

APPENDIX 7.5
PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY REPORT

Mowbray

Employment Land ~

Phase 1 Habitat Report

January 2026



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Report Ref: DFA250697

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Derek Finnie Associates was commissioned by Legal & General (Strategic Land North Horsham) Limited (L&G) to undertake an ecological assessment in relation to an area of land within their wider Mowbray Development, known as the Employment Land, Horsham, herein referred to as the 'Site' (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The Site previously had planning permission for the construction of a business park, which implies the principle of any impact on ecology has been deemed acceptable. The previous permission, however, has subsequently expired and L&G are now seeking outline planning permission (all matters reserved) to provide an Employment Park comprising flexible commercial, industrial and logistics uses (Use Classes E(g), B2, B8), healthcare (Class E(e)) and commercial leisure.
- 1.1.3 To inform the application, a series of ecological surveys were undertaken to ensure that the findings and conclusions of the previous Environmental Statement, in as far as they relate to ecology, are still true and valid. The following report, therefore, presents the methodology and results of a Phase 1 Habitat survey undertaken in 2025. The survey area (Figure 1) covers land associated with both the Employment Land application and the Employment Land Road application.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 The Site sits within L&G's wider landholdings at their North Horsham (Mowbray) site, which has been subject to numerous ecological surveys since 2010; all of which have been considered in the context of the current assessment.

2.2 Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 An 'extended' Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out on the 7th June 2025. The survey methodology followed that presented by the JNCC (2010). The Phase 1 technique aims to classify each habitat into categories based on the assemblage of plant species present, with the dominant plant species for each habitat being noted. In some cases, sub-divisions or modifications of the standard categories can be made where this is useful in providing further detail.
- 2.2.2 An 'extended' form of the basic methodology was employed to determine whether any notable or protected species of fauna utilise the study area, in particular [REDACTED] bats, amphibians, reptiles and birds. In the absence of direct evidence of these species, an assessment was made of the potential for the site to support such species.
- 2.2.3 Additional data on certain vegetation parameters were also collected during the site survey to allow the Defra Biodiversity Net Gain metric to be completed.

2.3 Survey Constraints

- 2.3.1 The survey was undertaken in line with the latest sectoral guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and BS 42020: 2013 *Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development*.
- 2.3.2 All survey work was undertaken by Derek Finnie MSc DipCons CEnv MEnvSc MCIEEM, Director of Derek Finnie Associates who has over 30 years as a practicing ecologist.

3 SITE DESCRIPTION

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 The was previously sown to support a mixture of cereal crops and improved grassland delineated by native hedgerows.

3.2 Field Survey

- 3.2.1 The Site, which covers approximately 17.27ha, comprises several fields delineated by hedgerows. A small stream, Chennells Brook, runs along the western and northern boundary, outside the redline application boundary. A railway line bisects the south eastern section of the Site.

- 3.2.2 The majority of the fields themselves have been in active arable crop production until late in 2024; the western most fields have developed into a species poor, semi-improved grassland.

- 3.2.3 The following Phase 1 habitats were encountered within the Site:

- Modified grassland;
- Arable, cereal crops;
- Bramble scrub; and
- Hedges

- 3.2.4 Each habitat is described in turn below and depicted on Figure 1.

Modified Grassland

- 3.2.5 Throughout the western section of the Site is an area of species-poor, semi-improved grassland, which would be classified as Modified grassland in the BNG Metric. It, comprises common, widespread species such as perennial rye grass, cock's-foot, Yorkshire fog, yarrow, creeping buttercup, white clover, ribwort plantain, dandelion and creeping cinquefoil.

- 3.2.6 The sward was approximately 500mm in height during the June 2025 survey; it is reportedly cut on an annual basis.

Arable crops

- 3.2.7 The majority of the Site was given over to arable crops until 2024, when there was a cessation of active farming. Since then, some remnant cereal crops have established, with the occasional ephemeral species such as pineapple weed, hoary bittercress, scarlet pimpernel, ribwort plantain, annual meadow grass and creeping buttercup also being noted.

Bramble scrub

- 3.2.8 On the south eastern side of the rail way line are several areas of developing bramble scrub.



Hedgerows

- 3.2.9 The field are typically delineated by native hedgerows comprising a mixture of hawthorn and blackthorn, with lesser amounts of hazel and elder.
- 3.2.10 The hedgerows are typically outgrown with limited signs of past management.

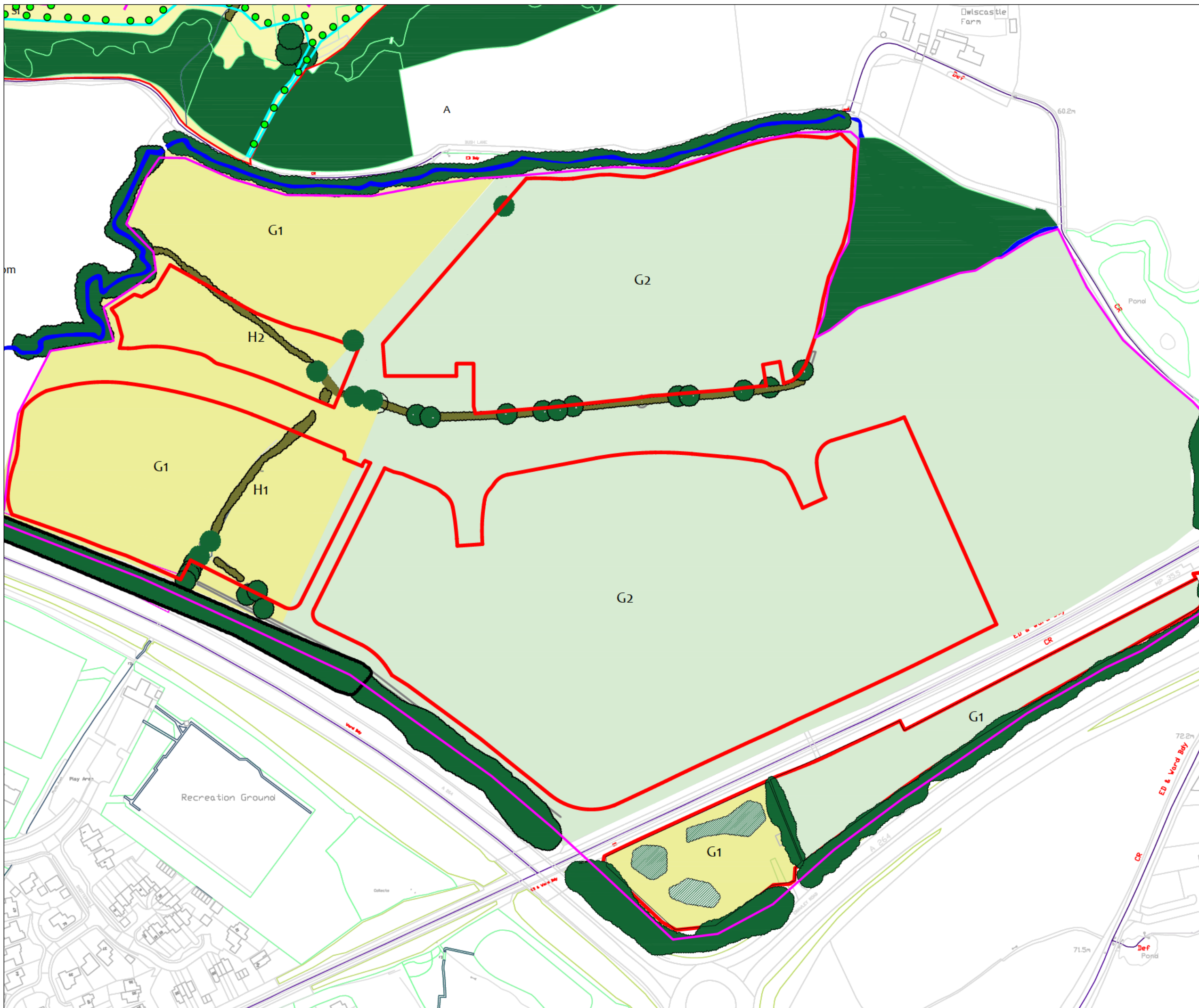
Fauna



- 3.2.12 There are no waterbodies within the Site, although there are several within 250m. Previous surveys had shown these ponds did not support great crested newts; update surveys may need to be conducted to demonstrate a continued absence.
- 3.2.13 The Site has limited potential to support reptiles.
- 3.2.14 The arable fields and grassland provide low quality bat foraging habitat, whilst the hedgerows may provide some commuting opportunities.
- 3.2.15 The Site is likely to provide some low to moderate breeding bird habitat.

4 SUMMARY

- 4.1.1 The Phase 1 Habitat survey confirms the habitats within the Site are similar to that identified during surveys to inform the original Environmental statement. Overall, the habits are of limited ecological value.



Legend	
	Modified Grassland
	Abandoned Arable
	Scrub
	Hedgeows
	Individual tree

Drawing Number:	Figure 1
Title:	Phase 1 Habitat Map
Date:	January 2026
Project:	Commercial Land
Client:	L&G

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