



GC3 Ecology

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL AND ROOST ASSESSMENT

SURVEY SITE: BENTONS BARN, BENTONS LANE, DIAL POST, RH13 8NP

JUNE 2026



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The contents of this report were correct at the time of the last survey visit. The report is provided for the sole use of the named client and is confidential.

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It is our policy to share species records collected during our surveys with local biological records centres unless instructed otherwise by the client.

Introduction:

- 1.1 GC3 Ecology was commissioned by the client to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) including Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Bentons Barn, Bentons Lane, RH13 8NP (central OS grid reference: TQ 14905 19450) to support the proposal for the erection of a replacement dwelling on the site. A location plan and site plan have been provided in appendix 1 and appendix 2.
- 1.2 The survey results and recommendations contained in this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion. Provided no significant changes are made to the proposals or on the site (e.g. significant changes to management practices or habitats present) subsequent to the report's issue; this report can be considered valid for 18 months from the date of issue.
- 1.3 This report has been compiled in accordance with current guidelines (British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development, 2013 and CIEEM, 2017 and 2018)
- 1.4 The Local Planning Authority website (Horsham District Council) was consulted to inform of additional relevant information to this assessment, including local development plan policies in relation to ecology and biodiversity (see Appendix A – Planning Policy and Legislation) as well as any Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) etc.
- 1.5 The aim of this survey was to assess the habitats present on and adjacent to the property and to evaluate the potential for protected species to be present. Recommendations on any further survey requirements, actions to preserve the habitats present and enhancements have been made as a result of the findings of this habitat survey. These findings should be used within the design phase of the proposals, to minimise the impacts for biodiversity, through careful design to avoid negative effects where possible. The survey findings then enable a prediction of the potential impacts of any ecological receptors present to be made in each specific case. Appropriate mitigation and biodiversity enhancement recommendations have been made where appropriate.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to establish the site's suitability for development, inform the design process for future proposals, record the ecological baseline and identify

key potential ecological constraints and opportunities associated with future development proposals. This report has been prepared with due consideration for existing best practice guidance (CIEEM, 2017) (BSI, 2013) and aims to provide general advice on ecological constraints associated with development of the site.

Development Proposal

- 1.7 It is understood that the proposal is for the erection of a replacement dwelling on the site. The development is not proposed to impact trees on the site. The development is also not expected to impact any of the existing hedgerows on the site (native or non-native) and mowed lawn will be the only potential habitat impacted. However, construction activities adjacent to habitats could cause some disturbance as will be addressed in the report in subsequent mitigation measures.

2. Overview of Policy / Legislative Context

- 2.1 A full legislative and policy overview is provided in Appendix 3. This appendix provides an overview of the principal legislation and planning policy relevant to biodiversity and protected species in England. It summarises key national laws including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, which collectively protect designated sites, habitats and species such as [REDACTED] bats, barn owl, reptiles, amphibians, hazel dormouse, otter and water vole. It highlights the statutory duty placed on public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The appendix also references protections for invasive species and ancient woodland, together with relevant local planning policies within Horsham District that require development to avoid biodiversity loss, safeguard designated sites, strengthen green infrastructure, and deliver measurable biodiversity net gain.

3. Site description and Location

- 3.1 Site Description: The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 14995 19479 and has an area of approximately 0.09ha.
- 3.2 The site is located on Bentons Lane on the west side of Dial Post village approximately 420m west from the main A24 road. The site consists of one detached residential barn-style dwelling and vegetated garden with lawn, hedgerows and driveway. The site is set within a mostly rural area, surrounded predominantly by open grassland to the immediate north and west in addition to a number of residential dwellings with associated gardens to the West. The wider area consists of grassland, shrubland, hedgerows and large deciduous woodland parcels. The local area is well connected via a network of tree and hedge lined fields, connecting the site to more substantial habitat.

4. Field Survey

- 4.1 The field survey comprised a walkover inspection of the land and habitats present. The survey followed standard Phase 1 survey methodology (JNCC, 2010) and covered all accessible parts of the site, including boundary features. Habitats were described and mapped (Figure 1: Appendix A).

Date of survey	Temperature (°C) High	Temperature (°C) Low	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
28/05/2026	17	16	8	15	None

- 4.2 Weather conditions were warm (c.17°C), with a gentle breeze (Beaufort Scale 3), minimal cloud cover and no rain. The field survey comprised a walkover inspection of the site by the ecologist, and immediately adjacent land including inspection of boundary features, in which ecological features were noted and mapped in accordance with principles of the UKHabs-Professional Classification System (UKHabs Ltd., 2023). A minimum mapping unit of 25m² / 5m length was used and habitats were identified to at least level 4 wherever practicable.

- 4.3 The condition of each of the existing habitats was assessed in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex I: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology (NE, 2023). A list of plant species noted was compiled, together with an estimate of relative abundance made according to the DAFOR scale (Table No. 13).
- 4.4 Constraints and Limitations: Due to the field survey consisting of only one site visit, certain species, may not have been visible or may have been otherwise inconspicuous at the time of the survey and hence overlooked. These are accepted constraints associated with the UKHabs Survey Methodology.

5. Summary of Survey Findings (UKHab codes used)

- 5.1 UK Habitat Classification Survey: The field survey was undertaken using the UK Habs Survey methodology (UK Habs, 2023a) to record the habitat types adjacent to the development boundary.
- 5.2 The UK Habs Survey has 5 hierarchical levels of habitat classification that aligns with those outlined under national legislation and planning policy. Habitats were mapped in the field using the primary habitat codes described in the UK Habs Survey Professional Edition to levels 3, 4 or 5 (UK Habs, 2023b).
- 5.3 Secondary habitat codes and target notes were assigned along with primary habitat codes to provide additional context where the habitat contained additional features that deviate from the primary classification. To identify each habitat, the dominant plant and other readily identified species were recorded and their abundance within the development boundary was measured using the DAFOR scale. [(D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).]
- 5.4 **Primary Habitat Type - Secondary Habitat Type - Description**

Built-up areas and gardens [u1] vegetated garden [828] the majority of site is dominated by heavily managed lawn with a frequent mowing regime with low sward length. This habitat is of negligible value to priority or protected species. The structure of the grassland was relatively uniform in structure reflecting the regular mowing. The grassland was species poor and dominated by grasses with up to 4 species per metre squared typically recorded.

Species present within the lawn included perennial rye grass *lolium perenne* (D), common daisy *bellis perennis* (F), creeping buttercup *ranunculus repens* (F), stinging nettle *urtica dioica* (O), and daffodil *narcissus pseudonarcissus* (R). Other plants: creeping thistle (O), bramble (R).

Buildings [u1b5] There is one existing building on the site.

h2b: Non-native and ornamental hedgerow. Two hedgerows were identified at the north and south of the site consisting of privet (*ligustrum ovalifolium*) and beech (*fagus sylvatica*) respectively.

u1c: Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface. A permeable driveway is present on the east and south side of the existing building.

u1e: Built linear features. Agricultural fencing and close boarded fencing was present on the boundary of the site (due to their scale and low importance this is not shown on the habitat map.)

One tree was identified on site as an apple (*malus domestica*) tree which is expected to be retained.



Habitat Survey Map

UK Habitat Classification
Survey Results

Legend

-  Site boundary
-  u1 - vegetated garden
-  u1c - artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  u1b5 - buildings
-  h2b - non-native hedgerow
-  Tree



Project Title
Bentons, RH13
8NP

Scale
@ A4 1:500

Drg No 34078

Date
01/06/26

Rev No. 3.

Sheet 1/1

5.5 Habitat of Principle Importance

Several habitats listed as being of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 are present within 1km of the site, including blocks of Deciduous Woodland and Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland.

Local notable habitats Within a 2km radius of the site the following priority habitats have been identified from the desk study:

- **Deciduous woodland:** closest parcel ~140m north-west of the site
- **Ancient woodland:** closest parcel ~630m north of the site
- **Traditional orchards:** closest parcel is designated on the site itself however at the time of inspection no traditional orchard was identified on the site.
- **Ponds:** closest parcel ~1040m west of the site. No ponds were recorded within 500m of the site.
- **Good quality semi-improved grassland:** closest parcel immediately to the north of the site.

Foreseen Impacts (Habitats) The habitats on site are widespread and not notable. Only one area of heavily managed lawn is being removed as part of the proposed works. No impact on adjacent or nearby habitats off site is therefore foreseen.

Recommendations (Habitats)

The retained tree should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012).

It is noted that a biodiversity net gain (BNG) report is unlikely to be required for the proposal, as the application is expected to be exempt from the requirements.

Survey Findings / Component	Recommendations / Assessment / Conclusion / Foreseen Impacts
	Refer also to Appendix 1 (Site Plan), Appendix 2 (Location Plan), Appendix 3 (Habitat Map), Appendix 5 (Site Photos) Any protected / notable species assessed as having negligible potential to exist on site during the possible presence assessment were scoped out of further assessment at this stage.
Locality and Designated Sites	
Summary of Survey Findings	The site is not subject to any designation, and there are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar Sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) within 2km of the site boundaries.
Foreseen Impacts	There are no anticipated impacts on any designated sites as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	None.

Invasive / Non-native species	
Summary of Survey Findings	No problematic invasive and non-native species were recorded on site.
Foreseen Impacts	None foreseen.
Recommendations	None.

Invertebrates	
Summary of Survey Findings	No habitat for protected or notable invertebrates is found on site, however the scattered trees, lawn and hedgerow on site provide good habitat for other more common invertebrate

	species. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. The site offers limited opportunities for notable species of invertebrate. The wider site contains other dwellings with mown lawns to the east, which will support a typical assemblage of common species associated with improved grass, including pollinators such as bumblebees, hoverflies and butterflies using clover and buttercups. Mature trees to the south of the site and near the site may support saproxylic invertebrates, though these trees are outside of the proposed works areas.
Foreseen Impacts	None foreseen.
Recommendations	None.

Bats	
Summary of Desk Study & Survey Findings	The desk study returned a total of 10 no. bat species records within 1km of the site, including records for common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus</i>, soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>, Daubenton's <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>, and <i>Nyctalus noctule</i>. The closest bat species record was c. 300m east of Common Pipistrelle. The desk study showed that one EPSL for bats has been granted within 2km of the site, as follows: • 2017-31760-EPS-MIT allowed the destruction of a breeding and resting place of common pipistrelles, between 26/10/2017 to 22/10/2022, located ~1510m south-west. No EPSLs were granted within 1km of the site. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the

	survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the license or will relocate to other known roost sites in close proximity to the licensed site. A bat preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of structures and trees as well as an assessment of the habitat within the development boundary for bats was carried out in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines for Ecologists (Collins, 2023). One building was surveyed to identify suitability for roosting bats (the existing dwelling). A ground level inspection of the exterior was undertaken to search for bat PRFs that might provide suitable crevices or access/egress points to voids or cavities for roosting bats.
Building / Assessed Feature	Assessment
Bat foraging and commuting habitat	Hedgerows provide some suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats. Habitat beyond the site boundary contains areas of good quality habitat and is connected to wider networks of greenspace that could be used by foraging bats. The wider local area comprises predominantly of grassland and woodland, which are well connected to site via a network of hedge and tree lined fields, providing suitable connectivity between the site and more substantial habitat nearby. Given the small scale of the site however it is not likely to provide a significant resource when considering the abundance of optimal habitat locally. The site is therefore assessed to have moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats.
Existing - overview	The existing building is a detached, single storey barn-style dwelling (Photo 2) constructed with brick plinth and timber frame and cladding on all sides.

	 Photo 1 – exterior
Existing building	Timber cladding was in very good condition and tightly fitted leaving no gaps or crevices which could be used by roosting bats. Windows and doors were also tightly fitting and appeared in overall good condition with no gaps. The brick and mortar at plinth level was also in satisfactory condition offering no crevices. The roof was an onduline corrugated roof with an interior of the building which has been in part converted to a residential use. The roof was in good condition with no areas of damage or lifted sheets that bats could utilise. The internal erection of the building comprises a timber structure with no loft space. The roof is unlined and constructed from corrugated material, which will fluctuate in temperature making it sub-optimal for bat roosts. With all doors and windows closed there was considerable light entering. This is therefore deemed to be an unsuitable roosting location for bats. No roosting features were identified internally and no evidence of bats or bats was found.



Photo 2 – Boarding

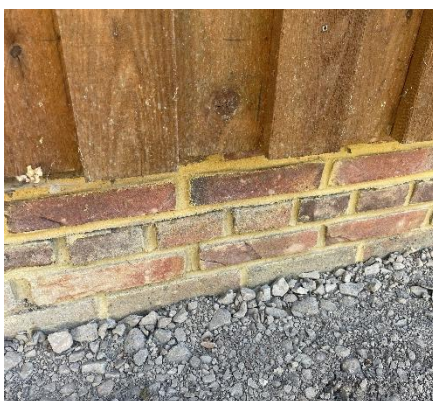


Photo 3 – Brick and mortar plinth

Existing - interior

Photo 4 – corrugated roofing



Photo 6 – Lighting



Existing - suitability assessment	The existing building has been assessed as having negligible value for roosting bats. The building was overall in good condition, with limited crevices on the exterior for roosting bats or opportunities of entry. the interior of the building is considered unsuitable due to high levels of light and anticipated temperature fluctuations. No bats were discovered in the building and no evidence of bats was identified at the inspection.
Foreseen Impacts	As it has been assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, there are no anticipated impacts.
Recommendations (roosting bats)	No further surveys are required in accordance with current guidance. The following recommendations are made to mitigate impact on bats: • A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters to be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website. In the event bats are discovered during works all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted. • Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities: The installation of one integrated bat box on the existing apple tree at the south of the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.
Foraging and Commuting Bats	Hedgerow along the site boundary could be used by local bat populations for foraging and commuting. These could also be used by bats dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site. The proposed development will not result in the removal of habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats as there are no proposed changes to

	hedgerows. Therefore, the following recommendations are made for the proposed development. Recommendations: (foraging and commuting bats) A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post development, to include the following measures: • Light spill on to hedgerow at boundaries should be avoided. Use narrow light spectrum light sources to lower the range of species affected by lighting. Use light sources that emit minimal ultra- violet light. • Avoid white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to reduce insect attraction and where white light sources are required • The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging bats: • Planting of native tree to increase foraging opportunities. • In order to manage the blue shortwave length content they should be of a warm / neutral colour temperature <4,200 kelvin. Not use bare bulbs and any light pointing upwards. Spread of light will be kept in line with or below the horizontal. • Light spill will be reduced via the use of low- level lighting used in conjunction with hoods, cowls, louvers and shields. Lights will also be directional to ensure that light is directed to the intended areas only. • External lighting will be on PIR sensors that are sensitive to large objects only (so that they are not triggered by passing bats) and will be set to the shortest time duration to reduce the amount of time the lights are on.
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	Wall lights and security lights will be 'dimnable' and set to the lowest light intensity settings. There are several products on the market that allow the control of the light intensity and the duration that the lights are on. All lighting on the developed site will make use of the most up to date technology available.
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Nesting Birds	
Summary of Survey Findings	There is negligible nesting opportunity for passerine birds on the site. No evidence of nesting birds was found on site during the surveys.
Foreseen Impacts	None.
Recommendations	None.

Reptiles	
Summary of Survey Findings	No ESPLs for reptiles were returned within 2km of the site. No reptile habitat is present within the site interior, with the managed lawn present providing suboptimal commuting opportunities. However, with suitable habitat nearby in the form of unmanaged grassland, isolated individuals may still be present at the time of survey in the site interior. Reptiles require a mosaic of habitats to persist in a landscape, including vegetative cover for refuge opportunities, open areas for basking and a diverse flora to support viable invertebrate prey throughout the year. The site was mostly identified as mown lawn and therefore this offers limited opportunities for reptiles.
Foreseen Impacts	Although only suboptimal, managed lawn will be removed as part of the proposed development, there is a low risk that individual reptiles could still be present in the vicinity of the

	works.
Recommendations	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to reptiles, further surveys have not been recommended. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation season (November to February) insofar as is possible. • A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be trimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any reptiles to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter reptiles from the working area. • Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent reptiles from utilising these areas. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Great crested newts (GCN) and Other Amphibians	
Summary of Survey Findings	There were no ponds or water bodies within 500 metres of the site identified from OS mapping/imagery. Therefore, there is not considered

	to be any reasonable likelihood of impact to these species as no waterbodies lie in the vicinity. The application site lies within the GREEN impact zone as per the modelled district licence impact map, which indicates that there is suitable habitat for GCN within the area surrounding the application site. However considering there are no water bodies identified within 500m it was assessed that the likelihood of impact on GCN is very low. No ESPLs or License Returns for amphibians were returned within 2km of the site. It is accepted that, unless connected by highly suitable habitat, great crested newts are likely to stay within 250m of breeding ponds (Langton et al., 2001).
Foreseen Impacts	Within the development footprint, cracks in the paving or patio slabs and around the base of the dwelling may provide limited terrestrial refuges for hibernating amphibians. As the proposed works are confined to mowed lawn, and the footprint of the dwelling, the overall risk to GCN is considered to be very low, and no further surveys are required.
Recommendations	No further surveys.
Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities	None.

Riparian animals	
Summary of Survey Findings	No watercourses or waterbodies were identified during the site visit.
Foreseen Impacts	None.
Recommendations	None.

Hazel Dormice	
Summary of Survey Findings	There are no dormouse European Protected Species License (EPSL) within 4km. As mowed lawn there is no suitable habitat for dormice at the site of the proposed works, with only the scattered trees and native hedgerow present providing some habitat opportunities. However the wider area is well connected via treelines and hedgerows to substantial, interconnected woodland, which could provide suitable habitat for dormice. Deciduous woodland in the surrounding area may provide high-quality dormouse habitat and mature hedgerows within the application site also provides some habitat opportunities albeit these are limited. Therefore, while unlikely, individuals may be present within the vicinity of the works. However as no impact is proposed to the existing hedgerows on site, the works are not envisaged to propose any long term impact to this habitat. Overall a proportionate response is that a precautionary working method should be implemented during construction.
Foreseen Impacts	While very unlikely, individuals may be present within the vicinity of the works, which could result in the death or injury of hazel dormice without mitigation.
Recommendations	Owing to the low potential for impacts to dormice, further dormouse surveys would be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: - Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. - The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which

	hedgehogs could use. - Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. - In the unlikely event that a dormouse or evidence of dormouse is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
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Other e.g. hedgehog, rabbit, hare	
Summary of Survey Findings	The lawn onsite provides limited foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, with woodland habitat nearby.
Foreseen Impacts	Hedgehogs are likely present within the surrounding gardens and grassland. The immediate working area has limited shelter or foraging potential due to sealed and maintained surfaces. Precautionary mitigation measures will be in place to protect any occasional individuals from harm.
Recommendations	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: - Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. - Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. - If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities/ and Mitigation Summarised

Opportunities for ecological enhancements which could be incorporated into the scheme design are provided below:

(i) The installation of one integrated bat box in the existing large oak tree at the south of the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.

(ii) Planting of native tree to increase bat foraging opportunities.

Mitigation and precautionary measures proposed to be incorporated into the scheme design are provided below:

(iii) A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post development, to include the following measures:

- Light spill on to hedgerow on the western and northern boundaries should be avoided.
- Use narrow light spectrum light sources to lower the range of species affected by lighting. Use light sources that emit minimal ultra- violet light.
- Avoid white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to reduce insect attraction and where white light sources are required
- The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging bats:
- in order to manage the blue shortwave length content they should be of a warm / neutral colour temperature <4,200 kelvin. Not use bare bulbs and any light pointing upwards. Spread of light will be kept in line with or below the horizontal.
- Light spill will be reduced via the use of low- level lighting used in conjunction with hoods, cowls, louvers and shields. Lights will also be directional to ensure that light is directed to the intended areas only.
- External lighting will be on PIR sensors that are sensitive to large objects only (so that they are not triggered by passing bats) and will be set to the shortest time duration to reduce the amount of time the lights are on.
- Wall lights and security lights will be 'dimmable' and set to the lowest light intensity settings. There are several products on the market that allow the control of the light

intensity and the duration that the lights are on. All lighting on the developed site will make use of the most up to date technology available.

- (iv) Reptiles: Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation season (November to February) insofar as is possible. A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be trimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any reptiles to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter reptiles from the working area. Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent reptiles from utilising these areas. Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
- (v) Hazel Dormice: A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. In the unlikely event that a dormouse or evidence of dormouse is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
- (vi) Hedgehogs: A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

Conclusion:

The site covers an area of approximately 0.09ha located to the west of Dial Post village. The site consists of heavily mown lawn / vegetated garden and hedgerow. The greatest ecological interest at the site is associated with existing hedgerows which could act as greenspace connecting to the wider nature network and nature corridors and should be retained where possible.

Taking a proportionate approach habitat on site was assessed in line with the development proposals which involve the retention of all hedgerows on site with the development of a small area of managed lawn. It was assessed overall that the habitat to be removed offered negligible to low likelihood of providing refuge for protected species and therefore no further surveys have been recommended.

Risk avoidance measures have been deemed sufficient to mitigate potential impacts for nesting birds, hedgehogs and commuting and foraging bats, and have been included in this report. In summary, individual trees and hedgerows should be retained wherever possible and disturbance to these potential habitats should be kept to a minimum during construction. Furthermore, opportunities for ecological enhancement have been provided to allow the ecological value to the site to be maximised.

Subject to a sensitively designed scheme, which gives due consideration to the recommendations and mitigation outlined herein, no major ecological constraints have been identified which would preclude the provision of the development as proposed. Should the development proposed change in any way it is advised to consult the qualified ecologist.

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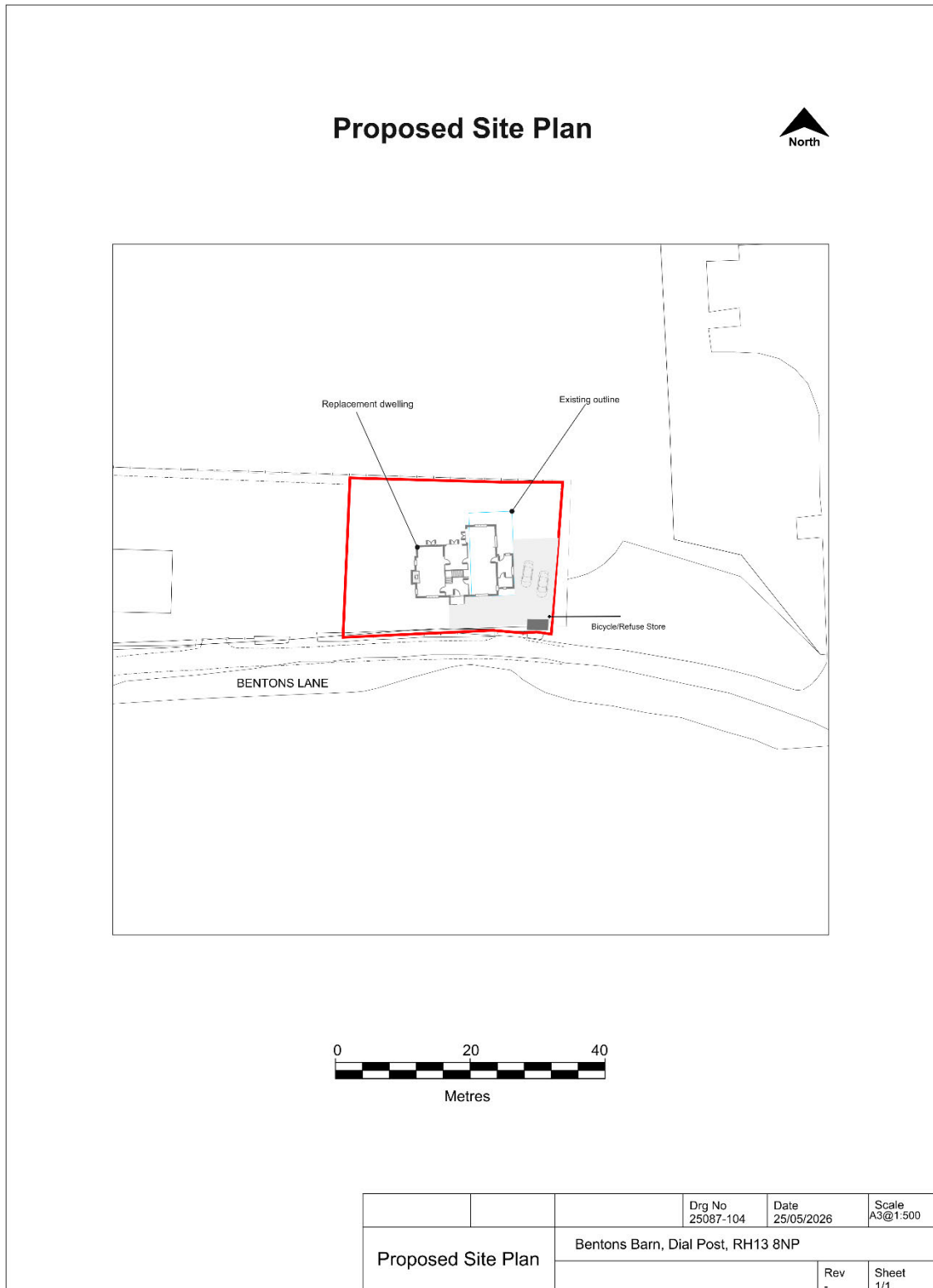
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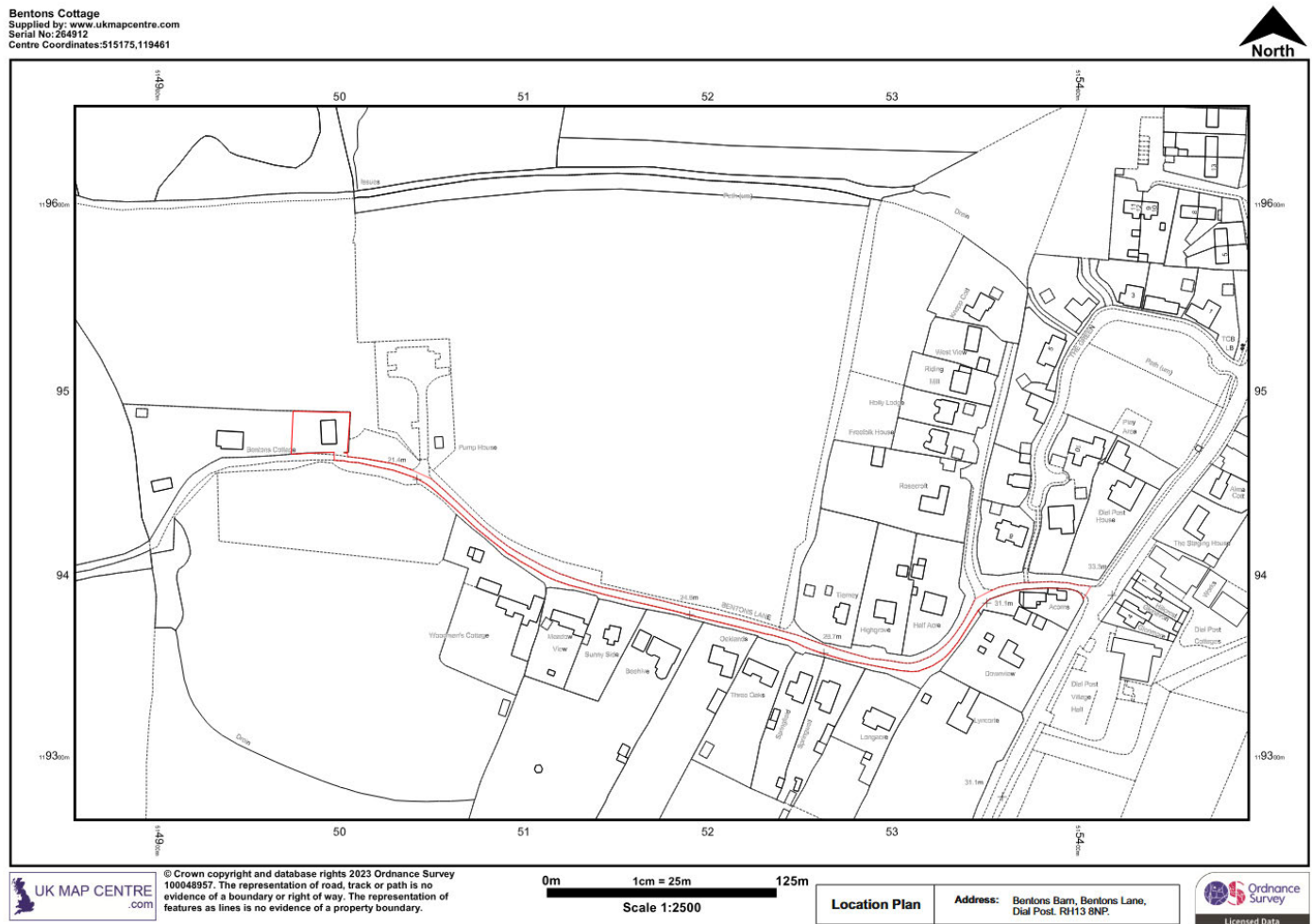
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Appendix 1: Proposed Site Plan



Appendix 2: Location Plan

Bentons Cottage
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Appendix 3: Legislation and Policy

Legal Protection of Habitats and Species (Informative Summary)

Introduction

This section provides an overview of the principal legislation and policy relevant to protected habitats and species in England. It is intended as a general guide only and does not replace the original statutory wording or specialist legal advice. The summary highlights key provisions relevant to ecological protection and biodiversity conservation.

1. Key National Legislation

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transpose the European Habitats Directive and elements of the Birds Directive into domestic law in England and Wales.

The core purpose of the Regulations is to safeguard biodiversity by ensuring the protection, appropriate management, and sustainable use of important habitats and species of wild flora and fauna.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 forms the foundation of species protection legislation in the UK. It:

- Protects wild birds, animals and plants.
- Establishes offences relating to killing, injuring, taking or disturbing protected species.
- Regulates the protection of designated sites and certain invasive species.

Many later Acts, including the CRow Act, have amended and strengthened this legislation.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRow) Act 2000

Part III of the CRow Act strengthens wildlife protection and amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It:

- Enhances the protection and management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

- Places a duty on public authorities to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs.
 - Introduces stronger enforcement powers and increased penalties for wildlife offences.
 - Makes certain offences arrestable and grants additional powers to wildlife inspectors and police officers.
-

National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949

This Act provides for:

- The designation and administration of National Parks.
- The creation and management of nature reserves.
- Powers for local authorities and the Nature Conservancy to establish protected areas.

Part III specifically addresses the designation and maintenance of nature reserves.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The NERC Act implements elements of the Government's rural strategy and addresses broader environmental protection matters.

Section 40 places a statutory duty on public authorities to have regard to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity when exercising their functions.

Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance (HPI/SPI). This list guides public bodies in fulfilling their biodiversity duty.

[REDACTED]

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Barn Owl

Barn owls are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Offences include:

- Killing, injuring or taking an individual.
- Damaging or destroying an active nest.
- Taking or destroying eggs.
- Disturbing adults at or near a nest containing eggs or young.
- Possessing or selling individuals or their derivatives.

Convictions may result in fines of up to £5,000 and/or imprisonment (up to six months) per offence.

Bats

All bat species receive strict protection under:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedule 5), and
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Offences include:

- Killing, injuring or capturing bats.
- Possessing bats.
- Damaging or obstructing access to roosts.
- Disturbing bats within roost sites.
- Sale or advertisement for sale.

A roost is legally protected whether or not bats are present at the time, due to habitual reuse.

Several species are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Breeding Birds

All wild birds are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take a wild bird.
- Damage or destroy an active nest.
- Take or destroy eggs.

Schedule 1 species receive enhanced protection, including offences relating to disturbance during nesting or of dependent young.

Amphibians

Certain amphibians (including great crested newt, natterjack toad and northern pool frog) are protected under both:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and
- Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Offences include killing, injuring, disturbing, damaging breeding sites or resting places, possession, or sale.

Some species are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act.

Palmate and smooth newts are protected against sale only.

Hazel Dormouse

The hazel dormouse is protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations.

Offences include killing, injury, disturbance, destruction of resting places, possession, or sale.

It is also a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act.

Otter

Otters are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations.

Offences include:

- Killing, injuring or capturing.
 - Damaging or obstructing access to holts.
-

- Disturbance at resting sites.
- Possession or sale.

Otter is also listed as a Species of Principal Importance.

Reptiles

Common reptile species (common lizard, grass snake, slow worm and adder) are protected against:

- Intentional killing or injury.
- Sale or trade.

Smooth snake and sand lizard receive full protection under both the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Habitats Regulations.

All UK reptiles are Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act.

Water Vole

Water voles are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Offences include:

- Killing, injuring or capturing.
 - Damaging or obstructing access to burrows.
 - Disturbing individuals in burrows.
 - Possession or sale.
-

Other Mammals

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 provides general protection by making it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering, including crushing or asphyxiation (for example, within burrows).

3. Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

The Section 41 list includes:

- 56 Habitats of Principal Importance.
-

- 943 Species of Principal Importance.

This list supports implementation of the biodiversity duty placed on public authorities under Section 40 of the NERC Act.

4. Invasive Non-Native Species

Under Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause certain listed non-native species to grow in the wild.

Species commonly included under Schedule 9 include:

- Himalayan balsam
 - Japanese knotweed
 - Giant hogweed
 - Cotoneaster species
-

5. Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats — including ancient woodland and veteran trees — should be refused unless exceptional justification is demonstrated.

Natural England's standing advice recommends:

- A minimum 15m buffer to protect root systems.
- A buffer of at least 50m where risks such as pollution or trampling may arise.

Ancient woodland and veteran trees may also be subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).

6. Local Planning Policy – Horsham District Council

Policy 25 – Natural Environment and Landscape Character

Policy 25 commits to protecting landscape character, biodiversity and green infrastructure. Development should:

- Protect and enhance landscape and townscape character.
 - Maintain settlement separation.
 - Retain and enhance green infrastructure.
-

- Safeguard biodiversity and geological sites.
 - Avoid net loss of biodiversity and seek net gains.
 - Conserve the setting of the South Downs National Park.
-

Policy 31 – Biodiversity

Policy 31 requires development to:

- Maintain or enhance green infrastructure.
- Avoid loss unless adequate mitigation or compensation is secured.
- Contribute positively to biodiversity enhancement.
- Retain significant ecological features.
- Provide replacement planting where protected trees are removed.

A hierarchy of designated sites applies, including:

1. SPA and SAC
2. SSSI and NNR
3. SNCI, LNR and Ancient Woodland

Development affecting Arun Valley SPA or The Mens SAC must be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) where required.

7. Birds of Conservation Concern

The Birds of Conservation Concern report categorises UK bird species into Green, Amber or Red lists based on population trends, distribution, and conservation status. It is produced by leading UK ornithological organisations and is periodically updated.

8. IUCN Red List

The IUCN Red List provides a globally recognised assessment of species' extinction risk. Species are classified according to internationally agreed criteria. In the UK, oversight is coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

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