

Ashfolds, RH12 4QX

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Report for Ms Frankland



Ashfolds – Phase 1

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

EHM Ltd

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Control Sheet

Project Information			
Client	Ms Frankland		
Assessment	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal		
Site	Ashfolds, Horsham Road, Rusper, West Sussex, RH12 4QX		
File reference	PEA – Ashfolds		
Survey Dates	3 rd July 2026: UK Habitat Classification Survey 3 rd July 2026: Daytime Bat Walkover		
Document History			
Author	Lauren Scudder, BSc (Hons), Cert Ecol	EHM Ltd	12/08/2026
Reviewer	Adam Cheeseman, Nat. Dip (Dist.), Cert Ecol	EHM Ltd	20/08/2026
Issued	Paul Green	EHM Ltd	21/08/2026
Life Span of Report	This report and survey data remains valid for 12 months from date of issue, following standing advice from CIEEM ¹ . The report, conclusions and recommendations are valid for current development plans only. Should these change, the report should be reviewed and, if necessary, further survey work and desk study review undertaken.		

¹ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2019) *Guidance Note: On the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys*. CIEEM: Winchester.

Non-Technical Summary	
Purpose of Report	To provide an assessment of the site reporting on the current conditions of the habitats present and their potential to support protected and notable species. To advise on further survey work and mitigation or avoidance measures likely to be required, as well as opportunities to deliver ecological enhancements.
Assessment Methods	A UK Habitat Classification Survey and Protected Species Risk Assessment were conducted on the 3rd of July 2026. The results of the field survey were supported by a desk study, which included a data search for records of protected sites, habitats and species within a 1-kilometre radius of the application site provided by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre on the 10th of July 2026, and a review of relevant online resources.
Ecological Constraints	The key ecological constraints associated with this application are: ○ Suitable habitat present for tree roosting, commuting and foraging bats; ○ Suitable habitat present for opportunistic, other terrestrial mammals; and, ○ Suitable habitat present for nesting birds.
Further Surveys and Assessments	Birds: If vegetation clearance or building removal must be carried out during the bird nesting season (typically the 1st of March to the 31st of August), a nesting bird survey should be carried out to identify the presence/absence and location of any nesting birds. This can then be used to better advise mitigation measures prior to the works on site. Full details of the recommendations can be found in Section 4.2.
Mitigation Measures	Mitigation measures have been recommended to minimise and avoid impacts on retained habitats and species in Section 4.3. Additional mitigation measures for nesting birds may be required following the findings of recommended further surveys, where applicable.
Ecological Enhancement Opportunities	Opportunities for ecological enhancements include native planting, bat and bird boxes, hedgehog access fencing, log piles and compost heaps. Additional enhancement measures may be identified following the findings of recommended further surveys, where applicable.

1 Introduction

EHM Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at a plot located in Rusper, West Sussex, RH12 4QX, which is hereafter referred to as the 'site'. This report will provide an assessment of the site reporting on the current conditions of the habitats present and their potential to support protected and notable species.

1.1 The Proposed Development

In accordance with the development proposals provided, the proposed development is understood to involve the demolition of stables and the construction of a detached self-build dwelling and associated driveway and landscaping. A section of the existing stables will be retained to be used as a garage.

It is understood that the access route to the proposed development will be provided via an existing entrance off Horsham Road.

1.2 The Application Site

The site, as defined by the red 'development' line boundary, is roughly rectangular in shape, covering an area of approximately 0.45ha. It is comprised of a private garden, an equestrian sand school, stables and hedgerows. Pedestrian and vehicular access is provided by a driveway off Horsham Road, in the southeast corner of the site.

The site is located in a small community which contains similar sized properties (to the proposed). The local landscape is best described as semi-rural in nature, with large pockets of woodland and agricultural fields dominating the land to the west and south of the site, and residential areas immediately to the northeast and within the wider surroundings. Wildlife corridors are present within the local landscape through grassland and woodland edges and linear features such as watercourses and hedgerows. However, main roads and impermeable boundaries such as solid fencing and walls fragment habitats and large areas of grassland are either managed to maintain a short sward length or managed for agricultural purposes. The centre of Horsham, the closest town, is approximately 6km south of the site.

The site (as shown in figure 1) is in Rusper, West Sussex and is approximately centred on Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference; TQ 19758 36651. Locations of broad habitats on the site are shown in Appendix 1.

1.3 Aims of PEA

The aim of this PEA is to:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with a project.
- Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy'.
- Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA).
- Identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement.

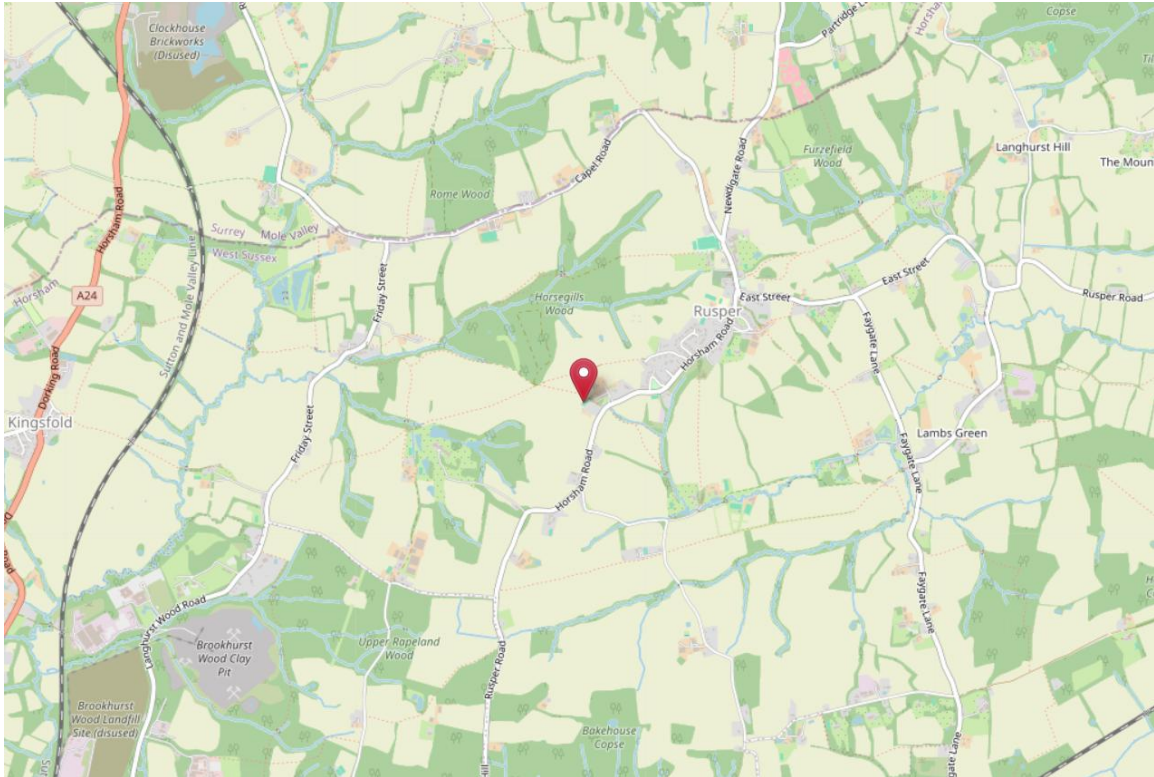


Figure 1: Location of the site. Map data from OpenStreetMap².

² www.openstreetmap.org/copyright

2 Methodology

2.1 Site Visit

EHM Ltd undertook a site visit on the 3rd of July 2026. This was to carry out a walk over of the site, determining the basic habitats present and their current condition. The potential for these habitats to support protected and notable species was also recorded. This ecological survey and assessment were confined to land within the red line boundary, which delineates the development boundary (see Appendix 2). This boundary defines the area subject to habitat mapping, condition assessment, and evaluation. Land outside the red line boundary, including areas within any wider landholdings were not surveyed in detail but may be referenced for contextual purposes where relevant.

The site visit was carried out by an experienced professional who is able to appropriately identify habitats and assess their quality and suitability to support species. Field survey conditions were as follows:

Date	Survey Type	Survey Timings		Temperature (°C)		Rain	Wind (Beaufort scale)
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish		
03/07/2026	UK Habitat Classification	12:45	15:00	23	24	None	2

Table 1: Field survey conditions.

Habitats within the survey area were classified using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) system (UKHab, 2020), a standardized framework for recording habitats across the UK. The UKHab system allows for consistent habitat identification using a hierarchical coding structure, with habitats typically recorded to Level 4 where possible to ensure adequate detail.

During the field survey, habitats were mapped as polygons or linear features and assigned UKHab codes based on their floristic composition, structure, and management. Target notes were used to provide additional detail on habitat condition, notable species, and ecological features of interest. The use of UKHab supports alignment with current best practice and facilitates integration with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessments where required.

2.2 Protected Species

The following evidence of protected species or habitats to support them was assessed.

Badgers

Evidence of badger activity on site was assessed by searching for:

- Presence of setts, indicated by suitably sized holes or burrows with evidence of badgers such as badger hair and footprints.
- Evidence of well runs supported by secondary evidence such as foraging signs or footprints; and
- Presence of badger latrines

Bats

The site was assessed for its potential to support:

- Roosting bats
- Foraging and commuting bats.

Features which could indicate a potential bat roost include:

- Holes and fissures in trees
- Gaps in buildings that could allow access to areas such as roof voids, e.g., holes in soffits, broken, loose, or missing tiles, damaged lead flashing, etc.

The methodology for assessing bat roost potential followed that recommended by the Bat Conservation Trust³.

Breeding birds

The site was assessed for its potential to support nesting and breeding birds, considering factors including sufficient habitat cover and food sources.

Dormice

The site was surveyed for suitable dormouse habitat, such as the presence of a well-connected understorey broadleaf habitat, and suitable food sources such as hazel, oak and other nut-bearing trees, fruiting trees and shrubs, flowers and invertebrates. Where hazel nut shells were found, these were inspected for evidence of dormouse feeding.

Aquatic mammals

³ Collins, J. (ed) (2016). Bat Surveys for professional Ecologists; Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Aquatic habitats were assessed for their potential to support aquatic mammals such as Otter or water vole. Signs including footprints, droppings and evidence of feeding were searched for.

Reptiles

The site was assessed for its potential to support reptile populations. Suitable habitat for reptiles includes long grass, scrub, woodland and hedgerow borders and wood/rubble piles that act as hibernacula.

Amphibians

Any aquatic habitat was assessed for its potential to support amphibian species, including Great Crested Newts. Any ponds on site were assessed, using the Habitat Suitability Index, for its potential to support Great Crested Newts. Terrestrial habitat was also assessed for its ability to support amphibians.

Other species

The site was assessed for its potential to support other notable species.

2.3 Desktop Study

In conjunction with the site visit a report was compiled of relevant ecological records within 1km of the site. This provided details of protected and notable species in the area which will help inform the potential of the site to support such species. The report from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre also provides details of protected sites within a 1km radius of the site. The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) map was also reviewed for additional relevant protected species and habitat information.

2.4 Limitations

Records of priority and legally protected species supplied by the local records centre are limited by the availability of records submitted to the local records centre and so may not account for all species potentially present within the site or locally. This limitation has been addressed through undertaking a Protected Species Risk Assessment of the habitats found within the site, which took account of the general geographical distributions of priority and protected species when assessing the suitability of the habitats present.

The contents of the site visit are limited by a single visit. The availability of flowering plants for recording is variable, and they can often be obscured from view by occurring in less accessible areas or by other plants. Every effort has been made to find and record all species, including

non-native plant species, within the site. Despite best efforts, recording of every species cannot be guaranteed.

This ecological survey is limited by factors which can affect the presence of flora and fauna, including the season in which the survey is carried out, behaviour and migration patterns. This limitation has been addressed by taking a precautionary approach to the assessment, with recommendations provided for further survey work and/or mitigation measures where appropriate.

2.5 Relevant Legislation and Planning Policies

A full list of UK wildlife legislation and designations can be seen in the appendix. Relevant legislation implications for this site include:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act) 2006

Planning policies, both local and national, may affect any proposed development. Relevant planning policies to this development include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3 Baseline Ecological Conditions

3.1 Designated Sites

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Statutory protected areas are not present within the site. Details regarding the non-statutory designated sites within the desk study area, along with the reasons for their designation and location in relation to the development site are provided in the table below. Locations are taken from the closest point of the site to the priority habitat parcel.

Site Name	Designation	Reasons for Designation	Location in Relation to the Site
Horsegills Wood	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	Horsegills Wood is a 40ha site containing ancient semi-natural woodland of great botanical importance as well as several small, wooded ravines containing streams.	230m northwest

Table 2: Non-statutory designated sites within the desk study area.

Additionally, the site is situated within a Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zone (SSSI IRZ). Using the Natural England Impact Risk Zone for Sites of Special Scientific Interest Advice website, the SSSI IRZs indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial SSSIs and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin. Therefore, for the proposed development, consultation with Natural England is not required.

Given the small-scale nature of the development and the distance between the site and Horsegills Wood, non-statutory designated sites are not considered to be a potential constraint to the proposed development, and therefore no recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or avoidance measures are required.

Priority Habitats within the Site

Priority habitats are not present within or immediately adjacent to the site boundary.

Therefore, as priority habitats are absent within and adjacent to the site, priority habitats are not considered to be a potential constraint to the proposed development, and therefore no recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or avoidance measures are required.

Priority Habitats within the Desk Study Area

Priority habitats within the study area consist of ancient woodland, deciduous woodland and ghyll woodland. Details about these habitats are provided in the table below. Locations are taken from the closest point of the site to the priority habitat parcel.

Site Name	Habitat Type	Location in relation to the site
N/A	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	250m northwest
N/A	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	300m southeast
N/A	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	635m southwest
N/A	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	880m southwest
Kiln Copse	Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	870m east
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	250m northwest
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	330m southwest
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	350m southeast
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	615m southwest
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	610m southwest
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	660m southeast
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	840m northeast
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	850m southwest
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	870m east
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	880m southwest
N/A	Deciduous Woodland	920m northeast
N/A	Ghyll Woodland	390m northeast
N/A	Ghyll Woodland	330m southwest
N/A	Ghyll Woodland	830m southwest

Table 3: Priority habitats within the desk study area.

Given the small-scale nature of the development and the distances between the site and parcels of priority habitat, priority habitats are not considered to be a potential constraint to the proposed development, and therefore no recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or avoidance measures are required.

3.2 Other Habitats

Descriptions of the habitat types recorded within the site during the UK Habitat Classification Survey are provided in the table below. The primary habitat types are shown on the habitat map within Appendix 1. Where appropriate, ecological features within the site are noted on the habitat map as target notes. Photographs of the habitats are provided in Appendix 2.

Primary Habitat Type	Essential and Additional Secondary Codes	Description
g4: Modified grassland	32: Scattered trees 108: Frequently mown 516: Active management 523: Non-native 524: Invasive non-native species 828: Vegetated garden 847: Introduced shrub	The site largely consisted of modified grassland which is regularly mown. This vegetation was species poor (<9 species per m²) and was characterised by species associated with high fertility. Species comprised white clover (D), common daisy (O), creeping buttercup (F), perennial rye grass (A), selfheal (O), yarrow (R), common plantain (R), clustered dock (R) and Yorkshire fog (O). Trees were present throughout the grassland. Species comprised Turkey oak, crab apple, Norway maple, evergreen spindle, hornbeam, down redwood, pedunculate oak, horse chestnut, Oregon cedar, arrow bamboo, elder, silver maple and white poplar. Scattered cherry laurel was present along the western site boundary.
h2b: Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	11: Hedgerow with trees 523: Non-native 524: Invasive non-native species 828: Vegetated garden	The northern site boundary comprised a dense hedgerow (H1) with frequent trees. The shrub layer is characterised by cherry laurel, a rhododendron spp. (likely an ornamental cultivar although confirmation was not possible in the absence of flowers) and arrow bamboo, with holly, elder and occasional hawthorn. Numerous mature trees were present throughout and comprised pedunculate oak, sessile oak, hornbeam, rowan and Scots pine. Cover of non-native species is approximated at 40-50%.

		An ornamental hedgerow (H2) consisting of Portuguese laurel was present within the site.
r1g: Other standing water	41: Pond (non-priority)	A small ornamental pond, approximately 15m ² in area, was present within the site. This pond was concrete-lined and covered with common duckweed.
u1b5: Buildings	827: Garden	A set of wooden stables (B1) was present within the site boundary. The stables were situated on a concrete base and had a pitched roof covered with a combination of corrugated metal and felt sheeting. Loft spaces were absent. The stables are used to house horses. A small wooden shed (B2) was also present. This shed was situated on hardstanding and had a flat roof covered with felt sheeting.
u1b6: Other developed land.	827: Garden	Areas of hardstanding were present throughout the garden and consisted of a mixture of brick-paved hardstanding and concrete hardstanding.
u1c: Artificial unvegetated – unsealed surface	827: Garden	A gravel driveway was present.
u1e: Built linear features	612: Fence	A post and rail fence was present to create subsections of the garden.
u1f: Sparsely vegetated urban land	N/A	A sand school used for equestrian training was present. Vegetation present comprised of Yorkshire fog (O), common plantain (O), cat's ear (O) and bramble (O).

Table 4: Habitats within the site.

The habitats on site are common throughout the local area. Some of the habitats present on site have potential to support protected and notable species.

Recommendations for avoidance and mitigation measures are provided in Section 4 to prevent any negative effects on habitats that have potential to support protected and notable species within the site.

3.3 Protected Species Assessment

The following assessment considers the information from the desktop study as well as an assessment of the habitats on site and their potential to support protected and notable species.

Bats

All bat species in the UK eat insects and forage along habitats such as hedgerows, woodlands, grasslands and waterways⁴. Bats use woodland edges, hedgerows, rivers and other linear features like tree-lined footpaths as corridors to commute from one area of countryside to another⁵.

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided one hundred and fifteen records of four species of bat found within 1km of the site: Noctule, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared Bat. The records also provided records of the following: Myotis Bat, a Pipistrelle Bat species and a Long-eared Bat species. Therefore, it is possible that additional species have been recorded.

Woodland parcels, agricultural pasture fields bound by hedgerows, mature trees and watercourses have been identified in the local area by the desk study. Bats could use these habitats to forage and commute across the local and wider landscape. The habitats within the site are of limited value for bat foraging and commuting as the majority of the site consists of modified grassland which is often mown. The hedgerow along the northern boundary and shrub along the western boundary is considered to offer limited value for foraging and commuting bats due to the species present and structure of these features. Some of the surrounding habitats in the local area contain linear features formed by mature trees or hedgerows which connect to woodland and other suitable habitat beyond the site. These features are likely to provide commuting and foraging opportunities and contribute to connectivity within the local

⁴ <https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/where-do-bats-live/bat-habitats/foraging-habitats>

⁵ <https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/where-do-bats-live/bat-habitats/commuting-habitats>

landscape. Therefore, commuting and foraging bats are considered likely to use habitats within the local area and are expected to interact with the site on occasion.

The site contained two buildings: a set of stables and a wooden shed, both of which were subject to a Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW). No bats or bat evidence were recorded during the DBW. All of the buildings within the site were assessed as having a negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

The trees present on site were assessed for any Potential Roost Features (PRFs). The bat conservation trust provides information regarding features that may be present in trees that bats could potentially use for roosting⁶. Two white poplars were found to contain ivy cover, several pedunculate oaks within the site or adjacent to the west site boundary were found to contain ivy cover, holes, cracks and splits and several Turkey oaks within the site or adjacent to the west site boundary were found to contain holes. The white poplars and Turkey oaks were assessed as having a low suitability to support roosting bats, whilst the pedunculate oaks were assessed as having a moderate suitability to support roosting bats. At the time of writing, these trees are not anticipated to be impacted by the proposed development. Whilst these trees are not anticipated to be directly affected by the development, it will be important to ensure that potential roost habitats are not disturbed during construction or post-development, including through the implementation of sensitive lighting strategies.

Due to the absence of suitable roosting features within any features anticipated to be affected by the development, further surveys are not recommended for this species. However, due to the identification of potential commuting and foraging habitat and potential tree roosting habitat, bats are considered a potential constraint to the proposed development and recommendations for mitigation and avoidance measures are provided in Section 4.

Badgers

Badger records are kept confidential by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and therefore the absence of records cannot be used to infer the absence of badgers from the local area.

The desk study identified woodland parcels, hedgerows and grassland in the local area, all of which could support badgers through providing sett creation, foraging and commuting opportunities.

⁶ http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/bat_roosts.html#TreeRoosts

The habitats within the site however provided limited opportunities for badgers, owing to the mown nature of the grassland, limited native species present and the presence of natural and man-made boundaries, which would restrict movement.

No evidence of badger sett creation or field signs of badgers was identified within the site boundary. Whilst badgers are considered unlikely to interact with the site, they are likely to be present within the wider area given the nature of the surrounding habitats.

Due to the likely absence of badger within the site, badgers are not considered to be a potential constraint to the proposed development, and no further surveys are recommended for this species. However, precautionary measures to protect this species are provided in Section 4.

Hazel Dormouse

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided zero records of hazel dormouse within the desk study area. Across its range, dormice prefer the successional stage of woody vegetation; this is the new growth that arises after woodland management such as coppicing, ride widening, thinning or glade creation. They may also occur in scrubby habitat⁷.

The desk study identified woodland parcels and hedgerows which may potentially support hazel dormice, however their suitability is unknown. The tree lines and hedgerow within the site are considered to lack suitability as they lack the species composition and structural diversity required to provide suitable habitat for this species. Field signs of hazel dormice were not identified.

Due to the likely absence of hazel dormice from within the site, hazel dormice are not considered to be a potential constraint to the proposed development and therefore no recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or avoidance measures are required.

Riparian Mammals

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre did not provide records of water vole. Otter records are kept confidential by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre and therefore absence of records cannot be used to infer the absence of otters from the local area.

The desk study has identified the closest watercourse to be an unnamed ordinary watercourse, which forms a headwater tributary feeding the River Mole, located approximately 80m

⁷ <https://ptes.org/get-informed/facts-figures/hazel-common-dormouse-muscardinus-avellanarius/>

northeast of the closest point from the development boundary. Whilst otters are typically associated with large rivers, smaller waterways may occasionally be used to commute or forage. Field signs of riparian mammals were not identified.

The habitats on site are considered unsuitable for riparian mammals because the site lacks any suitable wetland or watercourse features and instead comprises garden areas, offering no suitable foraging, commuting or resting opportunities.

Due to the likely absence of riparian mammals within the site, riparian mammals are not considered to be a potential constraint to the proposed development and therefore no recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or avoidance measures are required.

Other Mammals

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided sixteen records of rabbit, with the latest occurring in 2021.

The desk study has identified woodland parcels, hedgerows and grassland, all of which could support other mammals through providing foraging, commuting and resting opportunities.

Habitats within the site comprise grassland that is considered to provide limited potential for foraging, commuting and resting mammals due to it being mown frequently, which has resulted in low species and structural diversity. However, the site is connected to habitats with greater suitability for mammals, and, as a result of this connectivity, it is possible that small numbers of individuals may forage or commute across the site on occasion.

Whilst European rabbits are not European protected species, they are protected under UK wildlife legislation which protects wild mammals from unnecessary cruelty and suffering. Additionally, other priority species under Section 41 of the NERC Act may interact with the site on occasion. Recommended mitigation measures to avoid adverse effects to these species and other mammals are provided in Section 4.

Reptiles

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided zero records of reptiles.

The desk study has identified woodland parcels, grassland and hedgerows which could support reptiles through providing commuting, foraging, basking and resting opportunities.

Habitats within the site comprise grassland that is considered to provide limited potential for commuting, foraging, basking and resting reptiles due to it being regularly mown, which has

resulted in poor structural diversity. The tree lines and hedgerow within the site are considered to provide limited potential due to their structure or adjacent habitats. Habitats linked to the site through ecological connectivity provide a greater suitability for reptiles, and whilst reptiles are unlikely to interact with the site, they are likely to be present within the local area.

Due to the likely absence of reptiles within the site, reptiles are not considered a potential constraint to the proposed development and no recommendations for further surveys are required. However, precautionary measures to protect these species and recommendations that would benefit these species are provided in Section 4.

Amphibians

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided one record of palmate newt, three records of smooth newt and two records of common frog, with the most recent record occurring in 2015, 2015 and 2021 respectively.

The desk study has identified zero ponds within 250m of the site, the typical migratory range of great crested newt (GCN) from a waterbody⁸.

Additionally, the desk study identified that the site is located in Natural England's "Green Impact Risk Zone" for great crested newts. Green zones contain moderately suitable habitat for GCN and GCN may be present in these green areas. Magic Map was also consulted for any granted EPS licences within 1km of the site and zero were returned.

Aquatic habitat within the site is very limited, comprising a single small concrete ornamental pond measuring approximately 15m². The pond was heavily shaded and covered with common duckweed at the time of the survey. This pond was subject to a GCN Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment⁹ and received a poor suitability score. The remainder of the site provides poor terrestrial habitat for GCN and other amphibian species as the site is predominantly modified grassland within a vegetated garden and therefore lacks the structure required to offer suitable foraging and shelter opportunities.

⁸ Cresswell, W. & Whitworth, R., 2004. An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*: English Nature Research Report 576. Peterborough: English Nature.

⁹ [Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index \(HSI\) - Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK](#)

Habitats within the desk study area, some of which are linked to the site via ecological connectivity, provide a greater suitability for amphibians during both their aquatic and terrestrial stages of their lifecycle, and whilst amphibians are unlikely to interact with the site, they are likely to be present within the local area.

Due to the likely absence of amphibians, including GCN, within the site, amphibians are not considered to be a potential constraint to the proposed development and no recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or avoidance measures are required.

Birds

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided many records of fifty-eight protected and notable bird species, many of which are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Records included, but were not limited to, the following species: red kite, osprey, mediterranean gull, kingfisher and merlin.

Habitats within the site comprise regularly mown grassland, shrubs, trees and buildings which are considered to provide limited foraging opportunities for birds. These habitats however do provide suitable nesting opportunities, particularly within the larger shrubs, trees and the buildings. Three old swallow nests were identified within the stables (B1), although no active nests were recorded at the time of the survey. These could provide suitable nesting opportunities for low numbers of small and medium nesting birds, such as wood pigeons, wrens, blackbirds and robins.

Due to the presence of suitable habitats within the site there is potential for nesting birds. Therefore, birds are considered to pose a potential constraint to the proposed development and recommendations for mitigation and avoidance measures are provided in Section 4.

Plants

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided records of twenty-three protected or notable plant species. These species are largely associated with ancient woodland indicator species, such as bluebell, wood-sorrel and wild strawberry.

No protected species were identified during the field survey and considering the habitats on site, the presence of protected plant species is considered unlikely.

Due to the likely absence of protected plant species, plants are not considered a potential constraint to the proposed development and no recommendations for further surveys, avoidance or mitigation measures are recommended.

Invertebrates

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided records of seventy-seven protected or notable invertebrate species, including, but not limited to: stag beetle, small heath, white admiral, brown hairstreak and jersey tiger.

Habitats within the site are considered to provide limited opportunities for foraging, commuting and nesting invertebrates due to the current management practices used on the grassland and limited native species within the scattered trees, shrubs and hedgerow. Two log piles were present within the grassland which increases opportunities for invertebrates, however, their potential is limited due to their location within mown grassland. Protected species, or signs of them, were not identified during the field survey.

Due to the likely absence of protected and notable invertebrates, invertebrates are not considered to be a potential constraint to the proposed development, and no further surveys, avoidance or mitigation measures are recommended. Opportunities for enhancement are provided in Section 4 that would benefit these species.

3.4 Invasive Non-Native Flora and Fauna

Invasive Non-Native Flora

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided records of the following species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended): waterer's cotoneaster, wall cotoneaster, montbretia, giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, garden yellow archangel, Japanese knotweed and rhododendron ponticum. It also provided records of the following species listed as invasive non-native species in Sussex: hybrid bluebell, least duckweed and cherry laurel.

Cherry laurel was recorded during the UKHab survey. However, this species was confined to planted areas within the private garden, and the current risk of spread into habitats outside the garden area is considered low. There is no national requirement to eradicate cherry laurel from private gardens and therefore no further measures are required at this stage. However, any future landscaping should consider replacing cherry laurel with native shrub species to reduce the potential for future spread and enhance the biodiversity value of the site.

Additionally, a single rhododendron shrub was recorded during the UKHab survey, however, identification to species level was not possible at the time of the survey due to the absence of diagnostic flowers. The shrub appeared likely to be of an ornamental garden specimen rather than a naturalised population. Consequently, no eradication or mitigation measures are

considered necessary. However, any future landscaping should consider replacement with native shrub species to enhance the biodiversity value of the site.

Due to their likely absence or no formal ongoing conservation efforts to control now naturalised species, invasive non-native plant species are not considered a potential constraint to the proposed development, and no further surveys, avoidance or mitigation measures are recommended. Opportunities for enhancement are provided in Section 4 that would benefit the biodiversity value of the site.

Invasive Non-Native Fauna

The information supplied by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre provided records of the following species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended): mandarin duck, Egyptian goose, Canada goose, ring-necked parakeet and grey squirrel. It also provided records of the following species listed as invasive non-native species in Sussex: harlequin ladybird.

The grey squirrel was encountered during the UKHab survey, however, as the grey squirrel is considered a naturalised species and there is no formal effort to control population numbers, no further recommendations are provided.

No other non-native fauna was recorded during the UKHab survey.

Due to their likely absence or no ongoing conservation efforts to control now naturalised species, invasive non-native fauna species are not considered a potential constraint to the proposed development, and no further surveys, avoidance or mitigation measures are recommended.

4 Constraints and Opportunities

4.1 Key Ecological Constraints

Based on the findings of the desk study and the site surveys, the main ecological constraints to the proposed development are as follows:

- Suitable habitat present for tree roosting, commuting and foraging bats;
- Suitable habitat present for opportunistic, other terrestrial mammals; and,
- Suitable habitat present for nesting birds.

4.2 Further Surveys & Assessments

Considering the findings of the desk study and the site surveys, the following further surveys are required to determine the presence or likely absence of protected species within the site prior to the determination of this application:

Nesting Birds (if necessary)

Should removal or alterations be required on any of the buildings, trees or shrubs during the nesting bird season (typically the 1st of March to the 31st of August), a bird breeding survey would be required, prior to any alterations or removal.

If any active nest sites were to be identified, a suitable exclusion zone would have to be established until all the chicks have fledged the nest.

4.3 Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation Measures

The following measures are required to avoid or minimise any potential effect on any important ecological features, such as designated sites, legally protected species and non-native invasive species.

Protection of Retained Mature Trees

Measures to ensure that all trees on site are protected include:

- An arboriculturist should be instructed to produce an assessment and a tree protection plan, compliant with BS5837, and all recommendations by the arboriculturist should be followed.
- Clearly mark and fence off all tree protection zones (TPZs) to prevent damage.

- Prevent machinery from entering any root protection zones and when not in use it should be stored well away from TPZs, ideally on hard standing areas.

Bats

A sensitive lighting scheme should be incorporated into the final design to protect edge habitats and any newly created habitats on site. To protect potential roost or bat foraging/commuting habitat in the area it will be important to;

- Avoid illuminating the wider habitats on site, particularly the hedgerows, at dusk or night-time – Guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust and ILP should be followed¹⁰.
- Limit work to daylight hours.
- Limit noise disturbance and other forms of pollution such as dust.
- Maintain the wider habitats on site.
- Lighting should also be considered post-development with any external lighting positioned so as not to illuminate potential foraging or commuting habitats.

Nesting Birds

To ensure breeding birds are not impacted by any project works, any vegetation or buildings that require removal should be removed outside of the breeding bird season, which typically is the 1st of March to the 31st of August.

If removal is required during the nesting bird season the area should be subjected to a bird breeding survey by an experienced ecologist, prior to any works commencing. If there are any nest sites located within the work area a suitable exclusion zone will have to be established until the chicks have fledged the nest (see Section 4.2).

Management of Work Areas

Measures to ensure the protection of species which may commute across or interact with the site on occasion include:

- To prevent species becoming trapped in open earth works or excavations that are to be left overnight, they should either be covered over or a board placed securely within the excavation that allows access from the bottom of the excavation to the ground level to provide a means of exit.

¹⁰ <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

- The works area should be fenced off during the construction phase to discourage large mammals from entering the site.
- All excavations and trenches should be inspected each morning before works commence.
 - In the unlikely event that a badger is found trapped on site, works should cease, and an ecologist or local badger group/RSPCA should be contacted.
 - In the unlikely event that a suspected GCN is found on site, works should cease, and a qualified ecologist must be contacted. Works should not restart until an appropriate mitigation strategy is in place and the appropriate licencing requirements obtained.
 - In the unlikely event that a reptile is seen, then works should stop until an appropriate mitigation strategy can be agreed and implemented.
 - If an amphibian is found (aside GCN) trapped on site, the amphibian should be safely removed and allowed to disperse within suitable habitat that has connectivity to wider habitats.
- Any loose or soft material such as topsoil should be covered overnight and when not in use to discourage their use by badgers as potential setts. Any mounds should be inspected daily to ensure badgers have not established a sett. If a potential sett is discovered an ecologist should be consulted immediately and the area not disturbed.
- If pipework (over 120mm in diameter) is stored on site, the ends should be covered and inspected before use.
- Chemicals must be stored in a secure/bunded container to avoid disturbance by wildlife.
- The construction site should be kept tidy and where reasonably practical keep building materials off the ground to prevent the creation of hibernacula/refugia.
- In the unlikely event that a burrow entrance of a mammal that could be of a suitable size for badgers is discovered within the immediate area of the development the following actions should be taken:
 - Works must cease and an ecologist consulted.
 - A suitable buffer of at least 30m established and clearly marked around the suspected badger's sett. If this is not possible the professional judgement of the ecologist should be consulted to determine a suitable buffer.
 - Any badger sett or mammal burrow that could be in use by badgers and is reasonably likely to be impacted by the development should be monitored by a qualified ecologist for an appropriate period and the appropriate licencing requirement obtained if required.
- If any rabbit or fox burrows are found within the immediate area of the development, they should not be tracked over by machinery. If any are to be impacted by the

development, they should be dug out with hand tools to prevent unlawful methods of killing, such as those laid out in the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996.

- All personnel working on the development should remain vigilant for the presence of small mammals such as hedgehogs around any vegetation, debris or stored materials. If found, a reasonable action would be to carefully move an individual to a safe location either within retained habitat on site or off site.

Method Statement for Vegetation Clearance

To ensure the protection of species which may commute across or interact with the site on occasion, any vegetation clearance should be cleared systematically by hand and cut down to ground level in stages (described below). This will allow any wildlife present to leave the work area safely. This can be done under ecological supervision if that is wanted, although not necessary.

Stage 1 – the vegetation will need to be reduced to a height of 150-200mm using hand tools (e.g., strimmer). It is recommended that cutting works towards retained areas, where there is connectivity to wider habitats. All potential refugia such as log or rubble piles should be removed by hand to outside of work area.

Stage 2 – after a period of at least 24 hours has passed a second vegetation cut should be undertaken to ground level. Again, it is recommended that this second-stage cutting works towards retained areas. All cuttings to be removed from work area. The site can be completely cleared and worked upon as necessary.

Pollution Prevention Measures

All activities, during and post construction, should be undertaken in accordance with current GOV.UK guidance relation to pollution prevention and environmental protection¹¹. Appropriate measures should be implemented to prevent contamination of soils, surface waters and groundwater during construction. Contingency measures should be prepared, prior to any works commencing, to address any accidental spillages or other pollution incidents, and suitable spill response kits should be available on site at all times during construction.

4.4 Ecological Enhancement Opportunities

It is understood that a wildflower area is to be planted to replace the existing sand school. This creation of habitat will provide benefits to a range of species including pollinators. It is

¹¹ [Pollution prevention for businesses - GOV.UK](#)

recommended that a seed mix comprising a diverse range of native wildflower species with staggered flowering periods is used, to provide foraging resources for pollinators for a greater amount of time throughout the growing season. A seed mixture such as the EM3 Special General Purpose Meadow Mixture could be sown for example¹². The chosen wildflower area should be established and managed in accordance with the supplier's recommendations to ensure successful establishment and retention of species diversity.

Additionally, it is understood that a new hedgerow is to be planted within the site. This creation of habitat has the potential to provide benefits to a range of species including pollinators. It is recommended that a mix of native species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, common hazel and field maple are planted in a double staggered row to provide foraging, commuting and shelter opportunities as the hedgerow matures.

A number of further enhancements can be made in the event of any relandscaping works on site to help reduce any potential ecological impacts. It is important to utilise native plant species of local provenance in landscaping schemes to enhance the ecological value of the site. A few general enhancements are recommended to be considered when designing the final plan.

Native Planting

It is recommended to use species that are recognised as beneficial to wildlife due to their fruiting, pollinating or nectar producing abilities within any planting/landscaping scheme associated with the proposed development. A list of native plants that can support a range of species can be found on the Royal Botanical Gardens Key website¹³. Additionally, a list of native trees beneficial for wildlife can be found on the Royal Horticultural Society website¹⁴.

As mentioned in Section 3, it is recommended to consider replacing non-native, ornamental shrubs with native shrubs to enhance the ecological value of the site.

Additional Features

To enhance the local bat population and provide roosting opportunities within the site, it is recommended to incorporate an artificial roost site into the residential plot. This could be an

¹² [EM3 Special General Purpose Meadow Mixture - Emorsgate Seeds](#)

¹³ [Native plants for wildlife | Grow Wild | Kew](#)

¹⁴ [Choosing native trees and shrubs / RHS Gardening](#)

integrated bat box, such as the Ibstock enclosed bat box (B and C)¹⁵ which is easily installed into the interior of a building, as close to the eaves as possible. Or a non-integrated bat box, such as the Schwegler 2FN bat box¹⁶ or the Beaumaris bat box¹⁷, which can be mounted on a pole, building or tree. The correct placement of a bat box is crucial to its successful use by bats. The box should be installed on the south or west elevation if placed on buildings or trees as these elevations will receive the most warmth when bats are most active throughout the summer.

To enhance the local bird population and provide nesting opportunities within the site, it is recommended to incorporate an artificial nest site into the residential plot. This could be an integrated bird box, such as the Ibstock sparrow box¹⁸ which is easily installed into the interior of a building, ideally under the eaves. Or a non-integrated bird box, such as the Woodstone Barcelona - Vivara Pro open nest box¹⁹, which can be installed onto retained or planted trees. The correct placement of a bird box is crucial to its successful use by birds. Bird boxes should be installed 1-3m high, sheltered from weather, not too close to other boxes and away from any bird feeders.

It is also recommended that additional log piles could be made near areas of retained or created hedgerow or nearby trees. The log piles can be created during site management from leftover wood. Log piles offer shelter for hibernating small mammals and insects, as well as a foraging area for some birds.

Compost heaps can also be formed in areas of retained or created hedgerow or nearby trees. The compost heaps should be placed in sunny, south-facing areas. These can be created during site management or development. Compost heaps offer excellent habitats for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals and invertebrates.

Additionally, to allow hedgehogs to travel between homeowner's private gardens and prevent habitat severance, hedgehog access fencing is recommended in any fencing that is placed. This

¹⁵ [Bat Box - EcoHabitats](#)

¹⁶ [Schwegler 2FN Bat Box Special Bat Box - Ark Wildlife UK](#)

¹⁷ [Beaumaris Bat Box](#)

¹⁸ [Sparrow & Starling Box - EcoHabitats](#)

¹⁹ [WoodStone® Barcelona Open Nest Box \(Green\) | CJ Wildlife](#)

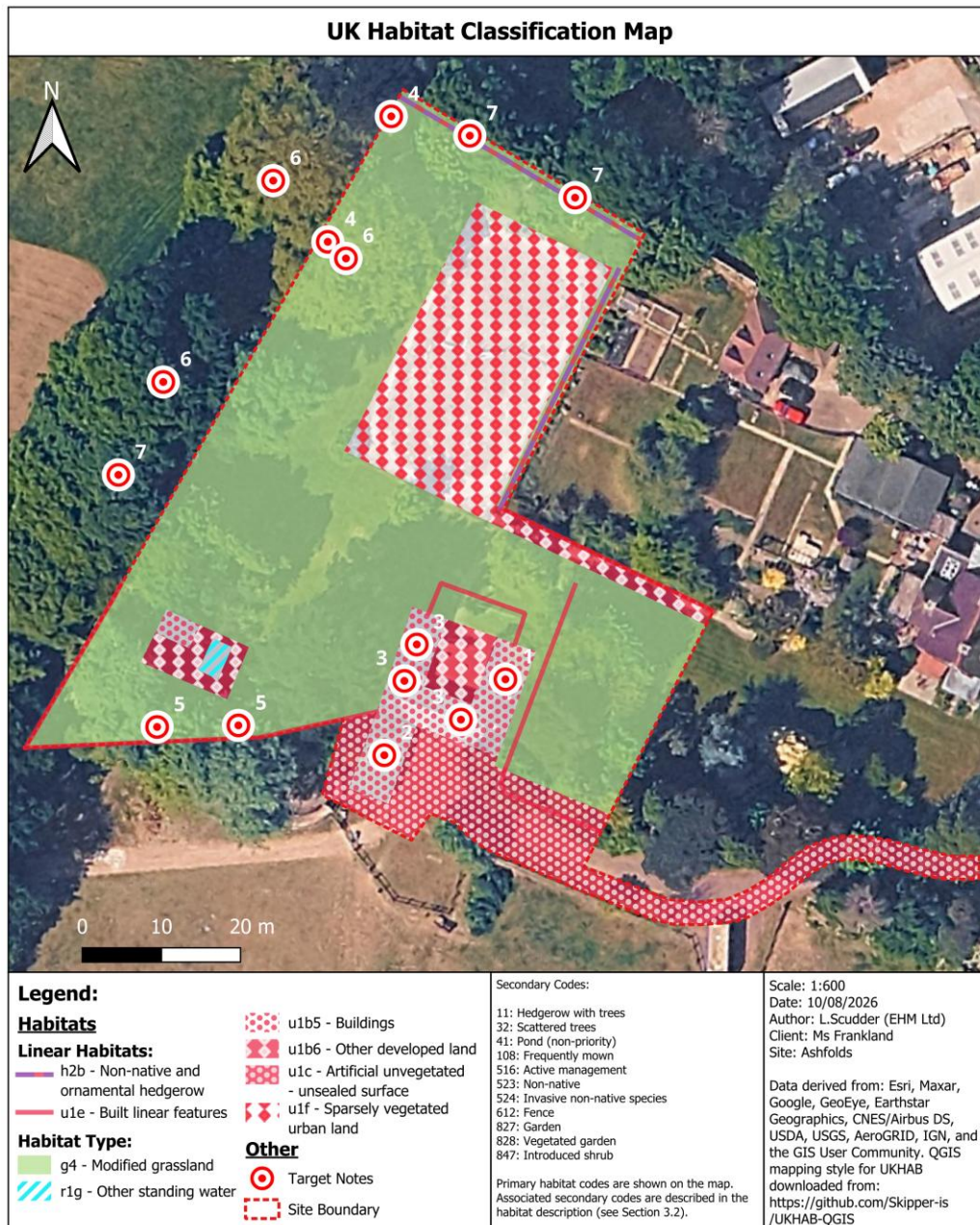
can be created by creating a 13cm X 13cm hole at the base of the fencing²⁰ or by installing Hedgehog Gravel Board²¹. To ensure these important wildlife corridors are not blocked, small signs can be placed or painted above the hole.

²⁰ [Link your garden with a hedgehog highway](#)

²¹ [Hedgehog Concrete Gravel Board - EcoHabitats](#)

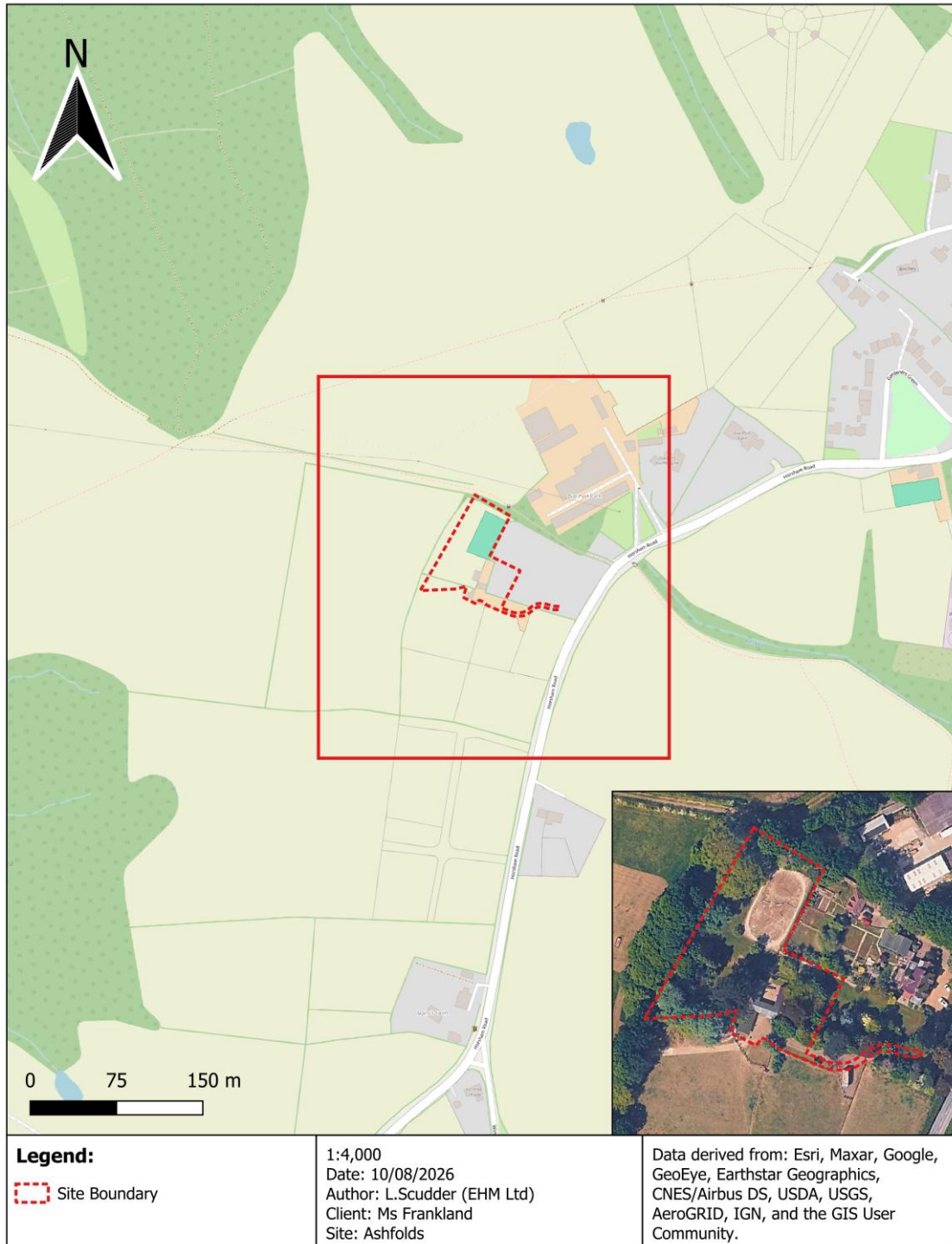
5 APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix 1: UK Habitat Classification Survey Results



Target Note	Details
1	Stables to be demolished.
2	To be retained for garage use.
3	Old bird nest, presumed to be from swallows.
4	Small log pile.
5	White poplar with low bat roost potential.
6	Turkey oak with low bat roost potential.
7	Pedunculate oak with moderate bat roost potential.

5.2 Appendix 2: Development Proposals – Site Location



5.3 Appendix 3: Photos



Stables (B1) to be demolished.



Stables (B1) to be demolished.



Non-active swallow nest.



Non-active swallow nest.



Vegetated garden with scattered trees.



Vegetated garden.



Sand school.



Sand school.



Log pile.



Log pile.



Shed (B2).



Ornamental pond.

	
Driveway.	Vegetated garden.
	
White poplars with low roost potential.	Turkey oak with low roost potential.
	
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (H1).	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (H2).

5.4 Appendix 4: Daytime Bat Walkover Results

Stables: External Inspection



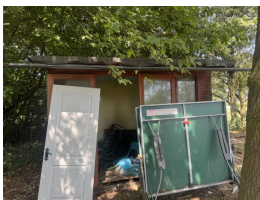
General Structure: A set of wooden stables on a concrete base.

Building Features: The stables had a pitched, tiled roof, covered with a combination of corrugated metal and felt sheeting. They were a set of wooden stables and situated on a concrete base. Loft spaces were absent.

Bat Evidence and Potential Roost Features (PRFs): No bats or bat evidence was recorded on the exterior (or interior where visible from the outside). The roof is corrugated metal or felt sheeting and there are no visible soffits, loose boards or cavities that would provide secure roosting locations. Additionally, the construction of the stables means that the building would lack a constant temperature, further reducing suitability for roosting bats.

Preliminary Assessment: No bats or bat evidence was recorded during the daytime bat walkover, and potential roost features were not identified. Due to the materials and structure of the stables, it would provide little to no thermal regulation and lacks areas suitable for roosting. This building is considered to have a negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

Shed: External Inspection



General Structure: A small wooden shed.

Building Features: This shed was situated on hardstanding and had a flat roof covered with felt sheeting.

Bat Evidence and Potential Roost Features (PRFs): No bats or evidence of bats was recorded on the exterior (or interior where visible from the outside). The roof is felt sheeting and there are no visible soffits, loose boards or cavities that would provide secure roosting locations.

Additionally, the current condition of the shed means that the building would lack a constant temperature, further reducing suitability for roosting bats.

Preliminary Assessment: No bats or bat evidence was recorded during the daytime bat walkover, and potential roost features were not identified. Due to the materials and structure of the shed, it would provide little to no thermal regulation and lacks areas suitable for roosting. This building is considered to have a negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

Scattered Trees



General Description: Scattered trees are present within the site, within one of the hedgerows (H1) and outside of the development boundary but within the wider landholding. The trees are a range of native and non-native species and are largely either young or early-mature.

Tree Features: Two white poplars were found to contain ivy cover. Several pedunculate oaks were found to contain ivy cover, holes, cracks and splits and several Turkey oaks were found to contain holes.

Bat Evidence and Potential Roost Features (PRFs): No bats or evidence of bats was recorded during the daytime bat walkover. However, two white poplars and a few Turkey oaks displayed a few features with the potential to support roosting bats, and a few pedunculate oaks displayed some features with the potential to support roosting bats.

Preliminary Assessment: No bats or bat evidence was recorded during the daytime bat walkover. However potential roost features have been identified on trees. The white poplars and Turkey oak are considered to have a low suitability to support roosting bats, whilst the pedunculate oaks are considered to have a moderate suitability to support roosting bats.

5.5 Appendix 5: Legislation

Introduction

This appendix provides a summary of the principal legislation and planning policy relevant to biodiversity, habitats and protected species in England. It is intended as a guide to the legal and policy framework that informed this assessment and should not be regarded as a substitute for the full text of the legislation or current government guidance.

International Conventions

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) is an international agreement which aims to conserve biological diversity, promote the sustainable use of biological resources and ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources. The Convention forms the basis of many biodiversity conservation policies and strategies adopted within the UK.

Bern Convention

The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention, 1979) promotes the conservation of wild flora, fauna and their habitats throughout Europe, with particular emphasis on threatened and vulnerable species.

Bonn Convention

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention, 1979) encourages international cooperation for the conservation and management of migratory species throughout their range.

Ramsar Convention

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention, 1971) provides a framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands through local, national and international action. Wetlands designated under the Convention are commonly referred to as Ramsar Sites.

National Legislation

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is one of the principal pieces of legislation protecting wildlife in Great Britain.

The Act affords protection to wild birds, certain animals, plants and geological features. It makes provision for the designation and protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and includes controls relating to certain invasive non-native species.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provide protection for habitats and species of national and international importance in England.

The Regulations provide for the protection and management of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), contribute to the protection of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and afford strict protection to European Protected Species (EPS), including all species of bat, great crested newt, hazel dormouse and otter.

Activities affecting protected species or designated sites may require licensing and/or assessment by the relevant competent authority.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 protects badgers (*Meles meles*) and their setts throughout England and Wales.

It is generally an offence to kill, injure or take a badger, or to damage, obstruct or interfere with a badger sett, except under licence or where otherwise permitted by law.

Hedgerows Regulations 1997

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 provide protection for important countryside hedgerows in England and Wales.

The Regulations establish criteria for identifying hedgerows of ecological, archaeological, historical or landscape importance and place restrictions on their removal.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish lists of Habitats of Principal Importance and Species of Principal Importance in England.

These habitats and species are of particular conservation significance and are a material consideration in the planning process.

Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 strengthened the biodiversity duty placed on public authorities and introduced a range of measures intended to support nature recovery in England. The Act amended Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, requiring public authorities to consider actions that conserve and enhance biodiversity. It also established the legislative framework for Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Under the Act, most planning permissions in England are required to achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, secured for a minimum period of 30 years. Biodiversity Net Gain is measured using the statutory biodiversity metric and may be delivered through on-site enhancement, off-site biodiversity gains, or statutory biodiversity credits where appropriate.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

In relation to biodiversity, planning decisions should:

- minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity;
- protect and enhance designated sites, priority habitats and protected species;
- safeguard ecological networks;
- help secure measurable improvements for biodiversity; and
- support the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and populations of priority species.

Summary

The legislation and policy listed above seek to protect biodiversity through the conservation of important habitats, designated sites and protected species, whilst ensuring that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement and nature recovery are incorporated into decision-making and development proposals wherever practicable.