margins. This could be achieved through use of hooded, directional and low level lighting, as appropriate, together with use of narrow spectrum and low-UV bulbs, fitted with automatic timers, dimmers and/or motion detectors where appropriate. Detailed lighting proposals should be reviewed by a suitably qualified ecologist at an appropriate stage.

8.2.7 The design of the surface water drainage scheme for the proposed development should seek to maintain the quality, quantity and constancy of water entering the ancient woodland and LWS throughout the construction and operational phases of the proposed development though the positioning of appropriately located swales, ponds and/or detention basins.

8.2.8 The ancient woodland LWS is located on privately owned land beyond the site boundary, and it is therefore highly unlikely that any loss of ancient woodland habitat, or direct damage through movement of vehicles or storage of materials would arise during the construction phase of the proposed development. Notwithstanding this, it is recommended that the following measures are implemented in order to minimise any potential indirect effects on the off-site woodland during construction works:

- Where possible, construction activities should maintain a 15m stand-off from the ancient woodland edge. This stand-off includes storage of materials and movement of vehicles. The exclusion area should be fenced throughout the construction phase.
- Where construction works within 15m of the ancient woodland are unavoidable (e.g. for construction of sympathetically designed attenuation ponds or path provision), these works should be subject of an agreed Arboricultural Method Statement and supervised by a suitably qualified arboriculturalist. In addition, works should be carried out in accordance with BS5837 ‘Trees in relation to Construction’ and avoid the rooting areas of woodland trees.
- Compound areas should be located away from the buffer area in order to avoid indirect effects of noise and lighting (see above and below).

- Construction works should be carried out in accordance with the Environment Agency's Pollution Prevention Guidance (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pollution-prevention-for-businesses).
- Although it is not expected that specific lighting will be required during the construction phase, in the event that temporary lighting is required this should be the minimum level required for safety and use directional, hooded and low-level lighting as appropriate to avoid light spill on to the woodland edge. Detailed lighting proposals should be reviewed by a suitably qualified ecologist at an appropriate stage.
- Similarly, it is not expected that significant levels of noise or dust would be generated during the construction phase that might otherwise have an impact on the woodland. Notwithstanding this, where appropriate dust suppression and quiet methods of working should be employed (as would be required with respect to nearby residential development in any event) and noisy activities should seek to avoid the bird breeding season (March to September inclusive).
- It is also recommended that a 'toolbox' talk is provided to construction workers to make them aware of the ancient woodland LWS, in addition to the measures to avoid indirect effects described above.

8.2.9 Through the implementation of the above measures, it is considered highly unlikely that significant effects on the integrity of the off-site Sparrows Copse LWS and its associated ancient woodland would arise as a result of the proposed development.

*Other designated areas*

8.2.10 No other statutory or non-statutory sites would be expected to be adversely affected by the proposed development of the Christ's Hospital site in the absence of mitigation or avoidance measures, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This is due to a combination of the nature and scale of the proposed development, the distance between the site and the designated areas, the limited ecological connectivity with the site and/or the character of the habitats and features for which the areas are designated.

8.2.11 This conclusion is supported by the absence of development of this nature in the list of potentially damaging development works for the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) in which the site is located (see *Section 3.4*).

**8.3 Habitats**

8.3.1 Current knowledge suggests that there are no habitats of International, National, Regional, County or District nature conservation value within the site.

8.3.2 The feature of highest ecological interest within the site itself is the in-field veteran Ash tree located on the western site margin which is considered to be of **moderate local value**. As stated in *Section 8.2* above, Natural England and the Forestry Commission identify veteran trees as 'irreplaceable habitats'. Development proposals should avoid any direct and/or indirect damage to the veteran tree during the construction and operational phases through maintaining an appropriate buffer zone. Buffer zones for veteran trees depend on the individual tree and the advice of a suitably qualified arboriculturalist should be sought in this regard. Natural England guidance states that buffer zones for veteran trees should be '*at least 15 times larger than the diameter of a veteran tree. The buffer zone should be 5 metres from the edge of the tree's canopy if that area is larger than 15 times the tree's diameter.'* Buffer zones should be located outside of residential curtilages, contribute to wider ecological networks and towards the green infrastructure of the area, and consist of semi-natural habitats such as rough and meadow grassland. Buffer zones may accommodate surface water drainage features and form part of informal accessible greenspace, provided this will demonstrably not result in deterioration of the tree. The emerging development proposals (WSP, 2022) show that the veteran tree can be retained with an appropriate buffer maintained between the tree and development.

8.3.3 It is recommended that the measures listed in *Section 8.2.8* above in regard to pollution prevention, lighting, noise and dust are also implemented in relation to the veteran tree in order to minimise any potential indirect effects during construction works. Further protection measures include:

- The veteran tree buffer zones should be clearly demarcated prior to construction works commencing, using appropriately robust fencing (e.g. Heras) as required. No development works including storage of materials and movement of vehicles should be carried out within the buffer zone. The exclusion area should be fenced throughout the construction phase.
- Where construction works within the veteran tree buffer zone is unavoidable (e.g. for construction of sympathetically designed attenuation ponds or path provision), these works should be subject of an agreed Arboricultural Method Statement and supervised by a suitably qualified arboriculturalist. In addition, works should be carried out in accordance with BS5837 'Trees in relation to Construction' and avoid the rooting areas of the veteran tree.
- Measures should be put in place to avoid deposition of dust on the veteran tree. This may include measures such as covering/ seeding of stockpiles, use of screening, cleaning of haul roads and damping down of bare ground.
- It is also recommended that a 'toolbox' talk is provided to construction workers to make them aware of the presence of the veteran tree, in addition to the measures to avoid indirect effects described above.

8.3.4 Through implementation of the above measures, it is considered unlikely that significant effects on the integrity of the on-site veteran tree would arise as a result of the proposed development.

8.3.5 Other habitats of nature conservation interest are the mature Oak trees scattered around the site. Although these are of limited value individually, they are considered to be of **low local interest** in combination. Similar habitats are relatively common in the wider landscape and although the mature trees within the site are not particularly high-quality examples of their habitat types, and are individually considered to be of no more than site value in their own right, the trees contribute towards habitat connectivity and provide potential habitat for a range of species, appreciably enhance the nature conservation interest of the site, and complement the off-site ancient woodland and LWS to the north. Where possible, the development proposals for the site should avoid or minimise loss of these trees. The emerging development proposals (WSP, 2022) indicates that all the mature trees will be retained.

8.3.6 Retained trees, hedgerows and woodland within and adjacent to the site should be protected during the course of development, with works carried out in accordance with 'BS5837 Trees in relation to construction' unless otherwise agreed with a suitably qualified arboriculturalist. Where possible, habitat buffers should be maintained adjacent to hedgerows, scrub and trees, incorporating semi-natural habitats such as rough and meadow grassland, scrub and wetland. For further information see *Section 8.2* above.

8.3.7 The modified grassland which dominates the site is considered to be of negligible nature conservation value in a local context. Although the grassland is of limited value, the majority of the grassland is expected to be lost from the site and where possible, the loss of opportunities for wildlife provided by this habitat should be compensated through provision of higher value habitats within the site landscape scheme such as woodland, scrub, rough and meadow grassland, and wetland habitats. The emerging development proposals (WSP, 2022) indicate that the northern area of the site (in the vicinity of the off-site Sparrows Copse LWS) and the western site margin will not be developed. This provides opportunities for establishment of such habitats within the retained areas of open space.

8.3.8 Opportunities for nocturnal wildlife within areas of retained and newly created habitat within and adjacent to the site should be maintained through sensitive lighting design. Where lighting is proposed in the vicinity of these areas, this should be designed to avoid light spill and consideration should be given to the use of directional, hooded and low-

level lighting where appropriate, together with use of warm narrow spectrum and/or low UV bulbs, whilst maintaining a minimum level required for safety.

8.3.9 Subject to appropriate implementation of the above measures, it is considered that opportunities for wildlife can be maintained at the site and its surrounds within the proposed development scheme.

8.3.10 Development proposals should also seek to enhance the site to provide new opportunities for wildlife in accordance with national and local planning policy and guidance (NPPF, 2024; ODPM, 2005) and the 2006 NERC Act. Recommendations as to how enhancements can be achieved are provided in *Section 8.5* below.

**8.4 Protected Species**

8.4.1 Prior to development of the site it has been recommended that surveys are carried out to determine the current status of bats, reptiles and Great Crested Newts at the site and where necessary identify measures to avoid or mitigate impacts on these species. These surveys have been commissioned and will be the subject of separate reports.

*Dormice*

8.4.2 Although it is unlikely that Dormice are present at the site and the extent of suitable Dormouse habitat within the site is very limited, this species is likely to occur in the wider area, and it is conceivable that Dormice may use scrub or hedgerow habitats on the site boundaries on an occasional or transitory basis. Due to the extremely low likelihood of Dormice being affected by the proposed works it is not proposed that further survey is carried out or a Natural England licence applied for in support of the removal of any woody vegetation during site clearance. It is however recommended that in the event that any sections of hedgerow or scrub are to be removed then works are carried out in accordance with the precautionary Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) set out below in order to minimise risk of contravention of nature conservation legislation. It is proposed that Natural England be consulted to agree this approach prior to vegetation removal works commencing:

- Any woody vegetation to be removed should be carefully cut down using hand held tools prior to removal from the site. Where trees are to be removed, consideration should be given to use of soft felling techniques (i.e. gentle lowering of cut vegetation to ground level).
- Contractors should be briefed prior to works to ensure that cutting is carried out in a sensitive manner, and that evidence of Dormouse (e.g. nests) can be identified if found during works.

- A suitably qualified ecologist should be present during vegetation cutting to check clearance areas for the presence of Dormouse nests or other evidence of Dormouse prior to and during works.
- In the unlikely event that a Dormouse is encountered, the works must stop and Natural England notified to agree an appropriate course of action.

8.4.3 In order to maintain and enhance suitable habitat for Dormouse at the site, where possible, opportunities provided by the hedgerow and scrub vegetation should be included within the scheme. Where appropriate new tree, hedgerow and shrub planting should include native fruit and nut producing species of high value to foraging Dormice and other wildlife, and should seek to enhance connectivity provided by habitats along the site boundaries. Further recommendations for enhancement of site habitats are provided in *Section 8.5* below.

8.4.4 In addition, the lighting scheme design for the proposed development should avoid light spill onto areas of scrub, trees and hedgerow habitat within and adjacent to the site, in order to avoid potential impacts on nocturnal wildlife such as Dormice. Where lighting is required in proximity to these habitats, consideration should be given to the use of cut-off, directional, low-level, and hooded lighting as appropriate. It is recommended that the lighting scheme is reviewed by a suitably qualified ecologist at an appropriate stage.

*Birds*

8.4.5 The site is considered unlikely to support an important assemblage of breeding birds and no further survey for this group is recommended. Notwithstanding this, any removal of trees, hedgerow and scrub vegetation should avoid the bird breeding season (generally taken as March to early September inclusive), as wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). If clearance is required during this period, then a search for nesting birds should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to clearance. If breeding birds are discovered, sufficient habitat will need to be retained to ensure birds are not disturbed until nesting activity has been completed and the nest vacated.

## 8.5 Opportunities for enhancement

8.5.1 Where appropriate, development proposals should seek to maintain and provide new opportunities for wildlife in accordance with national and local planning policy and guidance (NPPF, 2024; ODPM, 2005) and the 2006 NERC Act. A selection of measures is given below which are suitable for incorporation within the emerging proposals to potentially increase the long-term nature conservation interest of the site and provide enhanced habitat for protected and notable species:

- Woodland enhancements, including:

- Establishment of 'ecotones' along the off-site woodland edges. These comprise a gradation of woodland to scrub to rough/meadow grassland which are noted for their high biodiversity and the complementary habitat that they provide for woodland species;
- Establishment of a buffer area around woodland to protect woodland edges and discourage public access; and
- New woodland planting within the site landscape scheme, using native species appropriate to the local area.

- Tree/hedgerow enhancements, including:
  - Provision of new opportunities for movement of wildlife within and around the site through provision of new linear habitats including species-rich native hedgerow, tree and scrub planting. Where possible these should complement off-site areas of habitat; and
  - Maintenance and enhancement of standing and fallen deadwood habitats where safe to do so, including use of management techniques such as veteranisation of selected retained mature trees to promote deadwood.
- Creation of sympathetically designed new wetland habitats such as ponds, ditches, swales, reedbeds and/or wet grasslands, either as standalone features or as part of the site surface water drainage strategy, complementing the existing aquatic habitats in the wider area. These should be of wildlife friendly design including gently shelving margins, areas of open water and native aquatic/marginal planting.
- Inclusion of other habitats of high nature conservation interest within areas of open space including rough and meadow grassland and native species-rich scrub habitats, ideally in locations where they complement existing habitats and/or improve connectivity around the site and the wider area;
- Prioritising the use of native species typical of the local area in landscape planting where appropriate to do so and avoiding invasive species and cultivars. Where possible these should be sourced from stock of local provenance;
- Use of nectar and pollen-rich and fruit and nut-producing species within formal landscaping schemes to benefit species [redacted]
- Provision of bat roosting opportunities and bird boxes on existing trees; and
- Provision of log and brash piles around woodland edge, hedgerow and scrub edges to provide habitat for invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles.

## 9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Subject to the implementation of the recommended measures for the protection of the off-Sparrows Copse LWS and ancient woodland and potential veteran tree, and habitat retention, creation and enhancement, no reduction in the ecological interest of the site or

its surrounds is likely to arise as a result of the proposed car parking at the Christ's Hospital site. Development at the site could in fact provide opportunity to enhance its nature conservation interest for a number of species through incorporation of the measures outlined in *Section 8.5* above.

9.2 It is therefore concluded that, beyond the normal requirements to protect the off-site ancient woodland LWS and potential veteran tree, avoid impacts on protected species and maintain key elements of the habitat resource of the site, there appears to be no overriding nature conservation constraints that would preclude development at the site.

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**HDA Document Control and Quality Assurance Record**

Project Title: Land to North West of Southwater: Christ's Hospital
Project Reference: 2090.78
Document Title: 2025 Christ's Hospital: Ecological Appraisal
Commissioning Party: Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd

| Issue | Description | Date of Issue | Signed |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Christ's Hospital: Ecological Appraisal | January 2026 | [redacted] |

| | Personnel | Position |
|---|---|---|
| Author | Nick Chambers | Senior Ecologist |
| Approved for issue | Clare Bird MCIEEM | Associate Ecologist |

**APPENDIX A**

**Desk study results**

# Ecological Data Search SxBRC/25/579 - Summary Report

**An ecological data search was carried out for land at Southwater on behalf of Kate Thatcher (Hankinson Duckett Associates) on 20/10/2025.**

**The following datasets were consulted for this report:**

| | Requested | Radius/buffer size |
|---|---|---|
| Designated sites, habitats & ownership maps | Yes | 2km |
| Protected, designated and invasive species | Yes | 2km |

## Summary of results

### Sites and habitats

| | |
|---|---|
| Statutory sites | 1 Country Park |
| Non-statutory sites | 6 LWS |
| Section 41 habitats | 3 habitats |
| Ancient and/or ghyll woodland | Present |

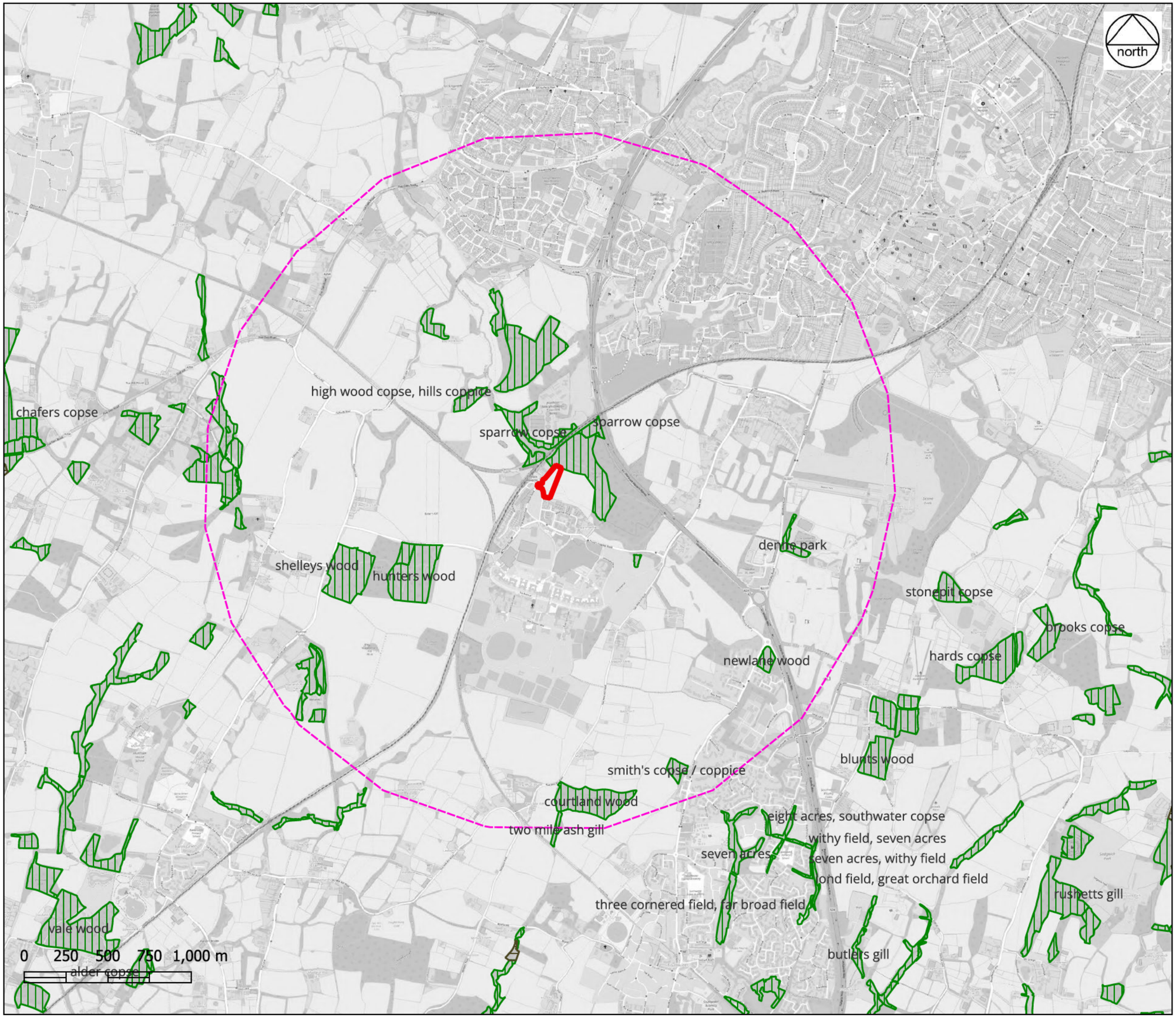
### Protected and designated species

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| International designations | 43 species | 1,086 records |
| National designations | 145 species | 13,231 records |
| Other designations | 334 species | 40,191 records |
| **Total** | **354 species** | **41,182 records** |
| Invasive non-native | 44 species | 3,432 records |

The report is compiled using data held by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) at the time of the request. SxBRC does not hold comprehensive species data for all areas. Even where data are held, a lack of records for a species in a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that the species does not occur there – the area may simply not have been surveyed.

**This summary page may be published.**
**The full report and maps may not be published or otherwise shared.**

**The data search report is valid until 20/10/2026 for the site named above.**




**KEY**

- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland

Map data from OpenStreetMap 2025-09-03

CLIENT
Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd

PROJECT:
Land North-West of Southwater, Horsham: Christ's Hospital

TITLE:
2km Search for Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland

SCALE AT A3: 1:17000

DATE: January 2026

2090.78 / 24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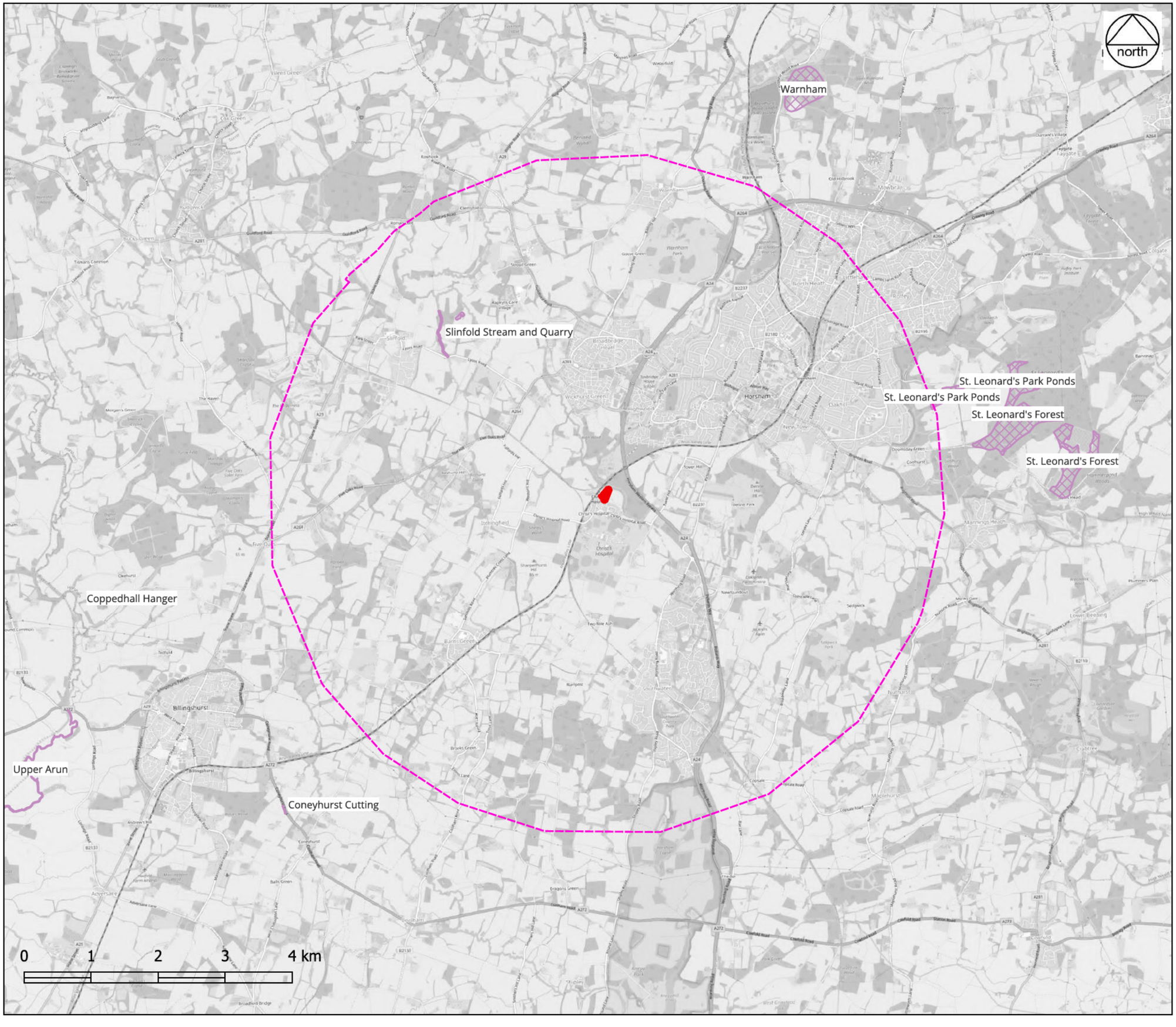


**KEY**

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Map data from OpenStreetMap 2025-09-03

CLIENT
Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd

PROJECT:
Land North-West of Southwater, Horsham: Christ's Hospital

TITLE:
5km Search for Nationally Designated Sites

SCALE AT A3: 1:40000

DATE: January 2026

2090.78 / 23



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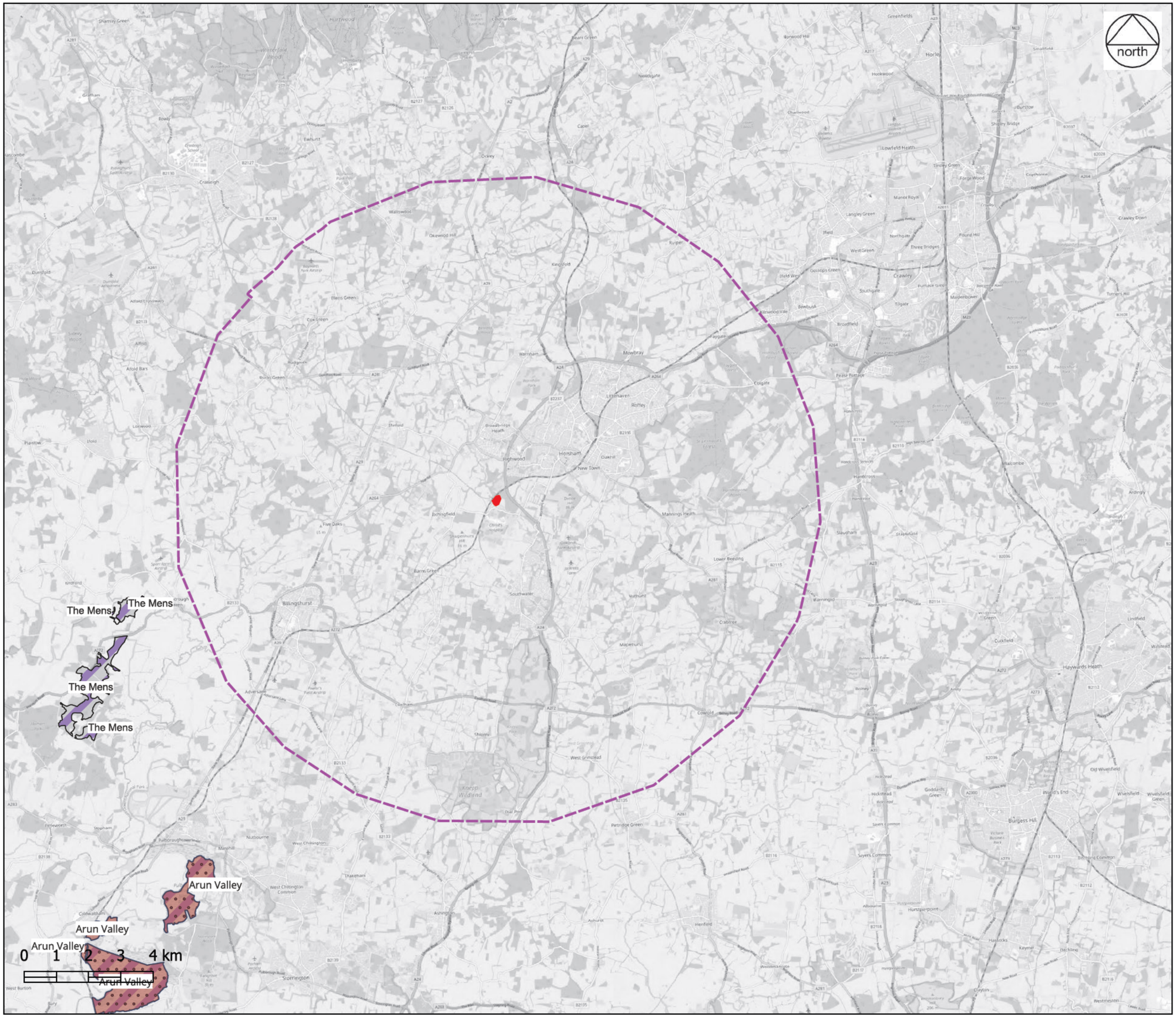


**KEY**

- Ramsar
- Special Protection Areas
- Special Areas of Conservation

Map data from OpenStreetMap 2025-09-03

CLIENT
Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd

PROJECT:
Land North-West of Southwater, Horsham: Christ's Hospital

TITLE:
10km Search for Internationally Designated Areas

SCALE AT A3:
See Scale Bar

DATE:
January 2026

2090.78 / 22


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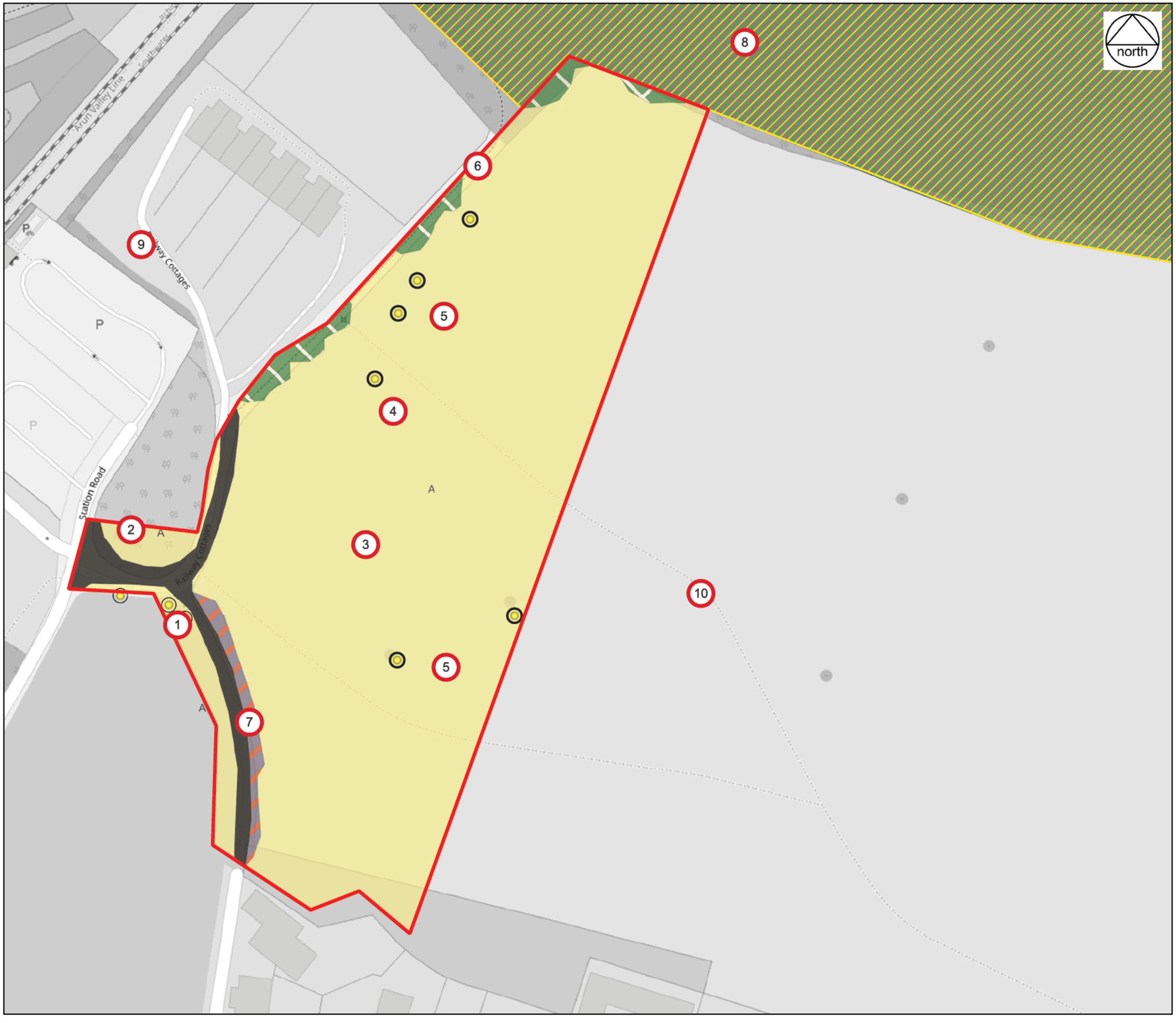
**APPENDIX B**

**UK Habitat Classification survey plan and target notes**




**KEY**

- Site boundary
- Target Note
- Local Wildlife Site
- Bramble scrub
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Mixed scrub
- A Modified grassland
- Existing Large Rural Tree
- Existing Small Rural Tree

CLIENT:
Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd

PROJECT:
Land North-West of Southwater, Horsham:
Christ's Hospital

TITLE:
UK Habitat Survey Plan

SCALE AT A3: NTS DATE: Jan 2026

2090.78 / 21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**Target notes**

1. A small area of modified grassland with three semi-mature Hawthorn trees (*Crataegus monogyna*).

2. Part of a small paddock of modified grassland with species comprising Ribwort Plantain *(Plantago lanceolata)*, Dandelion *(Taraxacum Officinale)*, Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Broadleaved Dock *(Rumex obtusifolius)*, Wood Avens *(Geum urbanum)*, Dove's Foot Cranesbill *(Geranium mole)*, Creeping Thistle *(Cirsium arvense)* and Bramble *(Rubus fruticosus)*. A stand of Rhododendron is present on the site boundary.

3. Western part of a field of species-poor modified grassland, with species including Perennial Rye-grass *(Lolium perenne)*, Cocks Foot *(Dactylis glomerata)* Common Bent *(Agrostis capillaris)*, Creeping Thistle, Broadleaved Dock, Common Nettle *(Urtica dioica)*, Dandelion and Lesser Celandine *(Ficaria verna)* with small patches of Bramble. The sward was up to 10cm high at the time of survey, with heavy poaching around the gateway in the west of the field.

4. A mature Ash *(Fraxinus excelsior)* tree of potential veteran/ ancient status (Ancient Tree ID: 220955) close to the western field margin.

5. Five mature Oak *(Quercus robur)* trees are also present within the site.

6. Patches of scrub along the northern and western site boundary, largely dominated by Bramble with juvenile Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus)*, Hawthorn and Common Lime *(Tilia × europaea)*. The ground layer beneath the scrub includes Ivy *(Hedera helix)*, Cleavers *(Galium aparine)* and Hedge Parsley *(Torilis arvensis)*. Hazel *(Corylus avellana)* coppice stools from off-site woodland overhang the northern boundary (see target note 8).

7. Bramble dominated scrub along a fenceline, with a tarmac path to the west along the site boundary.

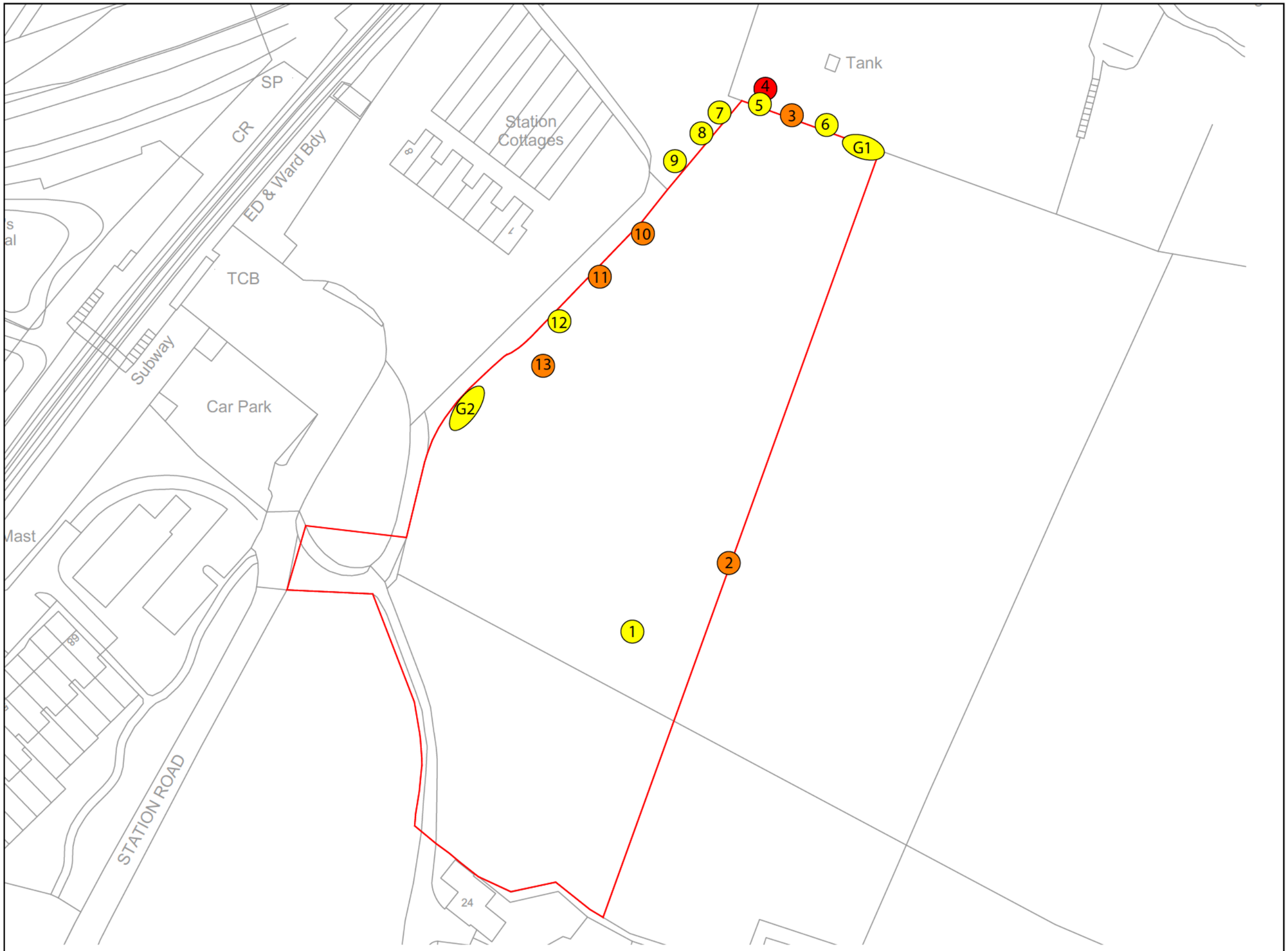
8. Off-site area of broadleaved woodland designated as Sparrows Copse Local Wildlife Site and included on Natural England Ancient Woodland Inventory. The woodland comprises Ash and Field Maple with an understorey of Hazel coppice.

9. Christ's Hospital Railway station (off-site).

10. Off-site grassland of similar character to target note 3.

**APPENDIX C**

**Phase 1 Bat Scoping Plan**




**KEY**

Site boundary

TREES *

High bat roost potential

Moderate bat roost potential

Low bat roost potential

* Roosting categories relate to roost potential in accordance with the BCT 2016 guidelines. All other trees within the site are regarded as having 'negligible' potential to support roosting bats.

CLIENT:
Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd

PROJECT:
Land North-West of Southwater, Horsham: Christ's Hospital

TITLE:
2022 Phase 1 Bat Scoping Summary Plan

SCALE AT A3:
1: 1,000

DATE:
January 2025

2090.78/06a



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**APPENDIX D**

**Evaluation criteria**

**Criteria used for the evaluation of ecological receptors (based on Ratcliffe, 1977; CIEEM, 2018)**

Assigning value is relatively straightforward in the case of designated sites, and undesignated sites meeting designation criteria. However, in most cases evaluation of ecological resources is not straightforward and requires a degree of knowledge, experience and professional judgement (Usher, 1986; Spellerberg, 1992). Evaluation of an ecological receptor was based on a number of criteria (Ratcliffe, 1977; CIEEM, 2018) summarised below:

- Site designations; SPA, SAC, Ramsar, SSSI, NNR, LNR, SINC or equivalent.
- Site designation criteria; e.g. Guidelines for the Selection of Biological SSSIs, JNCC, 1989.
- Conservation status; whether a habitat or species is rare, declining or threatened at a given geographic scale.
- Geographic location; the value of a habitat or species may change depending on whether it is being assessed in the south of England or the north of Scotland.
- Distribution; habitats or species on the edge of their distribution, particularly where that distribution is changing as a result of global trends and climate change and endemic species or locally distinct sub-populations of a species are more valuable;
- Rarity; the presence of habitats, species, subspecies or varieties that are rare or uncommon at a given geographic scale.
- Diversity; of habitats, or species, particularly of vascular plants. Species-rich assemblages of plants or animals are likely to be important in terms of biodiversity;
- Naturalness; habitats least affected by human disturbance are normally of relatively higher importance.
- Size; larger areas are generally more valuable than lots of small ones. Notably large populations of animals or concentrations of animals considered uncommon or threatened in a wider context may be important.
- Fragility; sensitivity to, and probability of, human impact.
- Typicalness; a good example of the type, particularly plant communities (and their associated animals) that are considered to be typical of valued natural/semi-natural vegetation types, including examples of naturally species-poor communities.
- Potential value (if restored to favourable conservation status).
- Secondary or supporting value; value of a receptor in supporting the integrity or conservation status of another valued receptor.
- Ability to be recreated; the more difficult a habitat is to re-create, were it to be destroyed, the greater the importance usually attached to it.