PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Abbots Leigh
Washington Road
Storrington
West Sussex
RH20 4AF

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Sussex Office
Rocks Yard, Victoria Road
Herstmonceux, East Sussex.
BN27 4TQ.

PJC Consultancy Ltd
www.pjcconsultancy.com
contact@pjcconsultancy.com
01233 225365 - 01323 832120

Kent Office
The Watermill, The Mill
Business Park, Maidstone
Road, Ashford, Kent, TN26 1AE.

This report has been prepared by

PJC Consultancy Ltd

on behalf of

David King

Document Author

Nicolle Stevens BSc(Hons) ACIEEM

Nicolle is a Senior Ecological Consultant with over seven years' experience working in the ecological consultancy industry. She gained a BSc(Hons) in Wildlife Conservation at the University of Kent in 2018. Nicolle is also an associate professional member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). In addition, Nicolle is a Natural England class one licence holder for great crested newts and a Natural England class two licence holder for bats.

Checked and Authorised By

Thomas Knight BSc(Hons) MSc MCIEEM

Tom is Director of Ecology with over ten years' experience working in the ecological consultancy industry. He gained a BSc(Hons) in Wildlife Conservation at the University of Kent in 2010 and a MSc in Conservation and Biodiversity at the University of Exeter in 2011. Tom is also a full professional member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). In addition, Tom is a Natural England class licence holder for beavers and a class one licence holder for both bats and great crested newts.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PJC Consultancy Ltd was commissioned by David King to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in support of the proposed development at Abbots Leigh, Washington Road, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 4AF. The purpose was to classify the habitats present, highlight the potential of the site to support protected species, and recommend suitable avoidance, mitigation, compensation and ecological enhancement measures where appropriate. When implemented successfully, these recommendations will ensure that the development proceeds in line with all relevant laws pertaining protected species and their habitats, as well as contributing to an increase in site biodiversity. This report has been produced in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) – more specifically Chapter 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' as well as the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (Horsham District Council, 2015).

Based on current proposals, the results of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal can be summarised in the following table:

Protected Species/Habitats	**Suitable Habitat Present**	**Recommended Further Surveys**	**Ecological Mitigation**
Sussex North Water Supply Zone	The Site is located within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone for Arun Valley Special Area for Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar.	None required.	The proposed development may need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to consider the impacts, both alone, and in combination with other projects within the area.
Bats (Roosting)	Trees T1 and T49 were identified as having PRF-M suitability to support roosting bats and trees G2, T34, T35 and T48 were identified as having PRF-I suitability to support roosting bats.	None required providing the avoidance and mitigation measures are adhered to.	Retention of trees T1, G2, T35, T48 and T49. An inspection of tree T34 should be undertaken immediately prior to its removal. Further requirements for mitigation, compensation and/or licences may be required for bats depending on the results of the recommended inspection.
Bats (Foraging and Commuting)	The Site was identified as having low habitat suitability to support commuting and foraging bats.	None required providing the avoidance and mitigation measures are adhered to.	Retention of all boundary vegetation and implementation of a sensitive lighting mitigation strategy.
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
Dormice	The Site was identified as providing some very limited foraging, commuting, nest building and hibernating opportunities for dormice.	None required providing the avoidance and mitigation measures are adhered to.	All habitat clearance works should be undertaken in accordance with a precautionary non-licensed method statement.
GCN	The Site was identified as having potential to support GCN during their terrestrial lifecycle phase. There was also suitable habitat connectivity to a network of waterbodies within a 250m radius of the Site.	None required providing the avoidance and mitigation measures are adhered to.	All habitat clearance works should be undertaken in accordance with a precautionary non-licensed method statement.
Reptiles	The Site was identified as having high potential to support reptiles providing foraging, commuting, basking and hibernating opportunities.	None required providing the avoidance and mitigation measures are adhered to.	All habitat clearance works should be undertaken in accordance with a precautionary non-licensed method statement.
Nesting Birds	The Site was identified as having potential to support nesting birds.	None required providing the avoidance and mitigation measures are adhered to.	Habitat clearance works should be undertaken outside the main nesting bird season. Should this not be possible, all trees and buildings must be inspected by an ecologist to determine the presence/absence of any nesting birds immediately prior to clearance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Instruction

1.1.1 PJC Consultancy Ltd was commissioned by David King to provide a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) which includes an ecological walkover survey and a daytime bat walkover (DBW) survey in support of the proposed development at Abbots Leigh, Washington Road, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 4AF (hereafter referred to as the 'Site').

1.2 Survey Objectives

1.2.1 The aim of this PEA is to identify potential ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the Site by undertaking an ecological walkover survey, ecological desk study and DBW survey, as well as to understand the ecological baseline of the Site. The objectives were to:

- Identify the habitat types present on the Site;
- Calculate the ecological baseline data of the Site by classifying the type, distinctiveness, condition, connectivity and strategic significance of habitats present prior to development;
- Calculate the area and hedgerow units of the Site pre-development;
- Identify the potential of the Site to support protected and notable habitats and/or species;
- Identify the potential of any trees and buildings within the Site to support roosting bats;
- Highlight known or potential legal or planning policy constraints in relation to ecology and recommend avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures to satisfy legal and planning policy requirements where appropriate; and
- Identify, where necessary, the requirement for further survey.

1.3 Documents and Information Provided

1.3.1 The proposed development includes the subdivision of the existing residential curtilage at Abbots Leigh to accommodate 1no. dwelling with associated private garden space, car parking and landscaping.

1.3.2 PJC Consultancy Ltd used the Proposed Site Plan, document reference: PL01, revision: P05 (2024), Tree Survey Schedule (PJC Consultancy, 2024) and Tree Constraints Plan, drawing number: PJC/66650/24/A (PJC Consultancy, 2024) and to aid in the preparation of this report.

1.4 Scope of Report

1.4.1 This PEA is only concerned with the habitats and features within the property boundaries of the Site, or in areas that have the potential to be affected by the proposed new development.

1.5 Site Description

1.5.1 The Site, approximately 0.3ha in size, comprises the residential gardens of Abbots Leigh, located north of Washington Road, located approximately 16km west of Washington village and 1.5km west of Storrington town centre, centred on (OS central grid reference: TQ 1013 3680). The Site is situated within a sub-urban landscape on the outskirts of the adjacent town and village, bound by a mosaic of woodland parcels, grassland, and scrub. The location of the Site within its environs is presented in Appendix I.

1.6 Legislation and Planning Policy

1.6.1 This PEA has been compiled with reference to relevant wildlife and countryside legislation, planning policy and the UK Biodiversity Framework. Their context and applicability is explained as appropriate in the relevant sections of the report and additional details are presented in Appendix II.

1.6.2 The key articles of relevance are:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- The Environment Act 2021;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA);
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2023);
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (2011-2020); and
- Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (Horsham District Council, 2015).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 A desk study was undertaken in October 2024 with the objective of collating and reviewing existing ecological information, and obtaining data and information held by relevant third parties.

2.1.2 Datasets from Natural England (MAGIC, 2024) were reviewed to identify the presence of UK statutory designated sites and notable habitats within the zone of influence, including woodlands listed on the ancient woodland inventory, habitats of principal importance (HPI) listed on the priority habitat inventory and statutory designated for their nature conservation value at the national scale such as sites of scientific interest (SSSI) and at the European and/or international scale namely: special areas of conservation (SACs), special protection areas (SPAs), and internationally designated wetland (Ramsar) sites. These sites collectively are hereafter referred to as 'European Sites'. Where measurements are included with the record, these provide the distance of the designated site from the closest point of the Site.

2.1.3 Data for sites within the zone of influence where European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences have been granted, were also reviewed. This information allows a greater understanding of the potential for European protected species to be present in the local area.

2.1.4 The zone of influence is the area over which ecological features, such as designated sites of nature conservation importance and protected and notable habitats and species, may be affected by the biophysical changes caused by the proposed development and associated activities. Due to the size of the Site and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that a zone of 1km from the centre of the Site is appropriate for the gathering of information for the desk study (CIEEM, 2018).

2.2 Ecological Walkover Survey

2.2.1 An ecological walkover survey (formerly referred to as 'extended phase 1 habitat survey') was undertaken on 25th September 2024 by Nicolle Stevens BSc(Hons) ACIEEM (Natural England class one great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) and class two bat licence holder).

2.2.2 As part of the ecological walkover survey, habitats were identified and mapped in accordance with 'UK Habitat Classification 2.0' (UKHab Ltd, 2023) (Appendix III).

2.2.3 UK Habitat Classification 2.0 comprises a five-level 'Primary Habitat Hierarchy' and a list of 'Secondary Codes', the latter is sub-divided into Essential and Additional Codes. For the purpose of this assessment, habitats have been allocated a single Primary Habitat Code up to Level 4 as well as all associated Essential Secondary Codes, and where relevant Additional Secondary Codes.

2.2.4 The ecological walkover survey was extended to include consideration of protected and notable species in accordance with good practice guidance for preliminary ecological appraisal (CIEEM, 2017). The dominant plant species in each habitat were recorded, as were any evidence of protected and notable species. The potential for the Site to support protected and notable species was also assessed. Those ecological features not classified as a habitat are denoted using a target note.

2.3 Daytime Bat Walkover Survey

2.3.1 All buildings and trees within the Site were also subject to a DBW survey on 25th September 2024 by Nicolle Stevens BSc(Hons) ACIEEM (Natural England class two bat licence holder). The external and internal inspection (where access permitted) of the buildings and ground inspection of trees was to assess potential roosting features (PRFs) such as those presented in Tables 1 and 2. The DBW was undertaken in accordance with best practice survey standards (BCT, 2023 and BTHK, 2018).

Table 1: Features of trees commonly used by bats.

Features of trees used as bat roosts	Signs indicating possible use by bats
Natural holes.	Tiny scratches around entry point.
Woodpecker holes.	Staining around entry point.
Cracks/splits in major limbs.	Bat droppings in, around or below entrance.
Loose bark.	Audible squeaking at dusk or in warm weather.
Hollows/cavities.	Flies around entry point.
Dense epicormic growth (bats may roost within it).	Distinctive smell of bats.
Bird and bat boxes.	Smoothing of surfaces around cavity.

Table 2: Features of buildings commonly used by bats.

Features of building or built structure	Signs indicating possible use by bats
Type of building. Age of building. Aspect of PRF. Wall construction – cavity walls or rubble-filled walls. Form of the roof – presence of gable ends, hipped roofs, nature and condition of the roof covering. Presence of hanging tiles, weather boarding or other forms of cladding. Nature of the eaves – sealed by a soffit or boxed eave and tightness of fit to exterior walls. Presence and condition of lead flashing. Gaps under eaves, around windows, under tiles, lead flashing. Presence and type of roof lining. Presence on roof insulation.	Tiny scratches around entry point. Staining around entry point. Bat droppings in, around or below entry point. Feeding remains below entry point. Cobweb free potential entry points. Audible squeaking at dusk or in warm weather. Flies around entry point. Distinctive smell of bats. Smoothing of surfaces around entry point.

2.3.2 The buildings and trees were assessed in accordance with the criteria listed above and assigned to one of five categories as listed in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3: Categorisation system for visual inspection of trees.

Suitability	Description
None	A tree with no features capable of supporting roosting bats or highly unlikely to be any present.
PRF-I	Features considered suitable to support individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	Features considered suitable to support multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Table 4: Categorisation system for visual inspection of structures.

Category	Description
Confirmed roost	Bats discovered roosting within structure or recorded emerging from/entering structure at dusk and/or dawn. Structure found to contain conclusive evidence of occupation by bats, such as bat droppings. A confirmed record (as supplied by an established source such as the local bat group) would also apply to this category.
High potential	A structure 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

Category	Description
	longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
Moderate potential	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
Low potential	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
Negligible potential	A structure with no features capable of supporting roosting bats.

2.4 Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment

2.4.1 A total of eight waterbodies were identified within a 250m radius of the Site as part of the desk study. The locations of these waterbodies can be seen in Appendix IV.

2.4.2 One of these waterbodies (waterbody WB1) located approximately 35m west of the Site, was subject to a habitat suitability index (HSI) assessment and terrestrial habitat assessment during the ecological walkover survey on 25th September 2024 by Nicolle Stevens BSc(Hons) ACIEEM (Natural England class one GCN licence holder).

2.4.3 A HSI is a tool that enables an assessment of the likelihood of a water body to support GCN. It incorporates 10 suitability indices (SI), all of which are factors thought to affect GCN, as detailed in Table 5 below.

Table 5: HSI Suitability Indices.

Suitability Indices	Description
SI_1	Geographic location
SI_2	Pond area
SI_3	Permanence
SI_4	Water quality
SI_5	Shade
SI_6	Waterfowl
SI_7	Fish
SI_8	Pond count
SI_9	Terrestrial habitat
SI_{10}	Macrophytes

2.4.4 Each variable is assessed separately and then mathematically combined in the following formula, HSI = (SI1*SI2*SI3*SI4*SI5*SI6*SI7*SI8*SI9*SI10)1/10 to provide the geometric mean, which is a numerical index between 0 and 1. A lower score indicates a less suitable habitat whereas a higher score represents optimal conditions favourable for GCN as detailed in Table 6 below. There is a positive correlation between the scores and the resulting incidence of GCN observed in ponds. However, whilst the HSI can be used to help inform the likelihood of presence or absence it is not sufficiently precise to allow conclusion that a higher score confirms presence and likewise a lower score absence. HSI is therefore used as a guide to help determine the need for further GCN surveys.

Table 6: Categorisation of HSI Scores.

HSI	Pond Suitability
<0.5	Poor
0.5-0.59	Below Average
0.6-0.69	Average
0.7-0.79	Good
>0.8	Excellent

2.5 Limitations of Survey

2.5.1 The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on Site, based on the suitability of the habitat and any direct evidence on Site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group. Additional surveys may be recommended if, on the basis of this assessment it is considered reasonably likely that protected species may be present.

2.5.2 The habitats present, and their management are likely to change over time, thus the findings of the ecological walkover survey are only considered valid for a period of up to two years.

2.5.3 A full biological record centre desktop study was not undertaken as part of this assessment. This was not considered necessary given the limited scale of the proposed development, the nature of the on-site and surrounding habitats and limited potential for impacts to arise within or outside of the Site.

2.5.4 This report includes a preliminary assessment of likely impacts of a development project only. The primary audience for a PEA is the client or developer and relevant members of the project team, such as the architect, planning consultant, and landscape architect. It is normally produced to inform a developer (or other client), and their design team, about the key ecological constraints and opportunities associated with a project, possible mitigation requirements and any detailed further surveys required. Under normal circumstances, it is not considered appropriate to submit a PEA in support of a planning application because the scope of a PEA is unlikely to fully meet planning authority requirements in respect of biodiversity policy and implications for protected species. In most cases, particularly when further surveys have been recommended within the PEA, a more detailed and comprehensive Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) should be submitted in support of a planning application instead.

2.5.5 This document has been prepared for the stated proposal (2.5.1) and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an additional check being carried out by the author as to its suitability in relation to any updated proposals. PJC Consultancy accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequence of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. PJC Consultancy accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person by whom it was commissioned.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

Statutory Designated Sites

3.1.1 Two statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance were identified within the zone of influence as part of the desk study. These were Sullington Warren SSSI located approximately 510m north-west of the Site and Chantry Mill SSSI located approximately 660m west of the Site.

3.1.2 Sullington Warren SSSI lies over Sandgate Beds and Lower Greensand, supporting a range of heathland habitats including both wet and dry heath, grassland, scrub and woodland. The woodland carries a rich community of breeding birds. The area of heathland in Britain has declined in recent years largely as a result of agricultural improvement and the encroachment of woodland onto neglected heaths. On Sullington Warren, the majority of the heathland is dry heath, but there is also a small area of wet heath which increases the species interest of the site. Several unusual plants and invertebrates are associated with these wet and dry heath communities. The remaining area on this site is comprised of scrub and bracken which forms dense stands in places; set-natural woodland, which has a very varied age structure and composition, and two small areas of grassland, one of which is predominantly wet.

3.1.3 Chantry Mill SSSI provides the best available exposure of the unusual 'iron-grit' horizon which characterises the Gault/Folkestone Beds junction in this part of Sussex and which contrasts strongly with the type of transition seen between these formations elsewhere in south-east England. The 'iron-grit' represents a condensed deposit associated with prolonged nondeposition over a structural axis, (probably the northern margin of the major Portsdown Axis), which separated the Vectian and Wealden provinces in the Lower Cretaceous.

Protected and Notable Habitats

3.1.4 In total, four parcels of ancient woodland listed on the ancient woodland inventory were identified within the zone of influence as part of the desk study. The nearest of which was located approximately 350m south-west of the Site.

3.1.5 Overall, 41 parcels of HPI listed on the priority habitat inventory, comprising broadly classified deciduous woodland, lowland calcareous grassland, traditional orchard and woodpasture and parkland, were identified within the zone of influence as part of the desk study. The closest parcel of which was a parcel of broadly classified deciduous woodland located approximately 80m west of the Site.

Protected and Notable Species

3.1.6 A total of four EPSM licences granted in relation to protected species were identified within the zone of influence as part of the desk study. These included:

- An EPSM licence for the destruction of a resting place used by Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii*, natterers *Myotis nattereri* and whiskered *Myotis mystacinus* bats for use between 2013-2013.
- An EPSM licence for the destruction of a breeding place and resting place used by common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Brandts *Myotis brandtii*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and whiskered bats for use between 2013-2015;
- An EPSM licence for the damage and destruction of a breeding place and resting place used by common pipistrelle, barbastelle, Brandts, brown long-eared and whiskered bats for use between 2015-2016; and
- An EPSM licence for the destruction of a breeding place used by soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bats for use between 2015-2025.

3.1.7 The closest of which was an EPSM licence for the destruction of a resting place used by Daubenton's, natterers and whiskered bats located approximately 500m east of the Site.

3.2 Ecological Walkover Survey

3.2.1 Habitat types and descriptions and associated primary and secondary codes are provided in Tables 7 and 8 below, in accordance with UK Habitat Classification 2.0. The distribution of these habitats are presented in Appendix III, together with Site photographs, which are presented in Appendix V.

Table 7: Habitat types present within the Site.

Habitat Type				Description
Level 2	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Secondary Codes**	
Woodland and Trees – urban trees (u)	N/A	N/A	Scattered trees (32) Ruderal or ephemeral (81)	Scattered broadleaved and coniferous trees were recorded throughout the Site, primarily within the northern extent. Tree species recorded included Atlas cedar *Cedrus atlantica*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, beech *Fagus sylvatica,* laburnum *Laburnum anagyroides* and silver maple *Acer saccharinum.* Parcels of ruderal or ephemeral vegetation were recorded beneath the mature trees, particularly within the north-eastern extent of the Site. The vegetation here was less than 30cm in height, and was sparse in places, comprising species of moss *Bryophyta* spp., fescue and tree saplings (see above for species list).
Urban (u)	Built-up areas and gardens (u1)	Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)	N/A	A small garden outbuilding was recorded within the eastern extent of the Site. A full description of the buildings is presented in Table 8 below. A gravel driveway was also recorded within the southern extent of the Site.
		N/A	Active management (516) Non-native (523) Vegetated garden (828) Flower bed (846) Introduced shrub (847)	The majority of the Site comprised a parcel of vegetated garden which predominantly comprised a garden lawn. The grassland supported a short sward length (~5cm in height) indicative of a regular mowing regime and supported up to 6 species per m^2 (excluding forbs). The parcel was dominated by Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* with white clover *Trifolium repens*, common selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, common daisy *Bellis perennis*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* and fescue *Festuca* spp. also recorded. Species of ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, hairy bittercress *Cardamine hirsuta* and dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* were also recorded occasionally throughout the grassland parcel having colonised closer to the introduced shrubs. Parcels of introduced shrubs forming formal planted beds were also located across the

Habitat Type				Description
Level 2	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Secondary Codes**	
				Site. The parcels were regularly managed and comprised stands of non-native ornamental species, primarily forming formal planted beds. Here, species of mature and immature stands included pampas grass *Cortaderia selloana*, common rhododendron *Rhododenron ponticum*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, *Iris* sp., blue leadwort *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* and Grahams sage *Salvia microphylla.* A large line of cherry laurel, approximately 4m in height and up to 3m in width, was recorded along the southern and eastern extents of the Site. The ground flora beneath this was bare for the majority, however supported tree saplings (see below for species list), and species of ragwort, dandelion, willowherb *Epilobium* sp., common nettle *Urtica dioica*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, wild strawberry *Fragaria vesca* and sow thistle *Sonchus oleraceus* along the periphery.
Woodlands and Forest (w)	Broadleaved and mixed woodland (w1)	Other broadleaved woodland (w1g)	Dry ditch (50) Introduced shrub (847)	A parcel of woodland approximately 180m in length and approximately 5m wide, was recorded along the southern Site boundary. The parcel was not managed as woodland but instead, part of the residential garden, and comprised species of hornbeam *Carpinus betulus,* pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, lime *Tilia* x *europaea*, sycamore, ash *Fraxinus excelsior,* yew *Taxus baccata*, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and hazel *Corylus avellana.* The woodland supported an understorey that was dense in places and comprised species predominantly of non-native ornamental species, such as Mexican orange *Choisya* sp., cherry laurel, Portuguese laurel *Prunus lusitanica*, common rhododendron and thorny olive *Elaeagnus pungens*. with wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, holly, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., hazel and yew. The ground flora beneath the woodland was also dense in places, particularly the south-eastern extent where the canopy was not as dense, and included species of cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, creeping buttercup, drooping sedge *Carex pendula*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, dandelion, wood speedwell *Veronica montana*, grassland sedge *Carex divulsa*, sow thistle, bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides*, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, sorrel

Habitat Type				Description
Level 2	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	**Secondary Codes**	
				Rumex sp., brome *Bromus* sp., hart's-tongue fern *Asplenium scolopendrium*, butterbur *Petasites pyrenaicus* and common nettle. A dry ditch was recorded along the northern extent of the parcel, where this met the line of cherry laurel. The ditch was less than 1m wide, and ran the length of the parcel.

Table 8: Notable ecological features present within the Site.

Target Note (TN)	Notable ecological feature
1	The approximate location of a mammal hole.
2	The approximate location of a log/brash pile.
3	The approximate location of a compost pile.

3.3 Daytime Bat Walkover Survey

3.3.1 A description of the buildings and trees and any potential roosting features (PRF) are detailed in Tables 9 and 10 below:

Table 9: DBW survey results of buildings within the Site.

B1
Description
An outbuilding forming a sunroom. The building was comprised of a timber frame supporting painted timber shiplap boards, which were unlined and exposed internally. The building supported a monopitched timber roof which was felt lined roof and in good condition, which was also unlined internally, exposing the underside of the timber roof. The building was well sealed and in good condition.
Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats
Negligible.

Table 10: DBW results of trees within or immediately adjacent the Site. All trees have been labelled in accordance with the Tree Survey Schedule (PJC Consultancy, 2024).

T1
Description
A mature atlas cedar approximately 20m in height.
Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features
Multiple woodpecker holes were recorded on the eastern and northern extents of the main stem, approximately 15m up. The upper stem also supported decay which could support potential fissures/cavities considered suitable in supporting bats.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats

PRF-M
G2
Description
A semi-mature sycamore approximately 10m in height.
Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features
Lifted bark on the main stem.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats
PRF-I
T34
Description
A dead ash tree approximately 5m in height.
Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features
The dead stem was clad with ivy *Hedera helix* growth which could provide roosting opportunities for bats.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats
PRF-I
T35
Description
A mature sycamore approximately 17m in height.
Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features
The stem was clad with ivy *Hedera helix* growth which could provide roosting opportunities for bats.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats
PRF-I
T48 – Located outside of the western Site boundary.
Description
A mature holm oak *Quercus ilex* approximately 17m in height.

Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features
A large tear out leading to a potential cavity on the southern elevation approximately 2m up on the main stem could provide roosting opportunities for bats.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats
PRF-M

T49 – Located outside of the northern Site boundary.
Description
A standing dead beech tree approximately 10m in height.
Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features
Multiple squirrel *Sciurus carolinenses* and woodpecker holes on the north-eastern extent of the main stem which could provide roosting opportunities for bats. The stem appeared to be hollow for the top metre and therefore was open to the elements.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats
PRF-I

T50 – Located outside of the northern Site boundary.
Description
A beech tree approximately 13m in height.
Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features
An open knot hole on the north-eastern extent of the main stem approximately 4m up.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats
PRF-I

All other trees within the Site
Description
Mature trees within the woodland and scattered throughout the Site.
Evidence of Bats
None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Potential Roost Features

None recorded at the time of the assessment.
Suitability to Support Roosting Bats
Negligible.

3.4 GCN HSI Assessment

3.4.1 A summary of the HSI results is presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Summary of HSI Results.

Suitability Indices	HSI Score
Location	1
Pond Area	0.15
Pond Drying	0.1
Water Quality	0.33
Shade	0.3
Fowl	1
Fish	1
Ponds	1
Terrestrial Habitat	1
Macrophytes	0.4
Overall Score	0.47 = Poor

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Statutory Designated Sites

4.1.1 In total, two statutory designated sites of nature conservation importance were identified within the zone of influence as part of the desk study. These were Sullington Warren SSSI located approximately 510m north-west of the Site and Chantry Mill SSSI located approximately 660m west of the Site.

4.1.2 Given the distance between the Site and the identified statutory designated sites, and the size of the Site and nature of the proposed development, adverse effects upon the statutory designated sites and their qualifying criteria for designation are not considered likely.

4.1.3 The Site is located within an impact risk zone for Sullington Warren SSSI, however, the proposed development does not fall into the listed development categories.

4.1.4 The Site is also located within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone. An assessment must be carried out on all new developments which would lead to an increased in water demand in the area. This is to prevent adverse impacts on the qualifying features of the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar.

4.1.5 The proposed development includes the construction of a new residential dwelling. On this basis, the proposed development may need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to consider the impacts, both alone, and in combination with other projects within the area, potentially proceeding to the appropriate assessment stage where likely significant effects cannot be ruled out.

4.1.6 An HRA should set out detailed mitigation measures that will be secured, to ensure there is no adverse effect on the integrity of the sites and their qualifying criteria.

4.1.7 On this basis, the LPA therefore has a duty to consult Natural England for advice on the development and potential impacts of drainage on the Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar resulting from any proposed development, and how these might be avoided or mitigated against.

4.2 Protected and Notable Habitats

Woodland

4.2.1 Overall, four parcels of ancient woodland and 41 parcels of HPI were identified within the zone of influence as part of the desk study. The nearest parcel of ancient woodland was located approximately 350m south-west of the Site, whilst the nearest parcel of HPI, a parcel of broadly classified deciduous woodland, was located approximately 80m west of the Site.

4.2.2 Given the distance between the Site and the nearest parcel of ancient woodland and HPI and given the size of the Site and nature of the proposed development, adverse effects upon these protected and notable habitats are not considered likely. Protected and notable habitats are therefore not considered an ecological constraint and are not considered further in this report.

4.3 Protected and Notable Species

4.3.1 The Site was considered to provide opportunities for protected and notable species. The suitability of habitat on Site to support species is considered below.

Bats

4.3.2 All bats are European protected species (EPS) and both individual animals and their roosts are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Certain bat species are also listed as Species of Principal Importance (SPI) under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.3 A total of four EPSM licences granted in relation to protected bat species were identified within the zone of influence as part of the desk study. The closest of which was an EPSM licence for the destruction of a resting place used by Daubenton's, natterers and whiskered bats located approximately 500m east of the Site.

Roosting Suitability

4.3.4 As part of the DBW, all buildings within the Site were identified as having negligible suitability to support roosting bats and therefore roosting bats are highly likely absent from the buildings.

4.3.5 As part of the DBW, trees T1, G2, T34, T35, T48-T50 were identified as exhibiting features with potential to support roosting bats. Trees T1 and T48 were identified as having PRF-M suitability to support roosting bats, whilst trees G2, T34, T35, T49 and T50 were identified as having PRF-I suitability to support roosting bats.

4.3.6 It should be noted that the DBW survey was undertaken from the ground and therefore it was not possible to accurately determine the characteristics of the feature, for example the depth of the feature within the tree. The above classification therefore follows a precautionary approach using professional judgement.

4.3.7 All trees with suitability to support roosting bats are anticipated to be retained as part of the proposed works, apart from T34, which will be lost to facilitate the proposed Given that tree T34 is proposed to be felled, the proposed development could result in the damage or destruction of a potential bat roost site.

4.3.8 Tree T34 was identified as having PRF-I suitability to support roosting bats. No further surveys are considered necessary on this tree. However, as a precaution it is recommended that an inspection of tree T34 (with the use of an endoscope inspection) be undertaken immediately prior to felling to determine whether bats are roosting within the tree, which can be undertaken by the tree surgery contractor under the instruction and supervision of a suitably licenced ecologist.

4.3.9 Other precautionary mitigation measures to be implemented may include soft-felling sections of the tree that contain potential roost features. This involves gradually sectioning the trunk and/or limbs and lowering sections to the ground by hand or by using ropes. As a further precaution, the felling of the tree should be undertaken outside the core hibernation period (between November and February).

4.3.10 It should be noted that should a bat roost or roosts be found, a EPSM licence may be required to permit works that would potentially cause destruction. A EPSM licence for development is issued by Natural England under Regulation 53(2)(e) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017). This application process can a minimum of six weeks.

4.3.11 It is also recommended that the lighting mitigation strategy, as detailed in paragraph 4.3.13 below, be adhered to throughout, to avoid the artificial illumination of the retained trees.

Foraging and Commuting Suitability

4.3.12 The Site was considered to provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats primarily the woodland, hedgerow and scattered trees and was classified as having low suitability to support foraging and commuting bats.

4.3.13 However, these features are to be retained throughout the proposed development, apart from a small section of woodland and hedgerow (approximately 0.1ha in size). On this basis, the proposed development is considered unlikely to result in the loss or degradation of bat foraging and commuting habitat or sever important commuting routes and obstruct access between potential bat roosts and important foraging habitats, providing the mitigation measures in relation to lighting described below are implemented during the construction and operational phase of the proposed development. It is recommended that any new artificial lighting associated with the proposed development aims to:

- Maintain a dark corridor along the Site boundaries and beneath the canopies of the mature trees;
- Use minimum light levels necessary. For example, there should be times throughout the evening (when bats are most active) when all outdoor security lights are unlit to avoid affecting bat activity. Lighting can also be installed using a timer or movement sensor to avoid long periods of an area being lit at night;

- Lighting should be a warm white spectrum and feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to lower the range of species affected by lighting. Using LED luminaires where possible and avoid luminaires with UV elements, specifically avoiding metal halide and fluorescent sources (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2023); and
- Internal luminaries can be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2023) and light spill and use hoods, louvres or other similar design features to avoid light spill and direct light away from areas of mature vegetation.

Hazel Dormice

4.3.14 Hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are EPS and are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Dormice are also listed as SPI under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.15 The Site supported some suitable semi-natural habitat for dormice comprising mature woodland and hedgerow that are arboreally connected to additional treelines and woodland parcels within the wider environment.

4.3.16 Given the hedgerow comprised a single species and the woodland understorey comprised non-native and ornamental species for the majority with the absence of preferred floral species (such as honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*), the opportunities for dormice are considered limited.

4.3.17 Nevertheless, these features were considered to provide sub-optimal foraging, commuting, nest building and hibernating opportunities for dormice.

4.3.18 In the event that dormice are present within the Site and wider surroundings, the proposed development could result in the death or injury, or disturbance to dormice or could result in the damage or destruction of a dormouse breeding site or resting place.

4.3.19 The proposed development seeks to retain the majority of the hedgerow and woodland which will retain habitat connectivity across the Site and between the Site and wider environment, apart from a small section of woodland and hedgerow (approximately 0.1ha in size) which will require removal to facilitate the new access into the Site.

4.3.20 On this basis, the proposed development is considered highly unlikely to result in the damage or destruction of a breeding place or resting place used by dormice, or injure a dormouse whilst it is occupying such a place, providing the mitigation measures detailed below are adhered to.

4.3.21 Therefore, as a precaution, it is recommended that construction works (including habitat clearance works) be undertaken in accordance with a Precautionary Non-Licensed Method Statement (see Appendix VI).

4.3.22 The purpose of the Precautionary Non-Licensed Method Statement is to detail all reasonable avoidance and mitigation measures to be implemented to ensure that there are no detrimental impacts on the favourable conservation status of dormice and no risk to individual dormice potentially present within the Site as a result of construction activities.

4.3.23 This is further supported by guidance detailed by Natural England. For European protected species (such as dormice) Natural England's stance is that: "If the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge or the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence under Regulation 41 or 45 then no licence is required" (Natural England, 2013).

4.3.24 It should be noted that should a dormouse or nest be found, all works must cease, and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist, An EPSM licence may be required to permit works that would potentially cause disturbance, damage or destruction of habitat or individuals. An EPSM licence for development is issued by Natural England under Regulation 53(2) of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017). This application process can take a minimum of six weeks.

4.3.25 It is further recommended that the sensitive lighting mitigation strategy, as detailed in paragraph 4.3.13 above, be implemented to ensure that the woodland edge remains dark, to minimise potential disturbance to dormice when they are most active.

4.3.26 Furthermore, the strict pollution prevention protocol and best practice construction measures, as detailed below, should be adhered to in order to minimise adverse impacts on dormice within the suitable habitats.

4.3.27 It is therefore recommended that a strict pollution prevention protocol be adhered to during the demolition and construction phases of the proposed development, to ensure indirect adverse impacts on woodland are avoided.

4.3.28 All demolition and construction works must ensure the use of water to damp down material and prevent dust clouds, and use on-tool extraction where possible. However, works must take place during periods of low rain fall and predicted dry weather to ensure pollution run off from the Site to the surrounding areas is avoided.

- Other best practice construction measures which must be adhered to during the demolition and construction phases of the proposed development include:
- Installing dust sheeting onto Heras panels surrounding the development area;
- Appropriate covering of skips and vehicles; and
- Avoidance of burning materials onsite.

Great Crested Newts and other Amphibians

4.3.29 GCN are EPS and are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). GCN and common toad *Bufo bufo* are also listed as SPI under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.30 No waterbodies were identified within the Site as part of the desk study. On this basis, the Site was considered to provide negligible breeding opportunities for breeding GCN. The Site supported mature woodland and hedgerow with suitable understorey, a drainage ditch and compost heap (Target Note 3), which were considered to provide some foraging and commuting opportunities for GCN during their terrestrial lifecycle phase. In addition, the brash/log piles (Target Note 2) and mammal hole (Target Note 1) were considered to provide some over wintering opportunities for GCN.

4.3.31 Overall, eight waterbodies were identified within a 250m radius of the Site as part of the desk study. These comprised seven ponds located 35m west (waterbody WB1), 45m south-west (waterbody WB2), 130m north (waterbody WB3), 130m north-east (waterbody WB4), 175m west (waterbody WB5), 230m west (waterbody WB6), 200m north-west (waterbody WB7), and a drainage ditch located approximately 40m south of the Site (waterbody WB8).

4.3.32 The waterbodies to the south are separated from the Site by a road (Washington Road) which is understood runs off into the waterbodies adjacent to it on the northern (waterbody WB1) and southern (waterbody WB2) extents. Although the road separates the Site from surrounding waterbodies, the road is not considered wide enough or fast enough to act as a barrier to dispersal for GCN.

4.3.33 Direct impacts on suitable waterbodies for breeding GCN are not anticipated. However, the proposed development could result in adverse direct and indirect impacts on GCN, resulting in the death or injury, or disturbance to GCN during their terrestrial phase or result in the damage or destruction of a GCN resting place such as a hibernation site.

4.3.34 A GCN HSI assessment was undertaken on waterbody WB1 (Table 11), which identified as being of 'poor' habitat suitability to support breeding GCN, mainly due to the waterbody supporting concrete sides preventing ingress/egress opportunities and that the water level of the waterbody fluctuates

regularly, likely with pollutants from the road run-off. With this in mind, waterbody WB2 is considered likely to also be of 'poor' habitat suitability to support GCN.

4.3.35 Given the above and given that the Site supports grassland for the majority that is well-maintained and comprises a formal residential property, GCN are considered likely absent from the Site during both their aquatic and terrestrial lifecycle phases. The proposed development is therefore considered unlikely to result in the death or injury, or disturbance to GCN or result in the damage or destruction of a GCN breeding site or resting place given the absence of both suitable aquatic and terrestrial habitat within the Site.

4.3.36 This is supported by the rapid risk assessment tool within the GCN licence application form (WML-A14-2), which was used to assess the risk of the proposed development on GCN. Based on the current proposal that comprises up to 0.2ha of terrestrial habitat loss within 100-250m of potential GCN breeding waterbodies surrounding the Site, the tool indicates a 'green' risk meaning the risk of an offence being committed is considered to be highly unlikely and that a European Protected Species (EPSM) licence is not required.

4.3.37 Nevertheless, as a precaution, it is recommended that construction works (including habitat clearance works) be undertaken in accordance with a Precautionary Non-Licensed Method Statement (see Appendix VI).

4.3.38 The purpose of the Precautionary Non-Licensed Method Statement is to detail all reasonable avoidance and mitigation measures to be implemented to ensure that there are no detrimental impacts on the favourable conservation status of GCN and no risk to individual GCN potentially present within the Site as a result of construction activities.

4.3.39 Providing the avoidance and mitigation measures detailed within the Precautionary Non-Licensed Method Statement are implemented in full, the proposed works are considered highly unlikely to adversely affect the favourable conservation status of GCN, or breach relevant nature conservation legislation pertaining to GCN. On this basis, further GCN presence/likely absence surveys and/or a EPSM licence is not required prior to proposed works commencing.

4.3.40 This is further supported by guidance detailed by Natural England. For European protected species (such as dormice) Natural England's stance is that: "If the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge or the species concerned, considers that on balance the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence under Regulation 41 or 45 then no licence is required" (Natural England, 2013).

Reptiles

4.3.41 Native, widespread reptile species (common or viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, adder *Vipera berus*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and slow worm *Anguis fragilis*) are protected under Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to kill or injure individual animals. All widespread reptile species are also listed as SPI under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.42 Habitats recorded within the Site particularly the mature woodland, hedgerow and introduced shrub, were considered to provide some foraging, commuting, basking, sheltering and egg laying (compost heap (Target Note 3)) opportunities for reptiles. Although the Site supported amenity grassland, this was maintained a short sward length, reducing the opportunities this provides for reptiles. In addition, the brash/log piles (Target Note 2) and mammal hole (Target Note 1) were considered to provide some over wintering opportunities for reptiles.

4.3.43 The proposed development seeks to retain the majority of suitable reptile habitat, however, will result in the loss of up 0.2ha of suitable habitat comprising, mature woodland, hedgerow introduced shrub, and to a lesser extent, amenity grassland. Works associated with any proposed development of the Site, for example habitat clearance, could therefore result in the death or injury of any reptiles present within the Site.

4.3.44 In order to comply with legislation protecting reptiles the mitigation measures detailed below should be adhered to.

4.3.45 As a precaution, it is therefore recommended that construction works (including habitat clearance works) be undertaken in accordance with a Precautionary Non-Licensed Method Statement (see Appendix VI).

4.3.46 Providing the avoidance and mitigation measures detailed within the Precautionary Non-Licensed Method Statement are implemented in full, the proposed works are considered highly unlikely to result in the death or injury of any reptiles potentially present within the Site. On this basis, further reptile presence/likely absence surveys are not required prior to proposed works commencing.

Birds

4.3.47 All birds, their nests and eggs are protected from killing and injury of individuals, damage and destruction of nests and destruction of eggs under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Species listed in Schedule 1 (Part 1) of the Act are also protected from disturbance whilst nesting or whilst with dependent young, by special penalties. Many bird species are also listed as SPI under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.48 The Site supported hedgerows, woodland and scattered trees, which were considered to provide good nesting and foraging opportunities to a wide range of common bird species.

4.3.49 Works associated with any proposed development of the Site, for example habitat clearance, could therefore result in direct adverse impacts on nesting birds. On this basis, nesting birds are therefore considered a potential ecological constraint. In order to comply with legislation protecting nesting birds the mitigation measures detailed below should be adhered to.

4.3.50 It is recommended that habitat clearance works be undertaken outside the main nesting bird season. The nesting bird season for most British bird species is between March and August (inclusive).

4.3.51 Should this not be possible, all suitable nesting habitat must be inspected by an ecologist to determine the presence/absence of any nesting birds prior to clearance. In the event of an active nest being identified, a temporary exclusion zone would need to be placed around the nest and development paused until the dependent young have fledged which may be several weeks. The ecologist will determine safe working distances and the distances will be dependent upon the bird species present.

4.3.52 The permanent loss of suitable foraging and nesting habitat for birds should be compensated for by incorporating new suitable foraging and nesting habitat into the landscape designs. Habitat creation examples including planting a variety of native fruit and nut bearing tree and shrub species such as birch *Betula* spp., holly *Ilex aquifolium*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and crab apple *Malus sylvestris*.

4.3.53 Artificial bird nest boxes should also be installed onto any retained trees within the Site. Given their designation as SPI, particular consideration should be given to the installation of starling (i.e. Schwegler 3S or similar) nest boxes and/or general bird nest boxes used by house sparrow and spotted flycatcher (i.e. Schwegler 1B, 2HW, 2GR or similar).

[redacted]

4.3.56 [redacted]

Other Mammal Species

Water Voles, Otters and Beavers

4.3.62 Water voles *Arvicola amphibious* and their places of shelter are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any water vole, damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place of shelter or protection that the animals are using, or disturb voles while they are using such a place. Water voles are also listed as SPI under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.63 Otters *Lutra lutra* are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to kill, injure or capture an otter, intentionally or recklessly disturb otters; or to damage, destroy or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a holt or other resting places. Otters are also listed as SPI under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.64 Eurasian beavers *Castor fiber* are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to kill, injure or capture a beaver, deliberately disturb beavers; or to damage or destroy the breeding site or resting place of a beaver.

4.3.65 Very limited suitable aquatic and terrestrial habitat was recorded within the Site and immediate surroundings.

4.3.66 Due to the size of the waterbodies and isolation from a connected network of waterbodies within the Site surroundings, particularly a large running watercourse such as a river, the waterbodies are considered unlikely to support a viable population of water voles, otters or beavers.

4.3.67 However, the waterbodies located north of the Site (waterbodies WB3, WB4 and WB7) are located within what appears to be a quarry surrounded by woodland parcels, where pits have been left over time to fill with water. Although unlikely to support a fish population or aquatic vegetation, the waterbodies could provide foraging and commuting opportunities for water voles, otters and beavers. Although unlikely, the banksides could also provide opportunities for otter holt creation and water vole burrow creation. On this basis, the waterbodies to the north of the Site supporting a population of water voles, beavers and/or otters, cannot be ruled out.

4.3.68 Given the distance between the waterbodies and the size of the Site and scale of the proposed development, adverse impacts on water voles, otters and beavers is not considered likely. On this basis, water voles, otters and beavers and are not considered an ecological constraint and are not considered further in this report.

European Hedgehog

4.3.69 The European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* is classified as an SPI under the NERC Act 2006. Therefore, the presence of this species on site would be a material consideration in the planning process.

4.3.70 The Site supported some suitable semi-natural habitat for hedgehogs in the form of hedgerows, woodland and introduced shrub. However, the proposed development is considered unlikely to result in impacts on European hedgehogs given the size and nature of the Site and presence of other suitable habitat within the wider surroundings and providing mitigation measures detailed below are adhered to.

4.3.71 Hedgehogs should be specifically watched for during the removal of features considered to provide potential sheltering habitat (i.e. brash piles). If any hedgehogs are found, they should be carefully moved to retained areas of vegetation outside of the Site.

4.3.72 Furthermore, any new boundaries required as part of the proposed development should be permeable to hedgehogs in order to main habitat connectivity across the Site and wider surroundings. This can be achieved by creating ground-level boundary holes (approximately 13cm x 13cm) which should link as many neighbouring land parcels as possible.

4.3.73 In addition, parcels of dense scrub, shrubs and tussocky grassland and features such as deadwood and brash piles should be maintained and/or created across the Site in order to provide important foraging and nesting opportunities for hedgehogs.

Rabbits and Foxes

4.3.74 It should also be noted that evidence of rabbits in the form of a mammal hole (Target Note 1) and droppings, were recorded within the southern extent of the Site during the ecological walkover survey.

4.3.75 Rabbits are protected under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 which makes it an offence to crush or asphyxiate or inflict unnecessary suffering to any and all wild mammals.

4.3.76 The mammal hole is located within the south-eastern extent of the Site and is to be retained throughout all phases of the proposed development. On this basis, the current proposals do not have the potential to contravene the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, through causing the collapse of tunnels and their entrances.

4.3.77 On this basis, no further mitigation measures in relation to rabbits is considered necessary.

4.3.78 However, in the event that the proposals will change and impacts to the mammal hole cannot be avoided, it is recommended that all identified mammal holes be sensitively deconstructed by soft-digging and supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist, to ensure than no offence will be committed.

Invertebrates

4.3.79 A number of invertebrate species such as stag beetles *Lucanus cervus* are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Many invertebrate species including the stag beetle are also listed as SPI under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.80 All protected invertebrate species listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) identified within the search area as part of the desk study are considered likely absent from the Site as their preferred food plants were either absent or not recorded in sufficient quantity to otherwise support a viable population.

4.3.81 In addition, the Site was considered to provide very limited opportunities for protected and notable invertebrate species given the absence of invertebrate microhabitats such as woodland edge, herb-rich grassland habitats and deadwood. Protected and notable invertebrate species are therefore not considered an ecological constraint and are not considered further in this report.

Plants

4.3.82 Wild plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which prohibits the unauthorised intentional uprooting of any wild plant species and forbids any picking, uprooting or destruction of plants listed on Schedule 8 of which there are over 150 species. In addition, nine plant species are afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Many plant species are also listed as SPI under the NERC Act 2006.

4.3.83 The habitats on Site were common and widespread and therefore provided limited potential to support protected and notable and rare plant species.

4.3.84 Section 14(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it illegal to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any plant listed in Schedule 9 of the Act including rhododendron.

4.3.85 No Schedule 9 non-native invasive plant species were recorded within the Site.

4.3.86 On this basis, protected and notable plants including non-native invasive plant species are not considered an ecological constraint and are not considered further in this report.

4.3.87 Multiple stands of rhododendron were recorded within the Site, particularly towards the southern extent. In addition, stands of cherry laurel, a Sussex invasive non-native species (Sussex INNS), were also recorded within the Site, again, towards the southern extent.

4.3.88 Works associated with any proposed development of the Site, for example habitat clearance or maintenance, including trimming or pruning, could therefore result in the spread of rhododendron and cherry laurel. On this basis, invasive plant species are therefore considered a potential ecological constraint. In order to comply with legislation regarding invasive plant species, the mitigation measures detailed below should be adhered to.

4.3.89 Any habitat clearance works associated with the proposed development of the Site should safely manage and correctly remove and dispose of the cherry laurel and rhododendron in order to prevent its spread.

4.3.90 Any works associated with the proposed development of the Site should be undertaken in accordance with the regulatory position statement (RPS) for invasive plant species; Treatment and disposal of invasive non-native plants: RPS 178 (Environment Agency, 2016). In addition, a specialist contractor should be employed to manage and remove the three-cornered leek from the Site in order to prevent its spread.

4.4 Ecological Enhancements

4.4.1 Under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 there is a duty to have regard to biodiversity conservation. In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) and the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (Horsham District Council, 2015) encourages ecological enhancement to be integrated into development projects in order to achieve an overall net-gain in biodiversity. Given the above, the following enhancement recommendations should be considered and incorporated into the final design proposals:

- Installation and maintenance of artificial bat bricks or bat tubes (i.e. Schwegler 1FR and 2FR bat tubes and Schwegler 1GS bat brick or similar) into any new buildings and installation of bat boxes (i.e. Schwegler 2FN or similar) on to suitable retained trees to increase the roosting opportunities for bats within the Site. Any artificial roosting features should be placed between 3m and 6m above ground in a variety of locations at slightly different heights and preferably positioned facing a variety of directions.

- Installation and maintenance of artificial bird nest boxes onto any retained trees and new buildings on Site to increase nesting opportunities for many bird species. Given their designation as SPI, particular consideration should be given to installing house sparrow *Passer domesticus* (i.e. Schwegler 1SP or similar) and starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (i.e. Schwegler 3S or similar) nest boxes onto any retained trees and any new buildings within the Site.
- Planting of native species rich hedgerows and/or 'natural buffer strips' along newly created plot boundaries. Approximately five woody plants should be planted per metre of hedgerow, in double staggered rows. The hedgerow should be managed on an annual rotation, whereby half of each hedgerow is cut in any one year. This will encourage a diverse structure to produce both a wide and dense hedgerow. Woody species planted could include the following species:
    - Oak *Quercus* sp;
    - Hazel;
    - Hawthorn *Crategous monogyna*;
    - Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*;
    - Field maple *Acer campestre*;
    - Holly;
    - Elder *Sambucus nigra*; and
    - Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*.
- Creation of a pond designed and managed for wildlife. Ponds provide valuable foraging opportunities for a wide variety of protected and notable species including amphibians and reptiles, particularly grass snakes. As general guidance, any newly created pond(s) should exhibit shallow pond margins (less than 5˚) to allow marginal vegetation to grow and should contain deeper open areas (at least 60 cm) within the centre of the pond. In addition, consideration should be given to the planting of additional marginal plant species including:
    - Branched bur reed *Sparganium erectum*;
    - Broad-leaved pondweed *Potomogeton natans*;
    - Yellow iris *Iris pseudocorus*;
    - Floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*;
    - Greater pond sedge *Carex riparia*;
    - Marsh marigold *Caltha palustris*;
    - Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*;
    - Water forget-me-not *Myosotis scorpioides*;
    - Water mint *Mentha aquatic*; and
    - Water plantain *Alisma plantago aquatic*.
- Incorporation of a 'Beebrick' into the new building(s). The 'Beebrick' should be positioned facing a southerly direction, in an area that receives a lot of light and warmth throughout the day and without vegetational obstruction to the entrances. It is recommended that for every Beebrick installed, a minimum of 1m2 of 'bee friendly' plant species be planted to support any solitary bees that would likely utilise the feature. The plant species could include:
    - Common yarrow *Achillea millefolium*;
    - Greater knapweed *Cantaurea scabiosa*;

- Common foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*;
- Hemp agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*;
- Common honeysuckle;
- Wild marjoram *Origanum vulgare*; and
- Guelder rose *Viburnum opulus*.

5 REFERENCES

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6 APPENDICES

Appendix I: Site Location Plan

Basemap: Google Satellite (obtained through QuickMapServices QGIS plugin), Map data © Google

LEGEND:

Site Boundary

STATUS: FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Sussex Office: Rocks Yard, Victoria Rd, Herstmonceux, Hailsham, BN27 4TQ.
T: 01323 832120.

Kent Office: The Watermill, Maidstone Road, Ashford, Kent, TN26 1AE.
T: 01233 225365

E: contact@pjcconsultancy.com
W: https://www.pjcconsultancy.com

CLIENT: David King

PROJECT: Abbotts Leig
Storrington
RH20 4AF

TITLE: Appendix I: Site Location Plan

SCALE AT A4:	DRAWN:	APPROVED:
1:1,881	NS	NS
PROJECTION:	DATE:	DATE:
EPSG:27700	15/10/24	15/10/24

DRAWING No: PJC/5996E/24/A1/V1

Appendix II: Legislation and Planning Policy

Legislation

The Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 contains provisions which will mandate delivering a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for most developments. These provisions are expected to come into effect in January 2024 for developments requiring planning permission. However, BNG for 'small sites' will be applicable from April 2024. The Act will legally require developers to ensure sites are improved for biodiversity, with a 10% increase in habitat value for wildlife compared with the pre-development baseline. This BNG can be achieved through habitat creation or enhancements to existing habitats. All biodiversity enhancements will be required to be maintained for a minimum of 30 years (UK Parliament, 2021).

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2017 is the UK transposition of the European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna, 1992, or the 'Habitats Directive'. The directive provides protection of key habitats and species of European importance. Those key habitats and species are listed in Annexes II and IV of the directive.

Those species protected under the regulations and most likely encountered during development include:

- All bat species
- Hazel dormouse
- Great crested newt
- Common otter

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the primary legislation for the protection of wildlife in Great Britain. This legislation is the means by which the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the 'Bern Convention') and the European Union Directives on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) and Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/FFC) are implemented in Great Britain. All breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young are protected under the Act, which makes it illegal to knowingly destroy or disturb the nest site during nesting season. Schedules 1, 5 and 8 afford protection to individual birds, other animals and plants respectively. The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 makes it an offence to 'recklessly' disturb a protected animal whilst it is using a place of rest or shelter or breeding/nest site

Those species protected under the act and most likely encountered during development include:

- All bat species
- All nesting birds
- Hazel dormouse
- Great crested newt
- Common otter
- Water vole
- All native reptile species

- White-clawed crayfish

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidates and strengthens previous legislation (including the Badgers (Further Protection) Act 1991). Under the act, it is an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempt to do so).
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger.
- Dig for a badger.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a badger sett, or obstruct access to it.
- Cause a dog to enter a badger sett.
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006

Section 40 of the Act requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'. Section 41 of the Act provides a list of habitats and species, which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.' This list aids decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Hedgerows Regulations 1997

These regulations were produced to protect important countryside hedges from removal. The regulations only cover hedgerows that are at least 20m long or, if shorter, connected to other hedgerows at both ends or part of a longer hedgerow. They must be in or adjacent to common land, village greens, site of special scientific interest, local nature reserves, or land used for agriculture, forestry or breeding or keeping of horses, ponies or donkeys.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

All wild mammals are protected against intentional acts of cruelty under the above legislation. This makes it an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

This legislation is of relevance when undertaking works with potential to affect wild mammals e.g. works near burrows, warrens or dens, regardless of other legislative protection.

Species and Habitat Specific Legislation

Plants

Wild plants are protected under Section 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It prohibits the unauthorised intentional uprooting of any wild plant species and forbids any picking, uprooting or destruction of plants listed on Schedule 8 of which there are over 150.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) have nine plants listed within Annex IV these are; creeping marshwort *Apium repens*, early gentian *Gentianella anglica*, fen orchid *Liparis loeselii*, floating-leaved water plantain *Luronium natans*, killamey fern *Trichomanes speciosum*, lady's slipper *Cypripedium calceolus*, shore dock *Rumex rupestris*, slender naiad *Najas flexilis*, and yellow marsh saxifrage *Saxifraga hirculus*. It is an offence to deliberately pick, collect cut, uproot or destroy any protected plant, or keep, transport, sell, or exchange, any live or dead such plant species, this applies to all stages of its life cycle.

Invasive Species

Schedule 9, Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) prohibits the introduction into the wild of any species that is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state, or any species of the 69 plants listed on Schedule 9.

The frequently encountered invasive species within proposed development sites include floating pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*, giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, New Zealand *pygmyweed Crassula helmsi*i, rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* and certain hybrids of the above, some species may be native yet are listed for conservation purposes.

Plant or soil material contaminated by Japanese knotweed that is to be discarded is considered to be a 'controlled waste' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990). It is an offence to deposit, treat, keep, or dispose of controlled waste without a licence. Furthermore, knotweed that has been cut down and removed must be received by an authorised person to be disposed of correctly. A licence can be obtained from the Environment Agency (EA). The release or planting of a listed species in the wild can be permitted under a licence granted by the relevant statutory body.

Invertebrates

A number of invertebrates such as silver studded blue butterfly *Plebejus argus*, stag beetles *Lucanus cervus* and white letter hairstreak *Stymondia w-album* are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended). This legislation makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure, or take a protected invertebrate, or to damage, destroy, or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by such a species; and disturb any protected species occupying such a structure or place.

Three invertebrates are listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019, fisher's estuarine moth *Gortyna borelii lunata*, the large blue butterfly *Maculinea arion* and lesser whirlpool ram's-horn snail *Anisus vorticulus*. It is an offence deliberately to kill, capture, or disturb a listed species, or to damage or destroy the breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

Amphibians

There are four widespread amphibian species, common frog *Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus* and smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*. All of the four widespread species receive partial protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) making it an offence to offer them for sale or trade.

Great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* and natterjack toads *Epidalea calamita* are fully protected under Schedule 5 (in respect of section 9(4)(b) and (c) and (5) only) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019. Reintroduced populations of 'native' pool frogs *Pelophylax lessonae* also receive the same protection. It is illegal to possess a protected species (alive or dead), deliberately capture, injure or kill, to intentionally or recklessly disturb, or to deliberately take or destroy the eggs of these protected species. It is also illegal to damage, destroy or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to breeding or resting place used by these protected species'. All life stages of each species' are afforded the same level of protection.

In order to undertake any activity, which would, otherwise result in any of the above offences being committed, it may be necessary to obtain a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from the relevant statutory body (Natural England (NE), Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) or Scottish natural Heritage (SNH)). It is possible to undertake surveys which would otherwise involve unlawful acts, such

as disturbance, by obtaining a survey license which provides authorisation for scientific and educational purposes

Reptiles

The four common reptile species, adder *Vipera berus*, grass snake *Natrix helvatica*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and slow worm *Anguis fragilis* are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) against deliberate and/or intentional killing, injuring and trade.

If common reptile species are found to be present or considered potentially present within a proposed development site. To ensure that no subsequent offence will be committed a precautionary method of working (written by a suitably qualified ecologist) and submitted to the relevant authority may be required to enable works to proceed with limited risks of offences being caused.

Birds

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird, or take or destroy an egg of any wild bird. It is also an offence to damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird (whilst being built, or in use). Therefore, clearance of vegetation within the site boundary, or immediately adjacent to the site during the nesting season could result in an offence occurring under the Act. The bird breeding season can be taken to run between the 1 February and 31 August and is subject to geographical and seasonal factors. There are 79 species of birds listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Barn owls *Tyto alba* are given the highest level of legal protection possible under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is therefore illegal to kill, injure or take a barn owl, or to take or destroy its eggs. It is also illegal to intentionally or recklessly take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built, release or allow the escape of a barn owl into the wild or possess any bird (dead or alive) or part of bird without a licence which is obtainable through the country agencies (EN, SNH, and CCW).

Badgers

Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended). As such it is an offence to wilfully take, kill, injure or ill-treat a badger, or possess a dead badger or any part of a badger. Under the Act their setts are also protected against obstruction, destruction, or damage in any part.

Sett interference includes damaging or destroying a sett, obstructing access to a sett, and disturbing a badger whilst it is occupying a sett. The Act defines a badger sett as 'any structure or place, which displays signs indicating the current use by a badger' and Natural England takes this definition to include seasonally used setts.

[redacted]

Bats

All native UK bat species are fully protected by UK law under Schedule 5 (in respect of section 9(4)(b) and (c) and (5) only) and Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended), and under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019. It is illegal to deliberately

capture, injure or kill a bat or to intentionally or recklessly disturb bats. It is also illegal to damage, destroy or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a breeding or resting place used by a bat.

Any activity that would result in a contravention of the above legislation would likely require an EPS licence from the relevant statutory body (NE, CCW or SNH). Works or mitigation activities involving interference with bats or bat shelters must be carried out by a licensed bat worker.

Dormice

Dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are protected under Schedule 5 (in respect of section 9(4)(b) and (c) and (5) only) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and are listed in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019. Under the current legislation it is illegal to intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture dormice, deliberately disturb dormice (whether in a nest or not); or to damage, or destroy dormouse breeding sites or resting places.

Any activity that would result in a contravention of the above legislation would likely require an EPS licence from the relevant statutory body (NE, CCW or SNH).

Otters

The otter *Lutra lutra* is fully protected under Schedule 5 (in respect of section 9(4)(b) and (c) and (5) only) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and are listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019. It is therefore illegal to deliberately capture, injure or kill an otter, possess an otter (dead or alive), or any other part of an otter, or intentionally or recklessly disturb otters. It is also illegal to damage, destroy or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a holt or other resting place used by an otter.

Any activity that would result in a contravention of the above legislation would likely require an EPS licence from the relevant statutory body (NE, CCW or SNH).

Water voles

Water voles *Arvicola amphibious* are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended). It is an offence to possess, control or sell water voles or to intentionally kill, injure or take water voles. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a place that water voles use for shelter or protection or disturb water voles whilst using such a place.

A licence is required for catching/handling water voles, or for field surveys that are intrusive or disturbing where the surveyor suspects' water voles are present. A licence can be obtained by applying to the relevant statutory body (NE, SNH, and CCW,). Please note that the legislation does not permit licences to be issued in relation to development of land.

Biodiversity Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Published in 2023 the NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied by local authorities. It replaces all the Planning Policy Statements and Guidance (PPSs and PPGs). The NPPF emphasises the need for sustainable development, whilst specifying the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and priority species (as listed in section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006). Paragraph 174 of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."

Paragraph 179 states that "to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

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

Furthermore, paragraph 185 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

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

Paragraph 181 states:
“The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

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

Paragraph 182 states:
“The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.”

The UK Biodiversity Framework (2011-2020).
The UK Biodiversity Framework is an important framework that is owned, governed and implemented by the four UK countries, assisted by Defra and JNCC in their UK co-ordination capacities. Although differing in details and approach, the four UK countries have published strategies which promote the same principles and address the same global targets: joining-up our approach to biodiversity across sectors; and identifying, valuing and protecting our ‘Natural Capital’ to protect national well-being now and in the future. This new framework has been developed to enhance the recovery of priority habitats and species in England (published under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006), thereby contributing to the delivery of the England Biodiversity Strategy. The framework has been developed and endorsed by the England Biodiversity Group and wider partnership. It is the starting point for a more integrated approach to biodiversity conservation in England, building on the strengths of the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process and improving those areas where insufficient progress was being made.

Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (Horsham District Council, 2015)
The Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (Horsham District Council, 2015) sets out the relevant policies for the control of development with regards to the natural environment and biodiversity.

Policy SD6 Landscape Buffer, Landscape Character, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
1. A strong 'Landscape Buffer' shall be provided to the open countryside to provide a robust and long term, defensible boundary to the development and to avoid perception of coalescence and to maintain separation between Horsham and Crawley.
2. The development shall respond to and complement the positive landscape characteristics and biodiversity qualities of the site.
3. A 'Nature Park' and the provision of green ways along the principal access roads, bus routes and cycle paths will be delivered as key features of a green infrastructure network.
4. Provision for a cemetery, allotments and sports provision should be made within the 'Landscape Buffer'.
5. The development will enable the retention, enhancement and creation of two major green corridors - north to south at the western side of Old Holbrook and Holbrook Park; and east to west at Bush Lane connecting to Langhurstwood Road and Wimlands Road.
6. Strategic landscape proposals, including advanced planting, shall be provided in key visually sensitive locations and designed to avoid creating the appearance of development along the A264. Proposals shall be delivered to an agreed phasing plan and an appropriate long term landscape management must be agreed.

Policy 25 Strategic Policy: The Natural Environment and Landscape Character

The Natural Environment and landscape character of the District, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which:

1. Protects, conserves and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation.
2. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District.
3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible.
4. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.

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 Reserves (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.

Policy 37 Sustainable Construction

Proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development. To deliver sustainable design, development should incorporate the following measures where appropriate according to the type of development and location:

1. Maximise energy efficiency and integrate the use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy;
2. Limit water use to 110 litres/person/day;
3. Use design measures to minimise vulnerability to flooding and heatwave events;
4. Be designed to encourage the use of natural lighting and ventilation;

5. Be designed to encourage walking, cycling, cycle storage and accessibility to sustainable forms of transport;
6. Minimise construction and demolition waste and utilise recycled and low-impact materials;
7. Be flexible to allow future modification of use or layout, facilitating future adaptation, refurbishment and retrofitting;
8. Incorporate measures which enhance the biodiversity value of development.

All new development will be required to provide satisfactory arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials as an integral part of design.

New homes and workplaces should include the provision of high-speed broadband access and enable provision of future technologies where available.

Appendix III: Ecological Walkover Survey Map

Basemap: Google Satellite (obtained through QuickMapServices QGIS plugin), Map data © Google

LEGEND:

- Target Note
- Existing Tree
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Other woodland; broadleaved
- Vegetated garden
- Site Boundary

STATUS: FOR INFORMATION ONLY

PJC

Sussex Office: Rocks Yard, Victoria Rd, Herstmonceux, Hailsham, BN27 4TQ.
T: 01323 832120.

Kent Office: The Watermill, Maidstone Road, Ashford, Kent, TN26 1AE.
T: 01233 225365

E: contact@pjcconsultancy.com
W: https://www.pjcconsultancy.com

CLIENT: David King

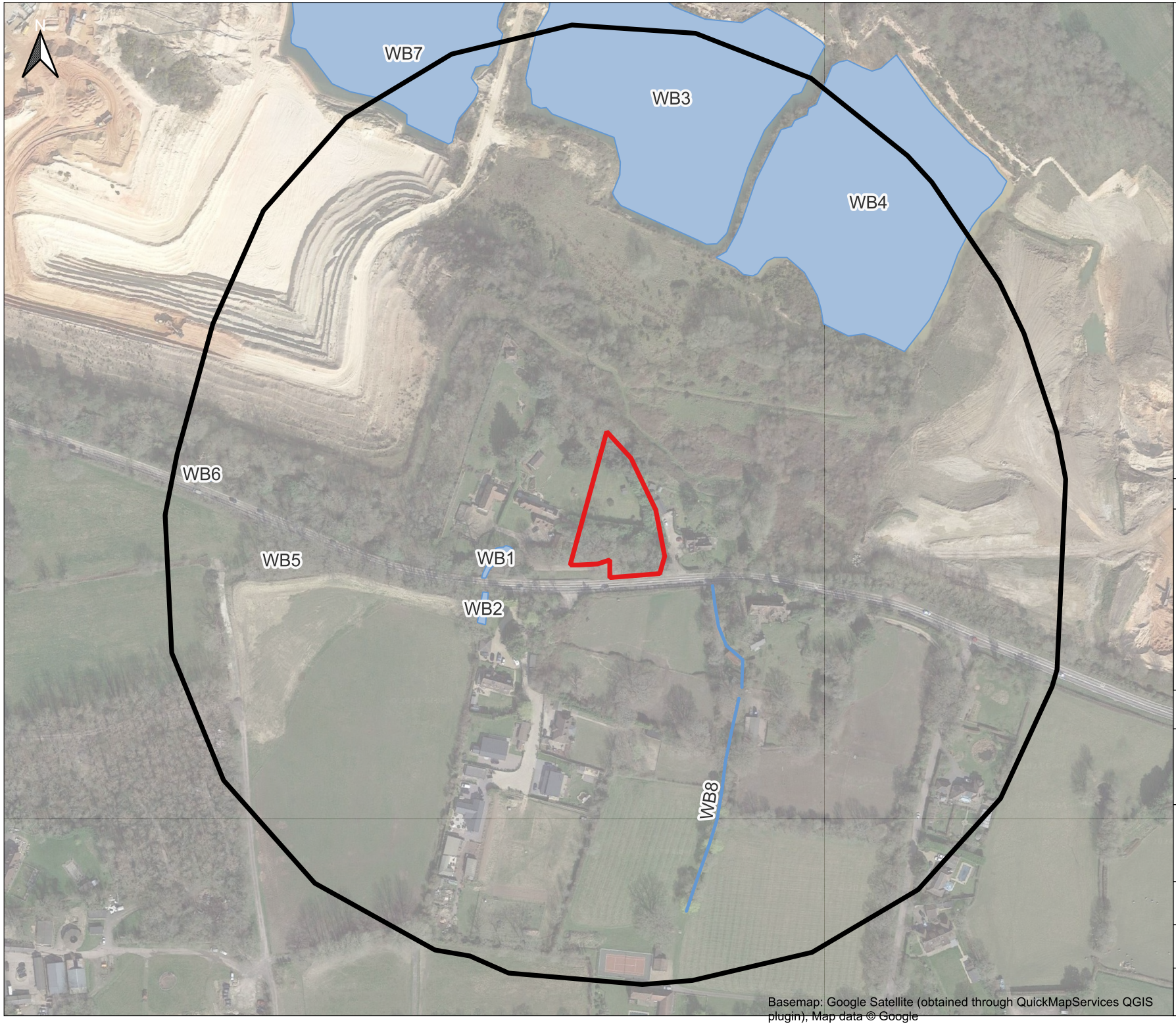
PROJECT: Abbotts Leigh
Storrington
RH20 4AF

TITLE: Appendix III: Ecological Walkover Survey Map

SCALE AT A4:	DRAWN:	APPROVED:
1:553.9	NS	NS
PROJECTION:	DATE:	DATE:
EPSG:27700	15/10/24	16/10/24

DRAWING No: PJC/5996E/24/A3/V1

Appendix IV: Waterbody Location Plan



LEGEND:

- Waterbodies
- 250m Buffer Zone
- Site Boundary

STATUS: FOR INFORMATION ONLY

PJC

Sussex Office: Rocks Yard, Victoria Rd, Herstmonceux, Hailsham, BN27 4TQ.
T: 01323 832120.

Kent Office: The Watermill, Maidstone Road, Ashford, Kent, TN26 1AE.
T: 01233 225365

E: contact@pjcconsultancy.com
W: https://www.pjcconsultancy.com

CLIENT: David King

PROJECT: Abbotts Leigh
Storrington
RH20 4AF

TITLE: Appendix IV: Waterbody Location Plan

SCALE AT A4:	DRAWN:	APPROVED:
1:3,043	NS	NS
PROJECTION:	DATE:	DATE:
EPSG:27700	15/10/24	15/10/24

DRAWING No: PJC/5996E/24/A4/V1

Appendix V: Site Photographs

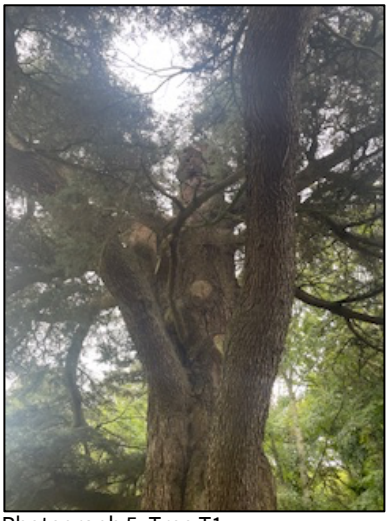
All Site photographs were taken by Nicolle Stevens BSc(Hons) ACIEEM on 25th September 2024.

Photograph 1: The southern Site boundary. Photograph showing the woodland on the right-hand side and tree T34 in the foreground on the left hand side.

Photograph 2: Mammal hole within the south-eastern extent of the Site.

Photograph 3: The dry ditch beneath the woodland at the southern extent of the Site.

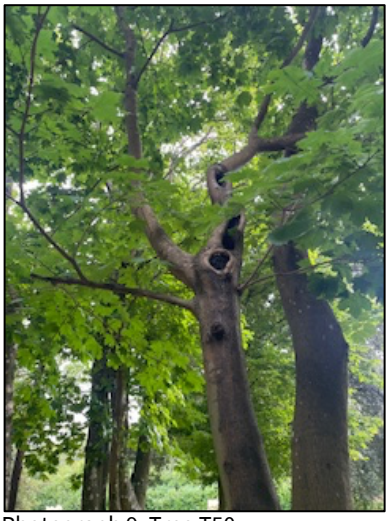
Photograph 4: The central extents of the Site. Photograph showing building B1, and the vegetated garden.



Photograph 5: Tree T1.

Photograph 6: Tree within G2.

Photograph 7: Tree T49.



Photograph 9: Tree T50.

Photograph 10: The areas just outside the western Site boundary showing tree T48.

Photograph 11: Waterbody WB1.

Appendix VI: Precautionary Non-licensed Method Statement

MITIGATION MEASURES

The mitigation measures detailed below are provided to ensure that in the unlikely event of dormice, GCN or reptiles being present within the Site, they are protected from death, injury or disturbance, and that their resting places are also protected from damage, destruction, or obstruction of access.

PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION WORKS

All site workers undertaking any habitat clearance works will receive an ecological Tool Box Talk (TBT) with a focus on dormice, GCN and reptiles from a suitably qualified ecologist prior to undertaking habitat clearance works on Site.

DURING CONSTRUCTION WORKS

Access and egress routes for people and plant must be kept to existing areas of hardstanding, bare earth and grassland (providing the grassland sward has been maintained below 100mm in height) and at least 3m from any suitable retained vegetation.

An ecologist must hand search the cleared areas before the first cut to look for any evidence of dormice, GCN or reptiles or other protected species.

All suitable dormouse, GCN or reptile habitat must take place between April to May to avoid the dormouse maternity season (when dependant young may be present) and the hibernation season (when dormice, GCN and reptiles are more vulnerable to disturbance, injury and death).

Additionally, any excavation works or actions that would impact upon the compost heaps (if required), should be carried out outside of the grass snake laying and hatching period, June to August, inclusive. In the event that this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist shall inspect the compost heaps immediately prior to their removal, to ensure that no eggs are present. In the event eggs are identified, a temporary exclusion zone would need to be placed around the compost heap and development paused until the hatchlings have dispersed which can take up to 10 weeks.

Habitat clearance must be conducted using a two-stage directional approach, first reducing the vegetation to approximately 150-200mm above ground. Then after at least 24 hours, the second cut can reduce the vegetation to ground level. Cutting will be undertaken in a direction from hardstanding towards vegetation, to allow any protected species potentially present within the Site to naturally disperse to other areas of suitable retained semi-natural habitat within the Site and immediate surroundings. Once the second cut has been undertaken, tree stump removal can take place.

All suitable dormouse, GCN and reptile habitat must be cleared with the use of hand tools only (e.g. strimmer, brush cutter or chainsaw) to minimise the risk to dormice potentially present within the vegetation.

All suitable dormouse, GCN or reptile habitat removal must be supervised at all times by a suitably qualified ecologist.

All arisings generated from habitat clearance works must be removed from Site and should not be stored on Site for any longer than a maximum 24-hour period to ensure the arisings do not become suitable refuges for other protected species.

All excavations should be excavated individually and back filled immediately where possible. Where this is not possible, excavations must be covered to prevent protected species becoming trapped within the excavation. If this is also not possible, one or both sides of the excavation must be sloped in order to allow egress from the excavation.

All machinery, equipment and materials must be stored on areas identified by an ecologist as being unsuitable for dormice, for example, grassland of a short sward or hardstanding and at least 3m from any suitable retained vegetation.

All site workers, particularly those involved in habitat clearance works, must remain vigilant at all times during construction works. If at any point during construction works any protected species or signs of protected species, including dormice, GCN and reptiles, are identified, the following instructions must be adhered to:

- Stop works immediately and leave the area;
- Inform an ecologist immediately who will then provide further guidance/instructions;
- Do not try to handle a dormouse, GCN or reptile; and
- Do not resume construction works until advised it is safe to do so by a suitably qualified ecologist.

CONTACT DETAILS

Sussex Office:

Rocks Yard

Victoria Road

Herstmonceux

Hailsham

East Sussex

BN27 4TQ

Tel: 01323 832120

Kent Office:

The Watermill

The Mill Business Park

Maidstone Road

Ashford

Kent

TN26 1AE

Tel: 01233 225365

Author: Nicolle Stevens BSc(Hons) ACIEEM

Date: 16th October 2024

E-mail: nicolle@pjcconsultancy.com