



**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL
&
PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT**

BYRNE PROPERTY LTD.

BATTS BARN
SCHOOL LANE
ASHURST, STEYNING
WEST SUSSEX
BN44 3AY

23RD JULY 2026

REF: 26010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PRA) was carried out at Batts Barn in April 2026. The assessments were required in order to ascertain whether any ecological constraints could affect proposed works at the site. Proposals are for the conversion of an existing rural storage building to provide a single residential dwelling. Access will remain as existing. The survey area extended over approximately 0.2 hectares (ha).

The main findings of the survey are as follows:

- * Batts Barn is in a rural environment, located in Ashurst in West Sussex, comprising an outbuilding, areas of crushed aggregate, grassland and ruderal and scrub margins together with a section of a boundary hedgerow and scattered trees. Land-use in the immediate vicinity comprises residential properties and associated gardens with agricultural land extending beyond the village of Ashurst in all directions.
- * The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations. The closest designated site is South Downs National Park; approximately 3.5km to the south-west. The works will not serve to negatively impact the National Park.
- * The survey site has been assessed as being largely of value within the immediate vicinity based on the current baseline conditions supported. Features associated with the site provide potential to support small numbers of nesting birds, reptiles and foraging bats.
- * The outbuilding is situated in an area with good connectivity to high value bat habitats within the local landscape. However following the PRA, the building does not support any optimal potential bat roosting features. The internal area of the building has limited roosting opportunities due to the metal supporting framework, together with high light levels, creating highly sub-optimal roosting conditions. Furthermore, no bats or any secondary evidence of bat presence was identified during the PRA. Furthermore, no bats or secondary evidence to suggest any recent or current bat presence was found externally.
- * Owing to an absence of suitable roosting opportunities and no evidence to suggest any current or recent bat presence, the building is currently considered to provide **Negligible** potential to support roosting bats at any time of year and on this basis, no further emergence and activity surveys in relation to the outbuilding are considered necessary to inform the proposals.
- * In terms of other protected species, further surveys in respect to reptiles may be required if areas of ruderal vegetation and earth banks adjacent to the barn are being impacted as a result of the works.

- * An eDNA survey of the pond within the wider site; located approximately 10m to the south, returned a negative eDNA result. Due to an absence of other ponds within 250m of the site, the potential presence of this species within on-site terrestrial habitats can be scoped out based on the results of the eDNA survey.
- *
- * It is understood that the scheme is exempt from requiring a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment on the basis that it is a householder application.
- * Details regarding further survey and mitigation to include precautionary working practices, together with habitat enhancement measures are provided in the Recommendations section of the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 CT Ecology Limited was commissioned by Byrne Property Ltd. to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment, to inform the potential ecological constraints of proposed works at Batts Barn in Ashurst, West Sussex (hereafter referred to as “the site”).
- 1.2 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, 2013 & 2016).
- 1.3 The purpose of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was:
 - * to classify the major habitats present;
 - * to identify the potential for any legally protected species to be present;
 - * to evaluate the nature conservation importance of the site;
 - * to recommend any additional ecological surveys and mitigation; and
 - * to provide recommendations for site enhancement.
- 1.4 This report also provides an assessment regarding the potential for the building to support roosting bats, providing information on their potential presence/absence and the need for further surveys and/or mitigation.

Development Proposals

- 1.5 Proposals are for the conversion of an existing rural building into a single dwelling house. Access will remain as existing. No trees or boundary features will require removal to facilitate the works.

Site Description

- 1.6 The site is within a rural location within the centre of Ashurst; in the Horsham District of West Sussex, accessed from School Lane to the north and located at British National Grid TQ177 160. The site comprises an agricultural building together with areas of modified grassland, ruderal vegetation and scattered trees in addition to a native boundary hedgerow. Residential gardens extend to the south, east and west and beyond School Lane to the north.
- 1.7 In the wider area, the village of Ashurst extends in all directions with scattered residential properties and agricultural fields together with scattered woodland blocks. The survey area extended over 0.2 hectares (ha) and is shown on the survey map in Appendix B.

2. METHODOLOGY

Desk Study & Consultations

- 2.1 The desktop study involved conducting database searches for statutory and non-statutory designated sites, legally protected species and features of interest within a 2km radius of the site and an online search for any Protected Species Mitigation Licences (PSML) within 1km. The data search was based on information provided by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC 2026); Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC, 2026); Ordnance Survey mapping; and aerial photography.

Field Survey and Assessment

- 2.2 An ecological survey of the site was undertaken on the 20th April 2026 by Carly Teague, a suitably qualified ecologist with over 18 years' experience as a professional ecologist. The weather conditions during the survey were clear with a gentle breeze and no precipitation and a temperature of 17.5°C at the start of the survey.
- 2.3 The field survey comprised a walkover inspection of the land and habitats present. The survey followed the UK Habitat Classification System (Ver 2.0) (UK Habitats, 2023) and covered all accessible parts of the site, including boundary features. Habitats were assigned to either Level 3 or to Level 4 where applicable, the minimum mapping unit used was 25m² and Secondary Codes were utilised where possible. Habitats were described and mapped (Appendix B). A list of plant species was compiled, together with an estimate of abundance made according to the DAFOR scale (Appendix D).
- 2.4 This assessment provides information on the habitats in the survey area and identifies actual or potential presence of legally protected or otherwise notable species/habitats in or immediately adjacent to the site.
- 2.5 Target notes highlighting a particular feature of ecological interest are provided in Appendix A, with associated photographs.
- 2.6 Scientific names are given after the first mention of a species, thereafter, common names only are used. Nomenclature follows Stace (2010) for vascular plant species.

Protected Species Assessment

- 2.7 The potential for the site to provide habitat for protected species was assessed from field observations in conjunction with results of the desk study. The site was inspected for indications of the presence of protected species including:

- * Habitat considered suitable to support widespread reptile species including areas with a scrub/grassland mosaic and potential hibernation sites;
- * on-site ponds offering potential breeding opportunities for great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and the presence of suitable terrestrial habitat including hedgerows and rough grassland;
- * presence of features in, and on trees, indicating potential for roosting bats *Chiroptera*, including knot and rot holes and loose bark. The presence of features on buildings including loose roof tiles, gaps in fascia boarding in addition to secondary evidence including staining, droppings and feeding remains;
- * presence of nesting habitat for breeding birds, including mature trees, dense scrub and hedgerows and direct evidence of bird nesting including bird song, old nests etc;
- * presence of woodland and or hedgerows providing suitable habitat to support hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*); and

* [REDACTED]

- 2.8 The potential presence for protected species is categorised as Negligible, Low, Moderate, High or Present, based on the findings of the field survey and on the evaluation of existing data.
- 2.9 The purpose of this assessment is to identify whether more comprehensive Phase 2 surveys for protected species or mitigation should be recommended.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 2.10 The building inspection was led by Carly Teague, a suitably qualified ecologist with over 18 years' experience as an ecological consultant. Carly is an accredited agent on a Level 2 Class Licence for bats (WML-CL18); Jack Kellett BSc (Hons), MCIEEM. The inspection of the structure was carried out concurrently with the PEA. The survey and report have been undertaken in accordance with good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023), with guidance provided by Jack Kellett.
- 2.11 The interior and exterior of the building was inspected closely with the aim of identifying the presence of bats and any secondary evidence, together with any potential roost sites or access points. Secondary evidence includes droppings, feeding remains, scratch marks and oil and urine staining. The external inspection comprised a detailed inspection and search of all accessible architectural features, including wall cavities using a Ridgid® videoscope. Additional equipment included a high-powered LED torch and binoculars.

- 2.12 The internal area of the building was also visually inspected, searching the floor, walls and roof pitches for any secondary signs of bat presence, and any visible roosting bats. A search of all surfaces and exposed timbers was undertaken using a high-powered LED hand torch.
- 2.13 The building was given a rating for the level of bat potential present i.e. likelihood of a bat roost to be present within the structure. Field signs and features, along with surveyor experience were used to make the assessment (in line with Collins, 2023). The following categories were used to provide a general rating and level of assessment for each building:
- * Negligible: No suitable features which could be used by bats. The structure may still have features which are commonly known to be used by bats but due to the circumstances of that feature or structure the feature is deemed unsuitable for bats;
 - * Low: A small number of potential suitable bat roosting features are present but are most likely to support a low conservation status roost such as individual bats of a common species (not a maternity roost). The structure or site may be isolated within the surrounding landscape;
 - * Moderate: Several potential suitable bat roosting features are present and the surrounding habitat is of value to commuting and foraging bats with linear features and suitable habitats;
 - * High: Several potential bat roosting features are present and those features are of particular significance to roosting bats. Surrounding habitat is of high value to commuting and foraging bats e.g. woodland, open water etc. with linear features. The structure is close to a known roost;
 - * Confirmed: Bats or recent secondary evidence of a bat roost such as droppings located within the structure and/or bats heard chattering from within the structure.

Caveat

Data Search

- 2.14 It is important to note that, even where data is held, an absence of records for a defined area does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of ecological interest; the area may be simply under-recorded.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- 2.15 Ecological surveys are limited by factors that affect presence of plants and animals such as seasonality. Whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation of the environment.

- 2.16 The appraisal does not constitute a full botanical survey, or a Phase 2 pre-construction survey that would include accurate GIS mapping for invasive or protected plant species. This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site based on the suitability of the habitat, known distribution of the species in the local area and any direct evidence observed during the survey. It is therefore used as a tool to recommend further protected species surveys (or other species of significant nature conservation interest) if on the basis of the preliminary assessment or during subsequent surveys, it is considered reasonably likely that protected species may be present.
- 2.17 It is considered that the survey was sufficiently rigorous to assess the ecological value of the site.

Bat Survey Constraints

- 2.18 Bats are mobile animals and can move roost sites throughout the year. It is possible that a PRA carried out in April could miss roosts occupied earlier or later in the year. However, where undisturbed, it is possible to find secondary evidence of bats inside a building throughout the year, although secondary signs may be missed where they are within an area that can't be fully accessed.

3. BASELINE CONDITIONS

Aerial Photography and OS Maps

- 3.1 The site is in a rural environment, located in Ashurst in West Sussex. Land-use in the immediate vicinity includes a combination of residential properties and agricultural land-use with open countryside comprising agricultural fields and scattered woodland.
- 3.2 There are no ponds within the site boundary. There is one pond within a 250m radius; located approximately 10m to the south-east of the application area.
- 3.3 Over 10 woodland blocks are present within 2km of the site, extending to the north and south. The closest wooded area is approximately 1100m to the north-west.

Protected Species Mitigation Licences (PSML)

- 3.4 No PSML's, or associated licence returns for any species were returned within 1km of the survey area.

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Statutory Sites

- 3.5 The site is not subject to any statutory designations and there are no statutory designated sites within a 2km radius.

Non-Statutory Sites

- 3.6 The site is not subject to any non-statutory designations and there are no non-statutory designated sites within a 2km radius.

Other Habitat Classifications

Ancient woodland

- 3.7 There are 10 blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) within 2km of the site. These are located to the north, west and south, the closest of which is Lowerbarn Wood ASNW, located approximately 650m to the south.

Habitats

Site Summary

- 3.8 The main habitats recorded within the site are described below. Additional details are shown on the habitat survey map in Appendix B, and the target notes are listed in Appendix A.

Table 3.2: Habitat Descriptions

Habitat Type	UK Habitats Code (secondary codes in brackets)	Description	Area (ha)
Developed Land; Sealed Surface. Building	u1b5	A single building was present; comprising a concrete block and timber storage building with pitched corrugated fibre-cement sheet roof.	0.01
Artificial Unvegetated Unsealed Surface	u1c	Crushed aggregate extended from School Lane, providing access to, and around, the building.	0.03
Modified grassland	g4	Grassland dominated the northern site extent which has been subject to long-term mowing. Grassland species included abundant cock's-foot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>); and meadow foxtail (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>) with frequently occurring sheep's fescue (<i>Festuca ovina</i>). Forbs contributed to approximately 30% of the sward and were limited to a small number of species including ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>); broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>); hogweed (<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>) and dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i> sp.).	0.09
	(81: Ruderal)	Recolonising ruderal vegetation had developed throughout disturbed ground in the southern site extent; adjacent to the building. Ruderal species had also colonised two earth mounds within this area. Species included spear thistle (<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>); common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>); yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>); docks (<i>Rumex</i> sp.); perennial sow-thistle (<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>); and green alkanet (<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>).	0.06
	(510: Bare ground)	Bare ground was within the southern site extent, forming access to the adjacent garden to the south.	0.007

	(32: Scattered trees)	A small number of semi-mature trees were clumped within the south-west corner of the application site. Species included pedunculate oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>).	
Bramble scrub	h3d	Scattered bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) had started to encroach within the south-west corner and a small patch had developed near the entrance to the site.	0.005
Native Hedgerow	h2a	H1. A beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>) hedge extended part-way along the southern site boundary; 6m (l) x 3m (h) x 0.2m (w). The hedge was subject to regular management. Common nettle and cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>) were present along the base of the hedge.	N/A

Protected Species

Legislation

- 3.9 Legislation relating to the protected species referred to in this section is included in Appendix C.
- 3.10 The following paragraphs detail the suitability of the on-site habitats to support protected species and include information from the data search for protected, rare and otherwise notable species returned within a 2km radius.

Breeding Birds (excluding barn owl)

- 3.11 A total of four **red** and two **amber** listed Birds of Conservation Concern¹ (BoCC) were returned by the data search which may utilise habitats within the site. These include **song thrush** (*Turdus philomelos*); **house sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*); **starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*); **tree sparrow** (*Passer montanus*); **dunnock** (*Prunella modularis*); **wren** (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*); a notable bird, has also been recorded within 2km and may utilise habitats within the site.

¹ Birds of Conservation Concern status is prioritised into high concern (Red), medium concern (Amber) and low concern (Green) (Eaton et al, 2009). Red-list species are those that are globally threatened according to the IUCN criteria; those whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years; and those that have declined historically and have not shown a substantial recent recovery. Amber-list species are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; rare breeders; and those with internationally important or localised populations. Green-list species are those that fulfil none of the criteria.

- 3.12 A feral pigeon (*Columba livia*) was recorded nesting within the building, located at the eaves on the eastern gable end, during the survey
- 3.13 The building, together with scattered trees and the boundary hedgerow provide opportunities for a range of breeding birds (refer to Target Note 1 on the survey map in Appendix B).
- 3.14 Overall, nesting birds were confirmed as being **present**.

Barn Owl

- 3.15 The data search returned 62 recent (post-2011) records for barn owl (*Tyto alba*) within a 2km radius of the site, although no records were returned from within the site boundary itself. The site comprised an outbuilding and grassland habitat. The outbuilding did not provide any ingress points or suitable ledges for nesting by this species. Although the grassland provided potentially suitable foraging habitat, more optimal and extensive foraging habitat was present in the wider landscape.
- 3.16 Overall, the site was considered to provide **negligible** potential for nesting and **low** potential for foraging by barn owl.

Bats

- 3.17 At least nine species of bat have been recorded within 2km of the site boundary. This includes pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus* sp.); common pipistrelle (*P. pipistrellus*); soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*); serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*); myotis species (*Myotis* sp.); Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*); noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*); long-eared species (*Plecotus* sp.); brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*); and barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*).
- 3.18 No records were returned from within the site. The most commonly recorded species is common pipistrelle with 12 records returned for this species. The closest roost record was recorded in 2016, pertaining to an unspecified long-eared roost. The closest record for bat activity is from 2011 in relation to noctule, common pipistrelle, and brown-long eared bats approximately 500m to the south of the site.
- 3.19 No PSML records were returned within a 1km radius.
- 3.20 The outbuilding did not support any potential roosting features. More details are provided in the PRA section below.
- 3.21 A single mature oak tree located near to the western site boundary supported dense ivy (*Hedera helix*) cover together with splits and holes associated with the limbs which in turn may provide potential roosting features (refer to Target Note 2 on the survey map in Appendix B). This tree will be retained.

- 3.22 Grassland together with trees and the boundary hedgerow provide opportunities for foraging and commuting bats to pass between grassland in all directions (refer to Target Note 3 on the survey map in Appendix B).
- 3.23 Overall, the site has **low** potential to support roosting bats and **moderate** potential for foraging bats.

Reptiles

- 3.24 The data search returned two recent (post 2011) records for slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*); and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) within a 2km radius. All records were over 500m from the site.
- 3.25 Grassland and ruderal vegetation together with vegetated mounds in the south of the site provide some potential to support widespread reptiles (refer to Target Note 4 on the survey map in Appendix B), with connectivity to suitable habitats to the south, east and west. This area of the site supports features with potential for foraging, sheltering and basking.
- 3.26 Overall, the site was considered to provide **moderate** potential for reptiles.

Great Crested Newt (and other amphibians)

- 3.27 The data search did not return any recent (post 2011) records for great crested newt within a 2km radius. Two historic records were returned. The closest of which was over 1.9km to the east from 2008.
- 3.28 A small number of recent records were returned for widespread amphibian species including common frog (*Rana temporaria*); and common toad (*Bufo bufo*). These were all over 1km from the site.
- 3.29 No PSML's pertaining to great crested newt were returned within a 1km radius.
- 3.30 The development area is located within a red impact risk zone for great crested newt as part of Horsham District Council's District Level Licencing (DLL) Scheme. This risk category indicates that high habitat suitability within the locality based on land-use and survey data held for the area.
- 3.31 There are no ponds within the site. There is one pond within a 250m radius; which is a large garden pond approximately 10m to the south-east.
- 3.32 The site is connected via suitable terrestrial habitat to this pond and ruderal vegetation together with earth mounds in the south of the application site provide potential sheltering opportunities and the site is connected to potentially suitable terrestrial habitat to the south, east and west.

- 3.33 An environmental DNA (eDNA) assessment was undertaken in relation to the adjacent pond on the 29th June 2026. The eDNA assessment returned a negative result for the pond. The results are provided in Appendix F.
- 3.34 Overall, the site was assessed as having **negligible** potential to support great crested newt due to an absence of other water bodies within a 250m radius and absence confirmed from the adjacent pond through eDNA sampling.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hazel Dormouse

- 3.38 The data search did not return any records for Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) within a 2km radius.
- 3.39 Dormice are largely arboreal and rely on blocks of diverse woodland and interconnected hedgerows for survival. Individuals rarely descend to the ground except to hibernate over winter months at the base of trees. Dormice favour a range of plant species which provide a food source throughout the year. Favoured species include an abundance of hazel and honeysuckle together with frequently occurring oak and bramble amongst other species.
- 3.40 Although the boundary hedgerow supported beech which is a species favoured by hazel dormouse, the hedge was short (measuring a total length of 20m), isolated from any suitable adjacent habitats and well-manged and in turn was considered sub-optimal for this species.
- 3.41 Overall, the site was considered to provide **negligible** potential for hazel dormouse.

Other

- 3.42 A small number of records for hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) have been recorded within proximity to the site. This species typically has a large home range. Habitats within the site have potential to support this species passing between habitats in the wider locality.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

- 3.43 No INNS were recorded within or adjacent to the survey site during the assessment.

Preliminary (Bat) Roost Assessment

- 3.44 A single building is subject to the current proposals. The on-site building is single skinned timber and concrete block storage building standing upon a concrete base. The building was gable ended with the roof pitched north to south, comprising corrugated fibre-cement sheeting with sections of Perspex allowing natural light ingress to the building. The sheet roof was rolled down over the top of the walls on the north and south elevations. These were well sealed when viewed from below. Gaps were present within the sheet roof where sections had broken, these were largely associated with the southern section of the roof and at the eastern gable end.
- 3.45 The wall elevations comprised timber cladding with the clad sections tightly attached with the exception of a small number of raised sections on the gable ends however these did not extend to form any suitable gaps or recesses for use by bats. Where small gaps were present, these were covered in dense cobwebs. A full height timber door on rollers was on the northern elevation. This was locked shut for security and tightly fitted with no gaps.
- 3.46 Internally, the building had a metal framework with open ridge line. The building was subject to high light levels owing to Perspex roof areas. Daylight was visible through the missing sheet roofing. No potential roosting features were supporting internally or externally.
- 3.47 No bats or secondary evidence of bat presence was located at the outbuilding. Owing to a lack of suitable roosting opportunities and no evidence to suggest any current or recent bat presence, the building is currently considered to have **Negligible** potential to support roosting bats at any time of year.



Left: A view of the north and east elevations.

Right: A view of the south and west elevations.



A view within the building showing the metal supporting frame and high light levels.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1 On the basis of the information available from the habitat survey and desk study, the site has been evaluated in terms of its potential for biodiversity, support of protected species and habitats, and the contribution the area makes as part of the wider landscape. The nature conservation value of the site has been assessed following standard criteria developed by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2006) and is provided below.
- 4.2 The biodiversity value of protected species within the site is a preliminary evaluation based upon the desk study records, habitat suitability and the conservation status of the species in question. It should be noted that where European Protected Species (EPS) or species of Principle Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity are present on-site they may be valued at a lower level/scale where it is considered likely that populations would not be of sufficient importance to justify designation at a higher level. However, regardless of their biodiversity value, such species are still subject to national and/or European legislation.
- 4.3 Key aspects of relevant planning policy regarding conservation, including an explanation of species referred to as being of 'Principal Importance for Conservation of Biodiversity' and European Protected Species and habitats, are provided in the Legislation section in Appendix C.

Geographic Evaluation

Features of International Importance

- 4.4 Features of International Importance are principally sites covered by international legislation or conventions, implemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England and Wales. The Regulations mainly deal with the protection of sites with certain habitats and populations of species that are important for nature conservation in a European context, i.e., Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) and Special Protection Areas (SPA's).
- 4.5 The site is not subject to any international statutory nature conservation designations. The closest site of International Importance is Arun Valley SAC and Ramsar, located approximately 12.5km to the west.
- 4.6 The SAC and Ramsar are designated for the inland water bodies, together with the network of bogs and marshes as well as areas of grassland and deciduous woodland. The ramshorn snail (*Anisus vorticulus*) is also listed as an Annex II species which is a primary reason for the SAC designation with Arun valley being one of the three main population centres for this species in the UK.

- 4.7 The survey site does not provide any supporting habitat for this SAC and Ramsar and based on the discrete nature of the proposals, future use of the site as a single residential dwelling is not considered likely to have any significant negative impacts on Arun Valley.

Features of National Importance

- 4.8 Features of national importance include SSSIs which are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 4.9 The closest site of national Importance is South Downs National Park; approximately 3.5km to the south-west at its closest point. Designated for its landscape value, with its network of farmland, ancient woodland and lowland heaths, scattered farmsteads and sandstone outcrops. The works will not serve to impact the National Park.
- 4.10 It is not considered that any habitats or populations or assemblages of species within the site itself would meet the criteria for the designation of a SSSI, or other nationally important site, at an appropriate geographic level².

Features of Regional Importance

- 4.11 The site does not include any features of value at this level neither is it likely to be selected as a wildlife site based on the results of the current survey.

Features of District Importance

- 4.12 The habitats supported are common and widespread in the district. The site does not support any features that were considered to be of value at this level.

Features of Local Importance

- 4.13 The site is small and dominated by man-made features along with well-managed semi-natural habitats which are common and widespread in the locality.

Features of Value Immediate Vicinity (c. 250m) of the project

- 4.14 The building, trees and the on-site hedgerow provide potential to support breeding birds, with semi-natural habitats having some potential to support widespread reptiles. The site is therefore of value at this level.

² JNCC Guidelines for selection of biological SSSIs (see <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2303#download>).

Summary

- 4.15 Overall based on the survey results and the above criteria, habitats are considered to be of importance within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Local Plan Evaluation

- 4.16 It is considered that the Horsham District Core Strategy (2017) contains nature conservation policies relevant to the site. A list of the relevant policies is contained in the Legislation section in Appendix C and this should be referred to.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- 5.1 Batts Barn is in a rural environment, located in Ashurst in West Sussex, comprising an outbuilding, areas of crushed aggregate, grassland and ruderal and scrub margins together with a section of a boundary hedgerow and scattered trees. Land-use in the immediate vicinity comprises residential properties and associated gardens with agricultural land extending beyond the village of Ashurst in all directions.
- 5.2 The application area extends over 0.2ha. Proposals are for the conversion of an existing outbuilding into a single dwelling house. Access will remain as existing. No trees or boundary features will require removal to facilitate the works.
- 5.3 The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations. The closest designated site is South Downs National Park; approximately 3.5km to the south-west. The works will not serve to negatively impact the National Park.
- 5.4 The survey site has been assessed as being largely of value within the immediate vicinity based on the current baseline conditions supported. Features associated with the site provide potential to support small numbers of nesting birds, great crested newts, reptiles and foraging bats.
- 5.5 The outbuilding is situated in an area with good connectivity to high value bat habitats within the local landscape. However following the PRA, the building does not support any optimal potential bat roosting features. The internal area of the building has limited roosting opportunities due to the metal supporting framework, together with high light levels, creating highly sub-optimal roosting conditions. Furthermore, no bats or any secondary evidence of bat presence was identified during the PRA. Furthermore, no bats or secondary evidence to suggest any recent or current bat presence was found externally.
- 5.6 Owing to an absence of suitable roosting opportunities and no evidence to suggest any current or recent bat presence, the building is currently considered to provide **Negligible** potential to support roosting bats at any time of year and on this basis, no further emergence and activity surveys in relation to the outbuilding are considered necessary to inform the proposals.
- 5.7 In terms of other protected species, further surveys in respect to reptiles may be required if areas of ruderal vegetation and earth banks adjacent to the barn are being impacted as a result of the works.
- 5.8 An eDNA survey of the only pond within 250m of the application site; located adjacent to the south, confirmed the absence of great crested newts from the pond and therefore absence from terrestrial on-site habitats can be assumed and mitigation in respect to this species is not considered necessary.

- 5.10 It is understood that the scheme is exempt from requiring a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment, however there are opportunities as part of the proposed scheme to enhance the site to ensure a gain in biodiversity post works.
- 5.11 Details regarding further survey and mitigation to include precautionary working practices, and habitat enhancement measures are provided below.

Recommendations

Bats

- 5.12 Bats receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), which affords protection to bats and the places they use for shelter and breeding.
- 5.13 It is understood all trees will be retained. If the oak tree on the western site boundary subsequently requires removal, then this should be subject to a ground level tree assessment, in accordance with current bat survey guidelines (Collins, 2023) in order to ascertain whether further targeted surveys that may include an aerial inspection, are required.

Reptiles

- 5.14 All widespread reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 5.15 Areas of grassland and ruderal vegetation in the south of the site together with earth mounds provide a habitat mosaic and vegetation structure suitable for reptiles. A reptile survey is therefore recommended if these areas are to be impacted as a result of the works in order to ascertain presence/likely absence and to enable suitable mitigation to be devised. The survey will entail a minimum of seven visits, following current guidelines (Froglife, 1999; English Nature, 2004), to determine the presence or likely absence and distribution of reptiles within the site. Reptile surveys must be undertaken in the active period for reptiles taken to run between mid-March and October. The optimum time is generally late spring, from April to mid-June and in the early autumn during September. The results of the survey will then be used to inform mitigation proposals for this species group.

Widespread Breeding Birds

- 5.16 All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 5.17 It is understood the trees and hedgerow will be retained however nesting by birds has been confirmed within the building. Any potentially impactful works on the building must therefore be undertaken outside of the bird nesting period (with works possible between September and February inclusive). Where this is not possible then an ecologist would need to carry out a pre-works check in order to ensure that there are no active nests within the building. In the event that an active nest is found or suspected, an exclusion zone around the nest would be established. Works would have to cease within this buffer area until the young birds have fledged.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Habitat Retention/Protection

- 5.19 Suitable fencing may be required to protect retained trees, grassland and hedgerows to ensure materials and machinery do not encroach into these retained areas.

Habitat Enhancement

- 5.20 Development at the site offers the opportunity for ecological enhancement and recommendations are detailed below.

Bats and Lighting

- 5.21 Different species of bat have been found to react differently to night-time lighting however research has found that generally, all species of bats are sensitive to artificial lighting and that excessive lighting can delay bats from emerging, thus shortening the time available for foraging, as well as causing individuals to move away from suitable foraging grounds or roost sites, to alternative dark areas (Jones, 2000). Bats can also become isolated from their foraging grounds if the linear features they use for commuting are suddenly illuminated, creating a light barrier (Fure, 2006).

5.22 Currently the site does not receive any light spill. If any new lighting is proposed as part of the scheme, this should avoid any light spill on adjacent grassland/tree lines/hedgerows, with any lighting scheme devised in accordance with accepted best practice measures (Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management 2006, Institute of Lighting Engineers 2023).

- * The level of artificial lighting including flood lighting should be kept to a minimum, with light spill limited on adjacent habitats;
- * recent LED technology should be utilised where possible. LED lights do not emit UV radiation, towards which insects are attracted, drawing them away from bat foraging areas in the surrounding landscape. All lights should be directed at a low angle with minimal light spillage wherever possible; and
- * the site boundaries and any newly planted boundaries must be kept dark at bat emergence (0-1 hour after sunset) and during peak bat activity periods (e.g., 1.5 hours after sunset and 1.5 hours before sunrise). Therefore, if lighting is required this should be installed with the light directed down into the access areas and lighting should be controlled through the use of PIR and/or timers.

Bird Boxes

5.23 Additional bird nesting provision could be incorporated into new design proposals. This could comprise an external bird box attached to the building or suitable semi-mature/mature tree. There are a range of bird boxes on the market and various types are suitable for the site. The model selected should be suited for use by a range of garden birds, located at a height of at least 3m on trees with a south-east or south-west facing aspect. Alternatively a sparrow terrace could be fitted to the new building; located at the eaves.

Bat Boxes

5.24 A single bat box could also be incorporated into the scheme. This could be an external wall mounted bat box installed on the building (on a different elevation to the bird box). The Beaumaris Woodstone Midi Black is appropriate to the proposed design, with the exact placement to be determined once final proposed plans are available. This box type is appropriate for a range of species locally recorded.

Post Development Landscaping

5.25 Post development landscaping should be carefully designed with biodiversity in mind.

- 5.26 Wildlife planting should be integral to the soft landscape plans and should include native species and/or species of recognised wildlife value³. The use of nectar-rich and berry producing plants will attract a wider range of insects, birds and mammals. Species should be carefully selected to ensure they are suitable for the area. Some species of known wildlife value are listed in Appendix E.
- 5.27 Good horticultural practice should be utilised, including the use of peat-free composts, mulches and soil conditioners, native plants with local provenance and avoidance of the use of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 5.28 New shrub planting, to include night flowering species, could be incorporated into the garden area. Additional hedgerow planting could be undertaken at the site to augment existing boundaries. Species could include (but not be limited to) some of the following species; hazel; guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*); dogwood; honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*); hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*); pedunculate oak; and/or field maple (*Acer campestre*). Any new planting must be carefully selected to ensure that the species is suitable for the location.

Other

- 5.29 It is recommended that an update habitat survey is undertaken if more than 18 months have elapsed between the survey and the point at which any development decisions have been made at the site.

³ For example, The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Perfect for Pollinators Scheme <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/conservation-biodiversity/wildlife/encourage-wildlife-to-your-garden/plants-for-pollinators> and the joint RHS/Wildlife Trust's Gardening with Wildlife in Mind Database <http://www.joyofplants.com/wildlife/home.php>

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Appendix A
Target Notes and Photographs

Target Note (TN)	Feature	Photograph of Feature
1	Photograph 1: A view south-west looking towards the building to be converted. Nesting birds were present within the building. Modified grassland dominated the northern extent of the site.	
1, 3, 4	Photograph 2: Looking towards the south-east corner of the site towards the boundary hedgerow. Habitats supported have potential for use by nesting birds, foraging bats and reptiles.	
N/A	Photograph 3: Looking north towards the entrance of the site.	

Target Note (TN)	Feature	Photograph of Feature
3, 4	Photograph 4: A view along the southern site extent to the rear of the building. Ruderal vegetation and earth mounds provide potential for reptiles.	 20 04 2020 13 23
N/A	Photograph 5: A view towards the off-site pond located adjacent to the south of the application site which returned a negative great crested newt eDNA result.	 20 04 2020 13 43

Appendix B
Habitat Survey Map

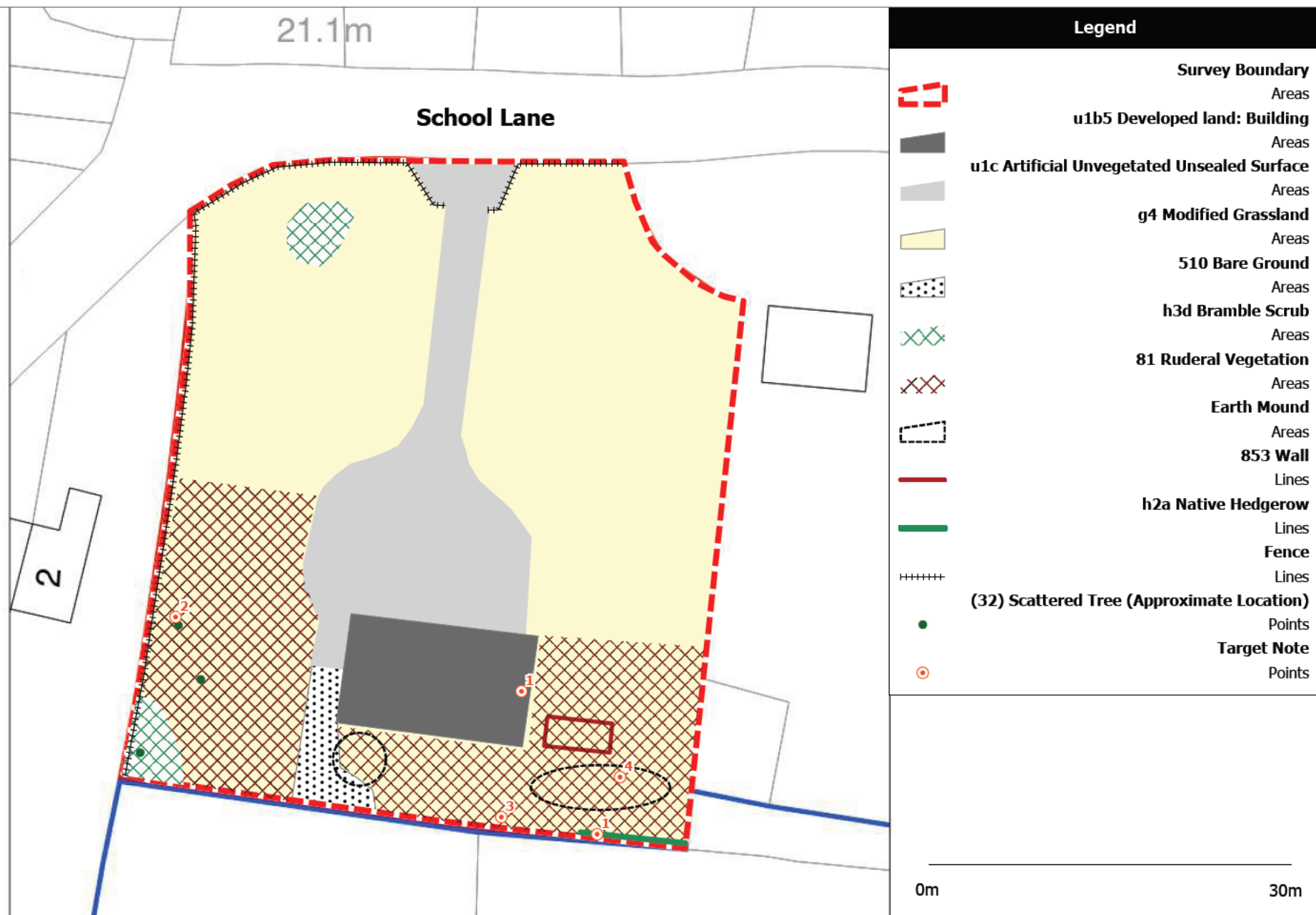


Figure 1: Batts Barn Habitat Survey Map

Drawn by: CT
Date: 23/07/2026
Scale: See Map

Appendix C

Legislation

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This section contains information pertaining to the legislation and planning policy applicable in Britain. This information is not applicable to Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. Information contained in the following appendix is provided for guidance only.

Species

The objective of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (formerly The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) and The Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (as amended) is to conserve plants and animals which are considered to be rare across Europe.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) implements the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and also implements the obligations set out for species protection from the Council Directive 2009/147/EC (formerly 79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds (EC Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

Various amendments have been made since the Wildlife & Countryside Act came into force in 1981. Further details pertaining to alterations of the Act can be found on the following website: www.opsi.gov.uk. Key amendments have been made through the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) and Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

There are a number of other legislative Acts affording protection to species and habitats. These include

- * Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000
- * Deer Act 1991
- * Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- * Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- * Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bats

Bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This act protects individuals from:

- * intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level);
- * intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- * selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

In addition, all species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- * deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (all bats);
- * deliberate disturbance of bat species as to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A Protected Species Mitigation Licence (PSML) issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake activities listed above. A licence is required to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and monitored.

Breeding Birds

Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), a wild bird is defined as any bird of a species that is resident in or is a visitor to the European Territory of any member state in a wild state. Game birds, however, are not included in this definition (except for limited parts of the Act). They are covered by the Games Acts, which fully protect them during the closed season.

Under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), all birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Sections 1-8 of the Act and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to:

- * intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- * intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) take, damage or destroy (or, in Scotland, otherwise interfere with) the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- * intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;
- * have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird, which has been taken in contravention of the Act;
- * have in one's possession or control any egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention of the Act;
- * use traps or similar items to kill, injure or take wild birds;
- * have in one's possession or control any bird (dead or alive) unless registered, and in most cases ringed, in accordance with the Secretary of State's regulations; and
- * in Scotland only, intentionally or recklessly obstruct or prevent any wild bird from using its nest.

Certain rare species receive additional special protection under Schedule 1 of the Act. This affords them protection against:

- * intentional or reckless disturbance while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young;

- * intentional or reckless disturbance of dependent young of such a bird;
- * in Scotland only, intentional or reckless disturbance whilst lekking; and
- * in Scotland only, intentional or reckless harassment.

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) has a list of birds that are Species of Conservation Concern. These birds are not legally protected but where they are found on site they should be given planning consideration. The criteria for birds listed as amber (medium conservation concern) include:

- * historical population decline during 1800-1995, but recovering: population has more than doubled over last 25 years;
- * moderate (25-49%) decline in UK breeding population over last 25 years;
- * moderate (25-49%) contraction of UK breeding range over last 25 years;
- * moderate (25-49%) decline in UK non-breeding population over last 25 years;
- * species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe (Species of conservation Concern);
- * five year mean of breeding pairs in the UK;
- * $\geq 50\%$ of UK breeding population in 10 or fewer sites.
- * $\geq 50\%$ of UK non-breeding population in 10 or fewer sites;
- * $\geq 20\%$ of European breeding population in UK; and
- * $\geq 20\%$ of NW European (wildfowl), East Atlantic Flyway (waders) or European (others) non breeding populations in UK.

Hazel Dormouse

The hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) is fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 through its inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- * deliberate killing, injuring or capturing;
- * deliberate disturbance as to impair its ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate.
- * deliberate disturbance as to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- * damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place; and
- * keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part of this species.

The hazel dormouse is also currently protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through its inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, this species is additionally protected from:

- * intentional or reckless disturbance;
- * intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- * selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

A Protected Species Mitigation Licence (PSML) issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect dormouse breeding or resting places (N.B. this is usually taken to mean dormouse 'habitat') or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above. The licence will allow derogation from the relevant legislation but will also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and monitored.

Herpetofauna (Reptiles and Amphibians)

The following species receive full protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

- * sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*);
- * smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*);
- * natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*);
- * great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*); and
- * pool frog (*Pelophylax lessonae*).

Under this legislation, Regulation 41 prohibits:

- * deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of species listed on Schedule 2;
- * deliberate disturbance of any Schedule 2 species as to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate.
- * deliberate disturbance of any Schedule 2 species as to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- * deliberate taking or destroying of the eggs of a Schedule 2 species;
- * damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place; and
- * keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part of a species.

With the exception of the pool frog, these species are also currently listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- * intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level);
- * intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- * selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

Other native species of herpetofauna are protected solely under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These species include:

- * adder (*Vipera berus*);
- * grass snake (*Natrix natrix*);
- * common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*); and
- * slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*).

Under this legislation, for these species it is prohibited under Section 9(1) & (5) to:

- * intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) kill or injure these species
- * sell, offer or expose for sale, possess or transport for purpose of sale these species, or any part thereof.

The following species are listed in respect to Section 9(5) of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which only affords them protection against sale, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transport for the purpose of sale:

- * common frog (*Rana temporaria*);
- * common toad (*Bufo bufo*);
- * smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*); and
- * palmate newt (*L. helveticus*).

Water Vole

The water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) (=terrestris) is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to:

- * intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) this species;
- * intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- * intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection; and

- * sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in his possession or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead water vole or part of this species.

Where development works are liable to affect habitats known to support water voles, Natural England must be consulted. All alternative design options must have been explored and communicated to Natural England in order to demonstrate that works have tried to avoid contravening the legislation e.g. the use of alternative sites, appropriate timing of works to avoid times of the year in which water voles are most vulnerable etc. Conservation licences for the capture and translocation of water voles may be issued by Natural England for the purpose of development activities if it can be shown that the activity has been properly planned and executed and thereby contributes to the conservation of the population.

Otter

Otters (*Lutra lutra*) are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- * deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of otters
- * deliberate disturbance as to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young; and
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate.
- * deliberate disturbance as to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species;
- * damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place; and
- * keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part of this species.

Otters also receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- * intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level);
- * intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection; and
- * selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

A Protected Species Mitigation Licence (PSML) issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect breeding or resting places or for activities likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above. The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and monitored.

Red Squirrel

The red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to:

- * intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) kill, injure or take (capture) red squirrels;
- * intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection;
- * intentionally or recklessly disturb this species while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter; and
- * sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in his possession or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead red squirrel or part of this species.

White Clawed Crayfish

The white clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) receives partial protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This species is protected under Sections 9(1) and 9(5), making it an offence to:

- * intentionally take/capture white-clawed crayfish; and
- * sell, offer or expose for sale, have in possession or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead white clawed crayfish or part of this species.

A conservation licence for the capture and translocation of crayfish may be issued for the purpose of development activities if it can be demonstrated that the activity has been carefully planned and this species considered. The activity must also demonstrate that it contributes to the conservation of the population.

Wild Mammals

All wild mammals are protected against intentional acts of cruelty under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- * mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

To avoid possible contravention of this legislation, due care and attention should be taken when carrying out works that have the potential to impact any wild mammal as described above.

Plants

Wild plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence for an 'unauthorised' person to intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) uproot wild plants. An authorised person can be the owner of the land on which the action is taken, or anybody authorised by them.

Some rare plant species also receive full protection under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This prohibits:

- * intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) picking, uprooting or destruction of any wild Schedule 8 species (or seed or spore attached to any such wild plant in Scotland only); and
- * selling, offering or exposing for sale, or possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, any wild live or dead Schedule 8 plant species or parts.

In addition to the legislation outlined above, several plant species are fully protected under Schedule 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Regulation 45 makes it an offence to:

- * deliberately pick, collect or destroy a wild Schedule 5 species; and
- * be in possession of, or control, transport, sell or exchange any wild live or dead Schedule 5 species or anything derived from it.

A Protected Species Mitigation Licence (PSML) issued by Natural England will be required for works liable to affect species of plant listed under The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017.

Invasive Plant Species

Certain plants are listed on Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) in respect to Section 14(2). Species include:

- * Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*);
- * giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*);
- * Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*);
- * certain species of rhododendron (*Rhododendron* sp.); and
- * certain species of cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster* sp.).

Species listed are non-natives whose establishment or spread in the wild may be detrimental to native wildlife. Inclusion on Part II of Schedule 9 therefore makes it an offence to:

- * plant or otherwise cause these species to grow in the wild.

This legislation makes it is an offence to cause species listed to grow in the wild. Therefore, if they are present on site and development activities have the potential to cause the further spread of these species to new areas, it will be necessary to ensure appropriate measures are in place to prevent this.

HABITATS

International Statutory Designations

- * Special Protection Areas (SPAs): Terrestrial SPA's are afforded protection by The Conservation of habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) an offshore SPA's are afforded protection under The Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (as amended).
- * Special Areas of Conservation (SACs): These areas are designated under the same regulations as detailed for SPA's.
- * Ramsar sites: These areas are wetlands designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971). Wetlands can include areas of marsh, fen, water or peatland and may be natural or artificial, permanent or temporary. Ramsar sites are underpinned through prior notification as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and as such receive statutory protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) with further protection provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.

National Statutory Designations

- * Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs): These sites are designated by the countryside agencies (for example Natural England) under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Prior to 1981 these were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Improved mechanisms for the protection of SSSIs have also been introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (in England and Wales).
- * National Nature Reserves: These sites are also designated by the countryside agencies under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Local Statutory Designations

- * 1949 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs): These sites are designated by local authorities under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These are sites recognised for their wildlife or geological interest at a local level and are managed for nature conservation.

Non-Statutory Designations

- * Local Wildlife Sites: Areas of local conservation interest may be designated by local authorities. The terminology for these sites varies depending on the county. They can be called Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI's), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Listed Wildlife Sites (LWS), Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS), Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs). The designation criteria may vary between counties. Local Wildlife Sites are of material consideration when planning applications are being determined.
- * The Hedgerow Regulations 1997: These have been compiled to protect 'important' countryside hedgerows from damage or removal. A hedgerow is considered important if (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy certain hedgerows without permission from the local planning authority. Hedgerows covered by these regulations include those on or adjacent to common land, SSSIs (including all terrestrial SACs, NNRs and SPAs), LNRs, land used for agriculture or forestry and land used for the keeping or breeding of horses, ponies or donkeys.

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2026) replaces the former NPPF and PPS9 documents and emphasises the need for sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and priority species. An emphasis is also made for the need for ecological networks through preservation, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species is also included as a requirement of planning policy. In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from adverse harm; appropriate mitigation or compensation measures are in place where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

Regional and Local Planning Policy

The Horsham District Core Strategy (2017) contains the following Nature Conservation Policies that are relevant to the site.

Horsham District Core Strategy (2017).

- * Policy CP1: Landscape and Townscape Character

'The landscape character of the district will be maintained and enhanced. Activities which may influence the character should only take place where:

- * *The landscape and townscape character is protected, conserved or enhanced taking into account key landscape and settlement characteristics;*
- * *Protected landscapes, habitats and species are properly protected, conserved and enhanced; and*
- * *The biodiversity of the District is conserved and enhanced.'*

Regional and Local BAPs

Many local authorities in the UK have produced a local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) at the County or District level and a series of Local Nature Recovery Strategies are also being devised for different counties/regions which will supersede the (LBAP). Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a statutory requirement from the Environment Act 2021. Their aim is to identify and protect the important places for nature that are left, and identify the opportunities to restore or create habitats, where this can have the most benefit for wildlife and people. The strategies will help to target future effort and funding.

Appendix D
Plant Species List

Scientific nomenclature follows Stace (2010) for vascular plant species and British Bryological Society (BBS) Special Volume No. 5 *English Names for British Bryophytes* for bryophyte species. Vascular plant common names follow the Botanical Society of the British Isles 2003 list, published on its web site, www.bsbi.org.uk. The plant species list was generated as part of a Phase 1 Habitat survey and does not constitute a full botanical survey.

Abundance was estimated using the DAFOR scale as follows:

D = dominant, A = abundant, F = frequent, O = occasional, R = rare.

Key to qualifiers: c=clumped, e=edge only, g=garden origin, p=planted, y = young, s=seedling or sucker, t=tree, h=hedge, w=water. L = locally i.e. LD=locally dominant.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	ABUNDANCE	QUALIFIER
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	R	H
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	R	
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	O	LF, C
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	O	LA
Buddleia	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	O	
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	O	
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	A	
Common chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	O	
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	O	LA
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	O	
Daffodil	<i>Narcissus</i> sp.	R	
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum</i> sp.	F	
Fescues	<i>Festuca</i> spp.	F	
Germander speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	O	
Green alkanet	<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	O	LF
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	R	T
Herb-Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	O	
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	O	LF
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	R	

Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	R	
Lords-and-Ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	O	
Meadow foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	A	
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	R	T
Perennial sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>	F	LA
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	O	
Sheep's-fescue	<i>Festuca ovina</i>	F	
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	O	LF
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	O	

Appendix E
Suggested Compensatory Planting

This section provides a list of plants which are of proven value to wildlife. The list is not exhaustive and merely provides a guide for suggested planting for wildlife value. Planting should be tailored on a site by site basis. The list includes some native and ornamental species however the emphasis should always be on the use of predominantly native species.

N = Native, NN = Non-native.

This list includes species that may be harmful if handled or ingested. Schedule 9 (Part 2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) includes a list of invasive plants, including aquatic species, that should always be avoided in planting schemes.

Large Shrubs

Hedge veronica/Hebe (*Veronica* spp.) NN

Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) N

Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) N

Rose: dog rose (*Rosa canina*), field rose (*R. arvensis*), burnet rose (*R. pimpinellifolia*) N

California lilac (*Ceanothus* spp.), (*C. arborea*) NN

Wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*) N

Common holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) N

Barberry (*Berberis* spp.) (*B. darwinii*), (*B. thunbergii*), (*B. x stenophylla*) NN

Daisy Bush (*Olearia* spp.), (*O. x hastii*), (*O. macrodonta*) and (*O. traversii*) NN

Firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*) NN

Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) N (*C. maxima*) NN

Viburnum (*Viburnum* spp.), wayfaring tree (*V. lantana*) N, guelder rose (*V. opulus*) N, laurustinus (*V. tinus*) E Note: *V. lantana* can become invasive in more open habitats.

Butterfly bush (*Buddleja* spp.), (*B. alternifolia*), (*B. globosa*) NN

Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) N

Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) N

Escallonia (*Escallonia macrantha*) NN

Hardy fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*) NN

Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) N

Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*) N

Tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*) N

Yew (*Taxus baccata*) N

Trees

Cherry (*Prunus* spp.), wild cherry (*P. avium*), bird cherry (*P. padus*), domestic plum (*P. domestica*) N or cherry plum (*P. cerasifera*) NN

Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) N

Apple (*Malus* spp.), edible apple (*M. domestica*), crab apple (*M. sylvestris*) N

Pear (*Pyrus* spp.), edible pear (*P. communis*) NN

Small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*) N
Silver birch (*Betula pendula*) N
Yew (*Taxus baccata*) N
Black poplar (*Populus nigra*) N
Foxglove tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) NN
Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) N

Climbers

Jasmine (*Jasminum* spp.), summer jasmine (*J. officinale*), winter jasmine (*J. nodiflorum*) NN
Ivy (*Hedera helix*) N
Climbing hydrangea (*Hydrangea anomala* ssp. *petiolaris*) NN
Honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.) (*L. periclymenum*) N
Clematis (*Clematis* spp.) NN
Hop (*Humulus lupulus*) N
Firethorn (*Pyracantha atalantioides*) NN
Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*) NN

Bulbs

English bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) N
Squill species (*Scilla* spp.) N/NN
Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) N
Winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) E
Crocus species (*Crocus* spp.) NN
Wild Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*) N
Onion species (*Allium* spp.) N/NN. N.B. *Allium triquetrum* (three cornered leek) and *Allium paradoxum* (few-flowered leek) are Schedule 9 invasive plant species.
Wood anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) N
Lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*) N

Appendix F

eDNA Results

Folio No: 3580-2026
Purchase Order: Batts Barn
Contact: CT Ecology
Issue Date: 19.07.2026
Received Date: 02.07.2026

GCN Report

Technical Report



SureScreen Scientifics

Folio No: 3580-2026
Purchase Order: Batts Barn
Contact: CT Ecology
Issue Date: 19.07.2026
Received Date: 02.07.2026

GCN eDNA Analysis

Summary

When great crested newts (GCN), *Triturus cristatus*, inhabit a pond, they continuously release small amounts of their DNA into the environment. By collecting and analyzing water samples, we can detect these small traces of environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm GCN habitation or establish GCN absence.

Results

Lab ID	Site Name	OS Reference	Degradation Check	Inhibition Check	Result	Positive Replicates
GCN26 09883	Batts Barn Pond	TQ 1782 2160	Pass	Pass	Negative	0/12

Matters affecting result: none

Reported by: Ruby Fielding

Approved by: Chelsea Warner



Methodology

The samples detailed above have been analyzed for the presence of GCN eDNA following the protocol stated in DEFRA WC1067 'Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt, Appendix 5.' (Biggs et al. 2014). Each of the 6 sub-sample tubes are first centrifuged and pooled together into a single sample tube which then undergoes DNA extraction. The extracted sample is then analyzed using real-time PCR (qPCR), which uses species-specific molecular markers to amplify GCN DNA within a sample. These markers are unique to GCN DNA, meaning that there should be no detection of closely related species.

If GCN DNA is present, the DNA is amplified up to a detectable level, resulting in positive species detection. If GCN DNA is not present then amplification does not occur, and a negative result is recorded. Analysis of eDNA requires attention to detail to prevent the risk of contamination. True positive controls, negative controls, and spiked synthetic DNA are included in every analysis and these have to be correct before any result is declared and reported. Stages of the DNA analysis are also conducted in different buildings at our premises for added analytical security.

SureScreen Scientifics Ltd is ISO9001 accredited and participates in Natural England's proficiency testing scheme for GCN eDNA testing.

Interpretation of Results

Sample Integrity Check:

When samples are received in the laboratory, they are inspected for any tube leakage, suitability of sample (not too much mud or weed etc.) and absence of any factors that could potentially lead to inconclusive results. Any samples which fail this test are rejected and eliminated before analysis.

Degradation Check:

Pass/Fail. Analysis of the spiked DNA marker to see if there has been degradation of the kit or sample between the date it was made to the date of analysis. Degradation of the spiked DNA marker may lead indicate a risk of false negative results.

Inhibition Check:

Pass/Fail. The presence of inhibitors within a sample is assessed using a DNA marker. If inhibition is detected, samples are purified and re-analyzed. Inhibitors cannot always be removed, if the inhibition check fails, the sample should be re-collected.

Result:

Presence of GCN eDNA (Positive/Negative/Inconclusive)

Positive: GCN DNA was identified within the sample, indicative of GCN presence within the sampling location at the time the sample was taken or within the recent past at the sampling location.

Positive Replicates: Number of positive qPCR replicates out of a series of 12. If one or more of these are found to be positive the pond is declared positive for GCN presence. It may be assumed that small fractions of positive analyses suggest low level presence, but this cannot currently be used for population studies. In accordance with the WC1067 Natural England protocol, even a score of 1/12 is declared positive. 0/12 indicates negative GCN presence.

Negative: GCN eDNA was not detected or is below the threshold detection level and the test result should be considered as evidence of GCN absence, however, does not exclude the potential for GCN presence below the limit of detection.

Inconclusive: Controls indicate inhibition or degradation of the sample, resulting in the inability to provide conclusive evidence for GCN presence or absence.

