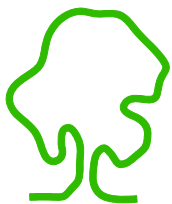


THE HUNTER GROUP

LAND AT EASTLANDS PARK, EASTLANDS LANE, COWFOLD

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

December 2025



eas ltd

Environmental Assessment Services Ltd

REPORT DATA SHEET

Requirement	Data
Report Reference	859/LG/Eastlands/PEA
Date	December 2025
Client	Lee Goossen. Eastlands Farm Limited
Report type	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Purpose	Submission to Planning
Revisions	N/A
Prepared by	Aimee – Jane Lowles BSc (Hons), MRes  Signed
Approved by	Lucy Monday BSc (Hons), ACIEEM  Signed

THE HUNTER GROUP

LAND AT EASTLANDS PARK, EASTLANDS LANE, COWFOLD

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

December 2025

CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Aim of the Report
- 1.3 Legislation
- 1.4 Assessment Method

2. CONSULTATION AND BASELINE DATA SEARCH

- 2.1 Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre Data Search
- 2.2 Horsham District Council
- 2.3 Local Geology and Soil Type

3. SITE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Habitat Assessment
- 3.2 Designated Sites and Priority Habitats
- 3.3 Protected and Controlled Species
 - 3.3.1 *Trees and Hedgerows*
 - 3.3.2 *Plants*
 - 3.3.3 *Invertebrates*
 - 3.3.4 *Amphibians*
 - 3.3.5 *Reptiles*
 - 3.3.6 *Birds*
 - 3.3.7 *Bats*
 - 3.3.8 *[REDACTED]*
 - 3.3.9 *Common/Hazel Dormice*
 - 3.3.10 *Other Protected and Notable Species*
 - 3.3.11 *Non-native Invasive Species*

4. MITIGATION

- 4.1 Habitats
- 4.2 Trees and Hedgerows
- 4.3 Amphibians
- 4.4 Reptiles
- 4.5 Birds
- 4.6 Bats
- 4.7 *[REDACTED]*
- 4.8 Common / Hazel Dormice
- 4.9 Other Protected Notable Species

4.10 Non-native Invasive Species

5. ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Planting

5.2 Bats

6. CONCLUSIONS

APPENDIX A

Site Location and Existing Site Plans

APPENDIX B

Proposed Site Plans

APPENDIX C

Site Photographs

THE HUNTER GROUP

LAND AT EASTLANDS PARK, EASTLANDS LANE, COWFOLD

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

December 2025

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Environmental Assessment Services Ltd has been appointed to prepare a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in relation to the proposed development of land at Eastlands Lane located near the village Cowfold, West Sussex.

The site (as existing) comprises of two undeveloped parcels of land separated by a private lane (Eastlands Lane). It is proposed to develop the land for residential use comprising up to 9 dwellings with associated access, parking and private gardens.

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

The assessment comprised consultation with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre to obtain records of protected, rare and notable habitats and species within 2 km of the site, consultation with Horsham District Council regarding Tree Preservation Orders for trees within and adjacent to the site, and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) undertaken on 11 November 2025 to identify habitats and features of ecological value and the site's likely potential to support protected, rare and other notable species.

Consultation with Horsham District Council has confirmed that there are eight mature oak trees and a mixed woodland adjacent to the site which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Assessment of the site, along with a review of consultation data provided by Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre, confirmed that the site does not lie within or immediately adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.

The site, comprising two parcels of modified grassland, is considered to be of low ecological value. The proposed development of this habitat is not considered likely to result in any significant loss of notable habitat, however, the development does have the potential to encroach on neighbouring habitats which are deemed to be of ecological value, and which may support notable and protected species. In this case, recommendations have been made for the provision of a buffer strip between the existing woodland areas to the east and west of the site, and the proposed residential plots. This will offer protection for both the habitat, and associated species (subject to the implementation of this and other recommendations given in this report).

Mitigation measures have been recommended in relation to a number of notable and protected species, together with recommendation for further surveying and/or licencing for great crested newts. Where these recommendations, together with the recommended ecological enhancements are delivered, there may be potential of ecological net gain.

THE HUNTER GROUP

LAND AT EASTLANDS PARK, EASTLANDS LANE, COWFOLD

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

December 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The following report, prepared by Environmental Assessment Services Limited, is a preliminary assessment of the baseline status of the ecology of land at Eastlands Park, Eastlands Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex.

The site comprises a paddock to the east of Eastlands Lane and part of an adjacent field to the west of Eastland Lane. The Ordnance Survey map reference for the approximate centre of the site is TQ2179 2227. See Appendix A for the site location and existing site plans.

It is proposed to develop the site for residential use comprising up to 9No. residential dwellings (over the two plots) with associated access, and gardens. See Appendix B for the proposed site plans.

1.2 Aim of the Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.3 Legislation

The legislation relevant to this study is:

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

1.4 Assessment Method

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

The assessment was undertaken in two stages:

- a) Consultation: comprising data searches by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) and Horsham District Council.
- b) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) carried out on 11 November 2025 to:
 - Assess the baseline status of the site.
 - Identify its potential for use by species of flora and fauna protected or controlled under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and associated European legislation.

- Identify notable habitats and features of interest that should or could be retained and/or enhanced as part of the proposed development.

2. CONSULTATION AND BASELINE DATA SEARCH

2.1 Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre Data Search

- 2.1.1 Data obtained from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) provided information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites and records of protected and notable species within the search area. The search was conducted for a 2 km radius surrounding the Ordnance Survey grid reference TQ 2179 2227. The search area was selected based on the scale and likely impacts of the proposed development.
- 2.1.2 The statutory and non-statutory designated sites identified by SxBRC within 2 km of the site are set out in section 3.2 below, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on these sites. Mitigation, where appropriate, is recommended in section 4.
- 2.1.3 Records of protected and rare species within 2 km of the site have been provided by SxBRC. These records are discussed under the protected species headings in Section 3.3 below, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on these species. Further surveying and/or mitigation, where appropriate, is recommended in section 4.

2.2 Horsham District Council

- 2.2.1 Horsham District Council's Tree Preservation Order (TPO) mapping (available online) has been used to identify trees protected by TPOs within and adjacent to the site. The assessment confirms that there are trees protected by TPOs within the vicinity of the site. This includes eight mature oak trees positioned adjacent to Eastland Lane, to the southwest of the site, and an area of mixed woodland (Eastlands Wood) that lies on adjacent land to the west to the site. Further consideration of the potential impact of the proposed development on these (and other) trees is given in section 4.2 below.

2.3 Local Geology and Soil Type

- 2.3.1 Soil type will impact factors including site drainage, nutrient availability and pH. This, together with other factors such as site topography, as well as anthropogenic activity, will impact site flora and fauna.
- 2.3.2 According to the British Geological Survey (available online), the site lies on Horsham Stone Member (Sandstone).
- 2.3.3 The Living England Habitat Map (available through Magic Map - online) identified the site to lie within an area of acid, calcareous, neutral grassland and improved grassland.

3. SITE ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) was carried out on 11 November 2025. The following is based on the findings of that assessment, together with a review of information provided by the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) and Horsham District Council. Photographs taken during the site survey are provided in Appendix C.

3.1 Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The site is located along Eastlands Lane (a private lane). The village of Cowfold lies to the west of the proposed development site. The site forms part of what was Eastlands Farm, which extends south of the site. The majority of farm buildings have been redeveloped for residential use. There are further residential dwellings to the northern end of Eastlands Lane. Adjacent land to the east of the western plot, and to the west and extending south of the western plot comprises mixed woodland known as Eastlands Wood. There are numerous agricultural fields surrounding the wider area.
- 3.1.2 The proposed development site comprises of two areas of undeveloped land which are separated by a private lane (Eastlands Lane). Both parcels of land are characterised as modified grassland habitat.

Paddock – East of Eastlands Lane

- 3.1.3 The land to the east of Eastlands Lane is a fenced paddock comprising modified grassland with typical dominant species of the area, plus small, isolated areas of bramble and scrub along its boundary, which includes blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). A disused field shelter is located in the southeast corner of the paddock, which is surrounded by unmaintained vegetation including, elder (*Sambucus nigra*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and nettle (*Urtica dioica*). An area of bare ground (approximately 12 x 12 m) is present towards the centre of the paddock extending up to the eastern site boundary. A wooded area with pond lies to the east of the paddock (beyond the sites boundary) and is separated from the paddock by fencing. A line of five mature trees overhang the site from the eastern site boundary. A visual assessment of the pond estimated that 50% of the water surface was covered by duckweed (*Lumna*). Further information relating to this pond is provided in section 3.3.4 below.

Field – West of Eastlands Lane

- 3.1.4 The land located to the west of Eastland Lane forms part of a larger field. The grassland within this field appears to have been recently seeded from bare ground, exhibiting very low species diversity. A conifer hedge runs along the eastern boundary separating this parcel of land from an adjacent private garden. A low, narrow strip of bramble scrub is present on the eastern edge of the field separating the land from the private road (there is no hedgerow habitat). An isolated, over mature oak tree lies within the field, but a significant distance south of the proposed site boundary. This isolated tree is notable for its condition, over mature with dead wood and cavities likely to be of importance for saprophytic invertebrates and possibly bats.

3.2 Designated Sites and Priority Habitats

- 3.2.1 The site lies approximately 1.5 km southwest of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are no other statutory sites within 2 km of the study site. There are no non-statutory sites within 2 km of the site as identified by SxBRC. The proposed development of the site is not considered likely to have any significant impact on the AONB.
- 3.2.2 European sites include Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). These, together with Ramsar sites, are protected for their ecological significance. Proposed development should not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites. The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC (Sussex bat SACs) lie within West Sussex and the Impact Risk Zone identified by Natural England includes Horsham District. The Arun Vally SPA, SAC and Ramsar also lies within West Sussex and is within 20 km of the development.
- 3.2.3 The Mens SAC is located 19 km west of the site. Barbastelle bats are the qualifying feature of this habitat. The proposed development of this site is not considered likely to have any significant impact on this habitat or qualifying species. No further impact assessment is required in this case.
- 3.2.4 Ebernoe Common SAC is located 25 km northwest of the site. Barbastelle bats and Bechstein's bats are the qualifying feature of this habitat. The proposed development of this site is not considered likely to have any significant impact on this habitat or qualifying species. No further impact assessment is required in this case.
- 3.2.5 Arun Valley SAC, SPA and Ramsar is approximately 20 km southwest of the site. Rare and diverse plant, invertebrate and bird assemblages are the qualifying features of this habitat. Key species include Bewick's swan, little whirlpool ramshorn snail and *Pseudamnicola confusa*. The proposed development of this site is not considered likely to have any significant impact on this habitat or qualifying species. No further impact assessment is required in this case.
- 3.2.6 The site does not lie within the 7 km impact zone for Ashdown Forest. No further impact assessment is required in this case.
- 3.2.7 The site has been assessed for its potential to include or be part of (BAP) Priority Habitat as listed on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). The site does not include any priority habitat/s, however, priority habitats have been recorded within 2 km of the site.
- 3.2.8 Section 41 Habitats recorded within 2 km of the site include:
- Traditional orchard
 - Lowland meadow
 - Deciduous woodland
 - Ancient woodland
 - Ghyll woodland

- 3.2.9 Deciduous woodland (Eastlands Wood) lies on adjacent land to the west of the western plot. There are also ponds and other water features within close proximity to the site. The potential impacts of the proposed development on these habitats (and associated species) is considered further in section 3 below, and mitigation advice is provided in section 4.

3.3 Protected and Controlled Species

3.3.1 *Trees and Hedgerows*

There are no trees or hedgerows within the site, however, there are trees and a coniferous hedgerow in close proximity to the site which could be impacted by the proposed development.

Trees associated with Eastlands Wood, an area of Priority Habitat and subject of a TPO, lie adjacent to the western boundary of the western field and a wooded area lies to the east of the eastern paddock. The root protection area (RPA) of the trees which lie adjacent to the site have been estimated, and it is considered likely that development of the site could impact the trees and the wider habitat and associated species where appropriate mitigation measures are not considered in the site design and where protection measures are not implemented during the development phase.

In addition to the above, there are mature oak trees (which benefit from a tree preservation order) located along Eastlands Lane, to the southwest of the site. While these trees lie along the access route to the site, it is not considered likely that they will be significantly impacted by the proposed development and/or future site use.

The coniferous hedgerow along part of the eastern boundary of the western field is not considered to be of significant ecological value, however, this feature is associated with a neighbouring garden and will need to be protected as part of the sites development.

Recommendations for mitigation through design, and outline protection measures to be implemented during development of the site, are provided in section 4.2, together with recommendations for the enhancement of the site in section 5.1 below.

3.3.2 *Plants*

Records of lower plants, including mosses and lichens, have been recorded within the wider area (2 km). There are records of four lichen species, including *Calogaya decipiens* and *Lobothallia radiosa*, both of which are listed as Sussex Rare species. *Leucodon sciuroides*, a moss species also classified as Sussex Rare is recorded within the surrounding area. These records are from field observations at Cowfold Churchyard. The proposed development is unlikely to have any significant impacts on these species (given the distance from the site).

There are also recordings of 40 higher plant species within 2 km of the site. Notable species include bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) protected from the removal for sale under Schedule 8 of the WCA, together with smooth lady's-mantle

(*Alchemilla glabra*), box (*Buxus sempervirens*), broad-leaved spurge (*Euphrasia nemorosa*), Welsh poppy (*Papaver cambricum*) and corn parsley (*Sison segetum*), all of which are Sussex Rare.

The site comprises of two parcels of modified grassland habitat, a low distinctiveness habitat. The paddock supports a range of common plant species, including but not limited to, creeping buttercup, clover, silverweed, yarrow, dandelion species, and greater plantain, common to higher fertility soils and disturbed ground. The western field supports a very low diversity and abundance of herbaceous plants. Neither area of grassland is considered to be of botanical interest and neither are considered likely to support any notable or protected lower or higher plant species.

Vegetation adjacent to the boundary of the site is also common of the area and appears to be of generally low botanical interest.

No further botanical assessment is recommended in this case.

3.3.3 Invertebrates

Large blue butterfly, fisher's estuarine moth and lesser whirlpool ramshorn snail are protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Other protected invertebrates are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

There are numerous records of invertebrates, (beetles, butterflies, moths and spiders) within 2 km of the site.

Notable species include stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) a UK BAP Priority and WCA species. Six species of butterflies including, purple emperor (*Apatura iris*), small heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*), white admiral (*Limenitis Camilla*), grizzled skipper (*Pyrgus malvae*) and brown hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*) all of which are either UK BAP Priority, WCA or NERC species. In addition, records show 12 notable moth species all of which are UK BAP Priority, NERC species.

Brown hairstreak is a Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme target species in this area. Efforts are being made to improve farmland sites for this species, but habitat may also be improved in rural gardens to support this species. See section 5.1 (Planting) for enhancement recommendations targeting this (and other) species.

The site, comprising of modified grassland, has generally low botanical diversity and contains no notable invertebrate features such as deadwood or other key microhabitats that would provide refuge or foraging opportunities for notable invertebrate species. The site's modified grassland habitat is considered to be of low importance for invertebrate assemblages. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the proposed development will have any significant impacts on invertebrate populations.

No further invertebrate assessment is recommended in this case. However, recommendations for the enhancement of the site for invertebrates (and other species) is given in section 5.1 below.

3.3.4 *Amphibians*

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

There have been ten records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) within the search area (2 km), with the earliest record from 2007 and the most recent from 2024. Most records are for land to the west and southwest, where land is well connected to the site (i.e. there are no significant barriers and terrestrial habitat is likely to be suitable). The records were obtained through a combination of field observations, GCN targeted surveys and environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling. Comments with the eDNA records indicate strong positive detections of GCN.

In addition, there are 18 records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*), a UK BAP Priority species, two records of palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*), five records of smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) and 31 records of common frog (*Rana temporaria*) within 2 km of the site.

Although there are no water features within the boundaries of the site, a pond is located within the wooded area to the east of the paddock. There is also a pond within Eastlands Woods together with connected ditches, and further ponds within 500 m of the site that may have potential to support GCN, common toad and other amphibian species. The pond to the east of the site was assessed for its potential to support GCN in 2019. It scored 'Average' potential (0.6116) and eDNA testing confirmed likely absence of GCN at the time of surveying.

No ponds will be lost or damaged as part of the site's development. The site, modified grassland habitat with no notable boundary habitat within the site, is of lower but not negligible ecological value to GCN and other amphibians and could be used to traverse this area to migrate between the ponds and other suitable habitat.

In this case, there is a potential risk of harm during development and habitat, although currently of lower value, will be lost, potentially impacting migration routes where GCN and other amphibians are present. See recommendations in section 4.3 below.

3.3.5 *Reptiles*

The more widespread reptiles; grass snake, slow-worm, viviparous lizard and adder, are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). It is an offence, amongst other things, to intentionally kill or injure any individual. The more restricted species; sand lizard and smooth snake, are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making them European Protected Species.

There are records for slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and grass snake (*Natrix Helvetica*) within 2 km of the site, both of which are WCA and NERC species. A significant proportion of these records are from the Cowfold area.

The site is considered to have low potential for use by reptiles. Sward cover is low within the site and there are no significant cover features. At this time the site is considered unlikely to be used by reptiles, however, reptiles are considered likely to be present within the surrounding area.

No further assessment is recommended in this case, however, protection measures are recommended during development to prevent harm should reptiles access the site from adjacent land during redevelopment, see section 4.4 below.

Post development, garden habitats may offer enhanced value for reptiles, however, enhancement cannot be secured within private gardens though planning.

3.3.6 *Birds*

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

The records obtained from SxBRC indicate numerous records for bird species, including those common to grassland habitats within 2 km of the site. The records include 16 WCA protected species and 20 NERC Priority species. Notable species of farmland habitat recorded in the area include lapwing which is a targeted Priority species in this area. The existing habitat, comprising short sward with no significant marginal habitat is considered to be of low / negligible habitat for this, and other, notable species.

The modified grassland provides negligible potential for nesting, foraging or shelter. This site does not include any buildings or structures that are likely to be used by birds. However, the adjacent woodland (outside of the site boundary) may provide nesting and foraging habitat for a number of bird species, including notable species. Recommendations are made in this case. See section 4.5 below.

3.3.7 *Bats*

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

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

There are records of bat species within 2 km of the site including noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctule*), pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and long-eared bat species (*Plecotus*). Habitat within 2 km of the site comprising deciduous, ancient and ghyll woodland and numerous ponds are habitats considered to be of high value to bats.

The disused field shed, located in the paddock, is in poor condition and overshadowed. Narrow and open sided this structure offers negligible potential for roosting bats.

There are no other trees, buildings or structures within the site which are likely to be used by bats.

No further assessment is recommended in this case, however, mitigation measures are recommended for bats which are considered likely to use habitat on adjacent land. See section 4.6 below. The development of the site may be used to enhance the site for bats, see section 5.2 below.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3.3.9 *Common/Hazel Dormice*

The common (or hazel) dormouse is protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making common dormice a European Protected Species. It is illegal to deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or disturb a dormouse or damage, destroy or obstruct dormouse breeding or resting place. Disturbance including obstruction and/or removal of habitat.

Typical common dormice habitat comprises deciduous woodland and scrub rich in hazel, flowers, pollen, fruit and insects, and hedgerows, the latter notably important for navigation/commuting.

There are four records of hazel dormice within close proximity (< 1 km) of the site recorded in 2024. There are significant areas of land comprising ancient, deciduous and ghyll woodland within 2 km of the site, which is considered likely to offer suitable habitat for this species.

Habitat with the potential to support hazel dormice lies to the east and west of the site, however, there is no suitable habitat within the site which is likely to be used by dormice. Dormice rarely descend to the ground, and are unlikely to use or cross the habitat within the site. The site does not have any habitats that would be considered likely to be of any ecological importance to dormice, and as such will not result in any habitat loss.

No further assessment is recommended in this case, however, protection measures are recommended to ensure that adjacent suitable habitat is not degraded by the development of the site, and enhancement should be delivered where possible to enhance the site for dormice and connect habitats where possible. See section 4.8 and 5.1 below.

3.3.10 *Other Protected and Notable Species*

There are 16 records of hedgehogs (NERC species) within 2 km of the site. The majority of these records are from Cowfold and in private gardens.

The potential of the site to support hedgehogs is low, principally due to the absence of hedgerows or dense vegetation required for foraging, nesting and connectivity to the adjacent habitats, such as Eastlands Woods.

No further assessment is recommended in this case, however, standard protection measures should be implemented during the redevelopment of the site in order to protect mobile species, including hedgehogs. See section 4.9 below. Enhancement should also target this species. See section 5.1 below.

3.3.11 *Non-native Invasive Species*

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

Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre has records of 17 higher plant, four bird and eight other animal species either listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA and/or identified as Sussex Invasive Species within 2 km of the site. Sussex invasive species, are species which have been identified to have a significant negative impact on the native species and habitats of Sussex.

No non-native species were identified within the site at the time of the site visit. Standard precautions should be taken during development of the site in order to prevent the introduction of such species. See section 4.10 below.

4. **MITIGATION**

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

4.1 **Habitats**

Whilst there are no habitats within the site considered to be of significant ecological value, the site neighbours two areas of woodland, one (to the west) is an identified Priority Habitat (Deciduous woodland) and the other, a small area of woodland with a woodland pond (to the east).

These habitats (and their associated species of flora and fauna) should be protected in the long-term. Measures for the protection of woodland are given in section 4.2 below.

4.2 **Trees and Hedgerows**

The layout of the proposed development should be designed to avoid encroachment (including the required work area) on the adjacent trees and hedging.

A buffer strip should be provided between the residential plots and the woodland areas to the east and west of the site, for the protection of individual trees, the

habitat and associated species. The buffer strip, as a minimum, should include the full extent of the tree canopy including an allowance for future growth (to full maturity) and calculated root protection area required to protect and retain the trees in good health in the long-term.

The coniferous garden hedgerow along the eastern boundary of the western field, although of low ecological value, should be retained and protected, as it is associated with an adjacent residential garden. A fenced off exclusion zone should implement along the conifer hedge to mitigate any potential damage including soil compaction and excavation within the rooting zone.

There are eight mature oak trees, which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), situated along the verge of the required access route. It is recommended that a banksman be present while large vehicles / loads are travelling to and from the site to direct the movement of vehicles and/or machinery away from the trees ensuring that adequate clearance is maintained at all times. All vehicle movements must be restricted to the existing road surface within the vicinity of trees.

4.3 Amphibians

The potential for GCN has been identified at and within the vicinity of the site for which further surveying and/or licencing is recommended.

Further surveying may be used to confirm presence / likely absence of GCN, which may then be used to inform protection measures and licence requirements, where appropriate. A licence would be required, either from Natural England or the LPA via Nature Space, where it is considered likely that an activity will impact GCN and/or their habitat (including aquatic and/or terrestrial habitat).

Mid Sussex District Council offer District Level Licences (DLL) in partnership with NatureSpace. Further surveying may not be required through this route, but protection measures will still form part of the licence.

Natural England require full survey data including presence / likely absence surveying, and population estimates where present, at all suitable ponds within 250 m of the development area, and possibly further where (a) a pond has the potential to support a large population, (b) the development includes particularly favourable habitat, (c) the development will have a significant impact on available habitat, (d) there is an absence of dispersal barriers (e.g. roads with high traffic volume, built-up areas, large or fast flowing water courses and large expanses of intensively farmed land).

If it is intended to apply for a DLL, the Council will request evidence of application to Nature Space. If the application is to be made to Natural England prior to receipt of planning approval, full surveying with an impact assessment and mitigation proposals will need to be completed and submitted for consideration.

4.4 Reptiles

Reptiles may access the site during redevelopment due to the accidental creation of artificial refuges that may attract reptile species from adjacent suitable habitat

during development. Protection measures for reptiles are also likely to need to comply with measures for the protection of great crested newt. Protection measures are likely to include the use of temporary exclusion fencing around the perimeter of the site to prevent reptiles and GCN from entering the construction zone during site clearance and development. The fencing should ensure species cannot pass over, under or through the temporary fencing and vegetation close to and on both sides of the fence should be kept short.

4.5 Birds

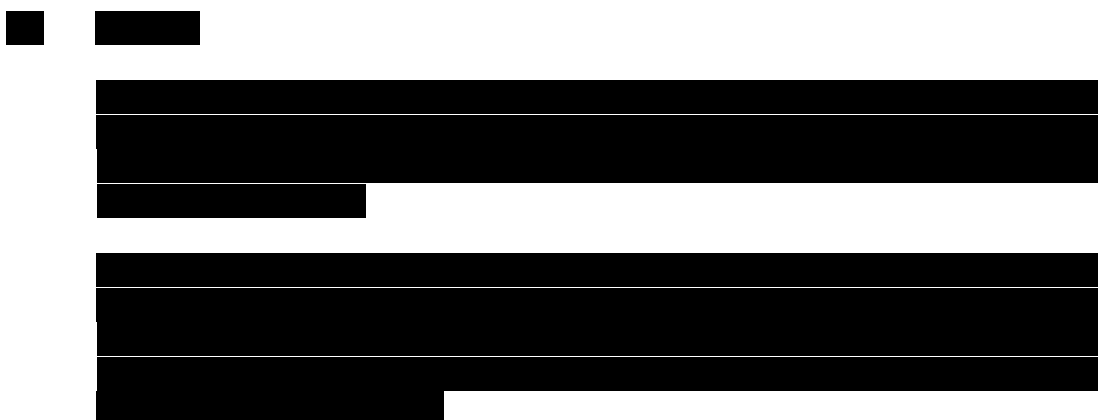
Woodland to the east and west of the site has potential to support nesting and notable bird species. That we are aware, no works are proposed within these areas. A buffer zone is to be provided between the woodland areas and the residential plots for the protection of the habitat and associated species, including birds.

4.6 Bats

Mitigation through design should be implemented to consider the effects of development encroachment and artificial lighting from the site on suitable adjacent habitats that may impact bat roosts, flight/commuting and foraging areas.

A buffer strip should be provided between the residential plots and the adjacent woodland habitats in order to protect these habitats, and to maintain potential flight lines / foraging routes along the woodland boundaries.

Artificial lighting may disrupt foraging activities and behaviour and increase the vulnerability of bat species. A detailed lighting design plan should be prepared to ensure that no artificial lighting falls on the surrounding vegetation notably the adjacent woodland areas.



4.8 Common / Hazel Dormice

The key risks to dormice relate to habitat encroachment and increased artificial lighting into the adjacent woodland habitats. Mitigation through site design should be implemented to avoid any adverse effects on potential dormice habitat.

A buffer zone should be allowed for between the woodland habitat and the residential development. This should be retained and maintained in the long term.

Artificial lighting may disrupt behaviour and nocturnal activity. A lighting design plan should therefore be prepared to ensure that no artificial lighting falls on the woodland along the eastern and western site boundaries, and any new habitat (such as boundary hedgerows) created as part of the development.

4.9 Other Protected and Notable Species

Mitigation measures should be incorporated into the development/construction phase to prevent potential injury or entrapment to small mammals.

It is recommended that trenches and/or ditches be covered when not in use or be fitted with a gentle sloping plank to act as an escape route. Any open pipes should be sealed or capped to prevent small animals from entering. In addition, construction materials such as but not limited to, pipes and pallets, should be stored off the ground to discourage fauna from sheltering underneath them. Implementation of these measures aim to reduce any potential harm to wildlife during construction.

4.10 Non-native Invasive Species

Biological protection measures should be implemented when transferring soil and plant material. This includes transferring vehicles and machinery on and off site, the disposal of soils and importation of soils which could contain plant matter, and the importing of new planting as part of the landscaping scheme.

5. ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Planting

Planting enhancements should aim to improve habitat connectivity along the site boundaries and maximise the availability of suitable resources for target species such as brown hairstreak, hedgehogs, dormice, birds, bats and other species associated with hedges, scrub and woodland edges / margins.

It is recommended that new mixed species native hedging is planted along the boundaries of the site, to provide a buffer to adjacent habitats, to provided connectivity and to provide new ecologically valuable habitat within the site.

New boundary planting should include blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) for the benefit of brown hairstreak (which feed exclusively on this species during their larval stage), and a mix of species which provide flowers, pollen, fruit and nuts for the benefit of other invertebrates, dormice and birds.

5.2 Bats

The addition of buildings to the site may be used to introduce new bat roosting potential. The surrounding habitat is considered to have high potential for the presence of bats, however, there are presently no features or structures on site which offer roosting potential and suitable habitat is limited to adjacent land.

Bat roosting features may be incorporated into the fabric of the proposed buildings to offer long term provision for roosting bats. This may include roosting tiles, bricks and boxes accessible from the façade of the building or access point to roof voids. Examples include Tudor Tiles, Schwegler bat tube IFR, Ibstock enclosed bat box, Habitat bat box, but there are designs to suit a range of building styles available online.

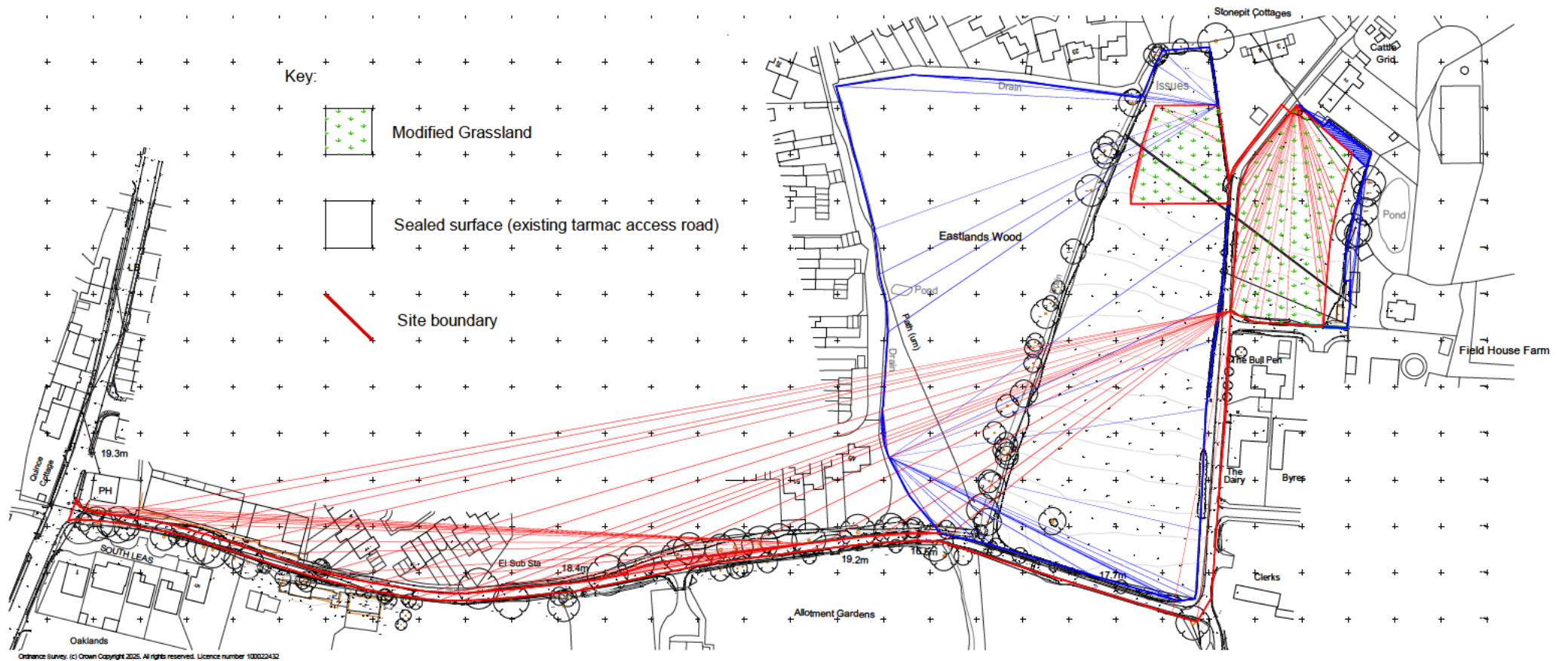
6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The proposed development will result in loss of modified grassland, deemed to be of generally low ecological value. The proposed development will not result in the loss of any notable habitat. However, there are habitats within close proximity to the site which are deemed to be of ecological value with the potential to support notable and protected species.
- 6.2 In this case, recommendations have been given for the protection of notable and protected species, which include protection of their habitat, notably the woodland areas to the east and west of the site, which also include ponds.
- 6.3 Further surveying and/or licencing has been recommended in relation to great crested newts, and it is recommended that a buffer strip be provided between the woodland habitat (to the east and west) and the proposed residential plots for both the protection of the habitat and associated species.
- 6.4 Enhancements have been recommended for inclusion in the site design, including the incorporation of new mixed, native species hedging along the boundaries of the site, together with the provision of roosting features for bats.
- 6.5 Where further surveying and mitigation, as recommended within this and subsequent reporting, is included within the development design and schedule, potential impacts of the proposed development may be mitigated. Where enhancement is included within the design, there may be scope for the ecological net gain.
- 6.6 It is noted that planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution relating to protected species. Should any protected species be identified before, or during the development, all works should cease and a suitably qualified/experienced ecologist should be contacted for advice.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

APPENDIX A

Site Location and Existing Site Plans

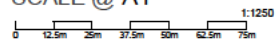


Ordnance Survey. (c) Crown Copyright 2025. All rights reserved. Licence number 100023432

Site Location Plan
Scale 1:1250



SCALE @ A1



Site: Land at Eastlands, Cowfold
Client: Lee Goossens

Baseline Habitat Map
Survey date: 11 November 2025

APPENDIX B

Proposed Site Plans



Proposed Site Plan
Scale 1:500



**LLOYD
HARDEN**

Design • Planning • Architecture

MATERIALS

- 1.2m high estate rail fence
- 1.8m high timber panel fence
- Driveway & Parking areas to be Gravel Resin
- Terraced areas to gardens - to be 900x900 slabs
- Area of land given to No. 1 Eastfields Lane
- Area of land under ownership
- New planting - species to be confirmed by Landscape Designer
- Proposed shed/bike store

HOUSE TYPES

- House Type 1 - 3 Bed Bungalow (1797sqft)
- House Type 2 - 4 Bed 2 Storey (1786sqft)
- House Type 3 - 3 Bed 2 Storey Semi (1216sqft)
- House Type 4 - 4 Bed 2 Storey (1786sqft)
- House Type 5 - 4 Bed 1 1/2 Storey (1700sqft)
- House Type 6 - 4 Bed 2 Storey (1800sqft)

SITE AREAS

- West Parcel - 0.15ha
- East Parcel - 0.34ha
- Total - 0.49ha

REV BY DATE DETAILS

SCALE @ A2

0 5m 10m 15m 20m 25m 1:500

CLIENT

Lee Goosens
Eastlands Lane, Cowfold, West Sussex, RH13 8AY

PROJECT

9 No - 3 & 4 Bed Homes

DRAWN BY

SJB

CHECKED BY

LKH

CONCEPTUAL DRAFT

DRAWING TITLE

Proposed Site Plan

DATE DRAWING NUMBER REVISION

21.11.25 2562-03

+44 (0)116 482 9284

www.lloydharden.co.uk

DO NOT CONSTRUCT FROM THIS DRAWING. Responsibility is Not Accepted For Errors Made By Others In Scaling From This Drawing. All Construction Information Must Be Taken From Figured Dimensions Only. All Dimensions And Levels Must Be Checked On Site And Any Discrepancies Between Drawings Must Be Reported To Lloyd Harden Design Ltd. THESE DRAWINGS ARE FOR CONCEPT USE ONLY.

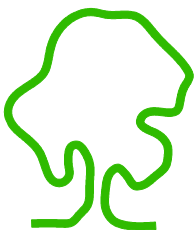
APPENDIX C

Photographs









eas ltd

Environmental Assessment Services Ltd

Unit 4B, The Courtyard, Holmsted Farm, Staplefield Road, Cuckfield,
West Sussex, RH17 5JT

Phone : +44 (0) 1444 882552

email : info@easltd.co.uk

web site : www.easltd.co.uk