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Watts Cole Rutter



**Preliminary Ecological  
Appraisal and Biodiversity  
Net Gain Baseline Report**  
Holbrook Surgery, Holbrook,  
Horsham, West Sussex

## Report Sign-Off Sheet

**Project Title:** Holbrook Surgery

**Report Type:** PEA and BNG Baseline Report

**Location:** Holbrook Surgery, Holbrook, Horsham, West Sussex

**Client Name:** Holbrook Surgery c/o Proctor Watts Cole Rutter

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### Declaration of Competence and Compliance

*This report has been prepared in accordance with the **CIEEM Code of Professional Conduct** and British Standard **BS 42020:2013, Clause 6.9**, with all reasonable skill, care, and diligence applied as accepted by ecological professionals.*

*Any limitations, constraints, or uncertainties relating to this report are fully stated within the relevant sections of the main document.*

*By signing below, you confirm responsibility for the findings and content of this report.*

### Sign-Off

I confirm that this report is a true and accurate reflection of the findings and has been prepared to the best of my knowledge and in line with relevant professional standards.

| Name | Position / Title    | Signature | Date       |
|------|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| RJ   | Principal Ecologist |           | 15/07/2026 |

This template meets CIEEM's expectations for professional sign-off and promotes accountability, transparency, and alignment with best practice guidance for ecological reporting.

## Executive Summary

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This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Baseline Report presents the ecological baseline for Holbrook Surgery, Holbrook, Horsham, West Sussex (central grid reference TQ 1899 3295) in support of proposals to construct a single-storey extension to the existing doctor's surgery together with associated paths and landscaping. The application site extends to 0.0286 ha (approximately 0.029 ha) and comprises modified amenity grassland, non-native and ornamental hedgerow and existing sealed surfaces associated with the operational medical centre.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric records a baseline of 0.0518 area habitat units and 0.0599 hedgerow units. No Priority Habitats, irreplaceable habitats or watercourses occur within the application boundary.

### Ecological Baseline

A proportionate desk study was undertaken using publicly available environmental datasets, aerial imagery and local planning information, supported by a field survey completed on 17 June 2026.

The site supports three habitat types comprising modified grassland, non-native and ornamental hedgerow and developed land. These habitats are of low to very low ecological distinctiveness and provide limited ecological value within the wider urban environment.

No statutory designated sites occur within 2 km of the application site and no Priority Habitats occur within the site boundary. The nearest designated sites are sufficiently distant that no likely significant effects are anticipated.

Habitat suitability assessments concluded that the site provides limited opportunities for protected and notable species. The existing building was assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, with no features capable of supporting bat roosts identified. The boundary hedgerows provide limited opportunities for commuting and foraging bats, together with nesting habitat for common breeding birds and occasional foraging habitat for hedgehog. The intensively managed grassland provides low suitability for reptiles and amphibians, and no evidence of [REDACTED] or other protected species was recorded during the survey.

### Recommendations

Ecological constraints associated with the development are considered to be low and can be appropriately managed through standard construction good practice.

Key recommendations include:

- undertaking vegetation clearance outside the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive), or following confirmation that active nests are absent;
- implementing a sensitive external lighting strategy to minimise light spill onto the proposed native hedgerow and mixed scrub;
- adopting precautionary working methods during vegetation clearance and construction to safeguard common fauna; and
- successfully establishing and managing the proposed native hedgerow, mixed scrub and replacement grassland habitats.

The post-development Statutory Biodiversity Metric includes 0.0072 ha of mixed scrub in Moderate condition, 0.0034 ha of modified grassland in Moderate condition, 0.0180 ha of developed land; sealed surface and 20 m of new native hedgerow in Moderate condition. The calculation delivers 0.0600 area habitat units and 0.0669 hedgerow units, equivalent to a net gain of approximately 15.8% for area habitats and 11.8% for hedgerows. The trading rules are satisfied.

Only habitats within the application red line boundary are included in the metric; landscaping outside the red line is supplementary. The planning application was submitted before 6 August 2026 and therefore remains subject to the BNG regime applying at submission. The on-site gains are below Horsham District Council's published significance criteria, so a 30-year Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is not considered applicable. Habitat establishment will be secured through the approved landscape proposals and Biodiversity Gain Plan.

## Contents

|                                                      |    |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 Introduction .....                                 | 5  |
| 1.1 Background and Purpose .....                     | 5  |
| 1.2 Site Description .....                           | 5  |
| 1.3 Proposed Development .....                       | 6  |
| 1.4 Relevant Planning Policies and Legislation ..... | 6  |
| 2 Methodology .....                                  | 8  |
| 2.1 Desk Study .....                                 | 8  |
| 2.2 Field Survey .....                               | 8  |
| 2.3 BNG Assessment .....                             | 9  |
| 2.4 Quality Assurance .....                          | 9  |
| 2.5 Limitations .....                                | 9  |
| 2.6 Data Validity .....                              | 9  |
| 3 Results .....                                      | 10 |
| 3.1 Desk Study Results .....                         | 10 |
| 3.1.1 Designated Sites .....                         | 10 |
| 3.2 Field Survey Results .....                       | 11 |
| 3.2.1 Habitats .....                                 | 11 |
| 3.2.2 Protected and Priority Species .....           | 12 |
| 4 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment .....       | 14 |
| 4.1 Baseline Habitat Units .....                     | 14 |
| 4.2 Post-Development BNG .....                       | 15 |
| 5 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities .....     | 16 |
| 5.1 Constraints .....                                | 16 |
| 5.2 Opportunities .....                              | 16 |
| 5.3 Mitigation Hierarchy .....                       | 17 |
| 5.4 Habitat Management and Monitoring .....          | 17 |
| 5.5 Further Survey Recommendations .....             | 18 |
| Conclusion .....                                     | 19 |
| References .....                                     | 20 |

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Background and Purpose

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), including a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) baseline, has been prepared on behalf of Holbrook Surgery (c/o Proctor Watts Cole Rutter), to inform proposed development at Holbrook Surgery, Holbrook, Horsham, West Sussex. The report supports the planning process by identifying the ecological value of the site and establishing a biodiversity baseline in accordance with current UK legislation and Horsham District Council requirements.

The aims of this report are to:

### **Undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA):**

- Complete an Extended UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey to identify and map all habitat types present on site.
- Assess the potential for the site to support protected and notable species, using field survey, publicly available environmental datasets and habitat suitability assessment.

### **Establish the BNG baseline using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric:**

- Calculate the site's baseline biodiversity units using the statutory metric, in line with current Defra and Natural England guidance.

### **Inform Planning and Design:**

- Provide recommendations for further surveys, mitigation, and opportunities for ecological enhancement, ensuring the proposed development can achieve at least 10% net gain in biodiversity as required by planning policy.
- Present clear, robust baseline data to support planning applications and future ecological management of the site.

This report incorporates the results of the field survey, desk study, habitat mapping, condition assessments, and BNG calculations. It is intended for use by the client, design team, and planning authority to guide the development process and support a successful planning application. This PEA has been undertaken in accordance with CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017).

## 1.2 Site Description

The application site is located at Holbrook Surgery, Holbrook, on the northern side of Horsham, West Sussex (the site), centred on National Grid Reference TQ 1899 3295 and covering approximately 0.029 hectares. It comprises the landscaped amenity grounds associated with the medical centre, areas of managed amenity grassland bounded by clipped non-native and ornamental hedging, with tarmac access paths linking the building entrances to the adjoining car park.

The surrounding landscape is suburban/urban-edge in character, with the surgery set among a residential neighbourhood and a local shopping parade, an adjacent car park, and amenity tree planting (including mature silver birch). A block of woodland adjoins the site to the north and west, providing a vegetated backdrop and local habitat connectivity. The site itself is intensively managed amenity land and is typical of landscaped grounds within an established built-up area.

Representative site photographs are provided in Figure 1 and Appendix 3. The application red line boundary and baseline habitat distribution are shown on the habitat plan in Appendix 1. The proposed development drawings are provided in Appendix 4 and the completed modified grassland condition assessment is provided in Appendix 5.



Figure 1 Representative photographs of the site — amenity/modified grassland and clipped ornamental hedging lining the access paths around the surgery building (survey, 17 June 2026).

### 1.3 Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the construction of a single-storey extension to the eastern elevation of the existing Holbrook Surgery to provide additional consulting and treatment accommodation. Associated external works include new and realigned footpaths, stopping up and grassing over part of an existing path, and new soft landscaping comprising native hedgerow and mixed scrub.

Within the application red line boundary, the works will remove the mapped modified grassland, sealed paths and non-native ornamental hedgerow affected by the development. The post-development scheme provides 0.0072 ha of mixed scrub, 0.0034 ha of modified grassland, 0.0180 ha of sealed surface and 20 m of new native hedgerow. The relevant proposed plans are included in Appendix 4.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been completed using the habitats located within the application red line boundary. Landscape proposals shown outside that boundary have been excluded from the calculation and are not relied upon to deliver the statutory minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. The final Biodiversity Gain Plan will confirm the habitat creation, management and monitoring commitments.

### 1.4 Relevant Planning Policies and Legislation

This report has been prepared to assess the ecological baseline of the site and to inform the proposed development in accordance with current planning policy and relevant wildlife legislation.

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) requires planning decisions to minimise impacts on biodiversity by applying the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate and compensate), protect and enhance ecological networks, conserve irreplaceable habitats, and secure measurable Biodiversity Net Gain where applicable. Development should also incorporate appropriate opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

#### Horsham District Planning Policy

The adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and the emerging Horsham Local Plan require development proposals to conserve and enhance biodiversity, protect designated sites and ecological networks, and contribute towards nature recovery. Relevant policies seek to avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity wherever possible and support the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with national legislation.

The West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2026) should also be considered when identifying opportunities for habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement.

#### Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides statutory protection for a range of wild animals, plants and habitats, including the protection of breeding birds, protected species and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Any works affecting protected species or their habitats must comply with the requirements of the Act.

### **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)**

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provide protection for European Protected Species, including all species of bat. Where relevant, works affecting protected species must be undertaken in accordance with these Regulations and any associated licensing requirements.

### **Environment Act 2021**

The Environment Act 2021 introduced the mandatory requirement for most planning applications in England to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), measured using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Off-site gains and significant on-site gains must, where required, be secured and managed for at least 30 years through the Biodiversity Gain Plan and an appropriate legal mechanism.

This report establishes the ecological baseline and assesses the post-development Biodiversity Net Gain for the application site. The habitats relied upon for the gain will be confirmed and secured through the Biodiversity Gain Plan and appropriate long-term management arrangements.

## 2 Methodology

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### 2.1 Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken in July 2026 to establish the ecological context of the site and its surroundings and to inform the scope of the field survey and subsequent assessment. The desk study sought to identify:

- Statutory and non-statutory designated sites within the site's likely zone of influence;
- Records of protected and notable species where relevant to the proposed works;
- Priority habitats and ecological networks that may influence the ecological assessment.

A proportionate, risk-based desk study was undertaken having regard to the scale, nature and location of the proposals. The works comprise minor landscaping within existing managed grounds surrounding an operational doctor's surgery in a predominantly urban setting. In view of the limited scale of the proposed works and the absence of credible pathways for significant ecological effects beyond the site, a commissioned data search from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) was not considered necessary. Instead, the desk study relied on publicly available environmental datasets and mapping, together with professional judgement, to identify ecological constraints within the site's likely zone of influence.

The following information sources were reviewed:

- MAGIC Map (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) to identify statutory designated sites, Priority Habitats and other environmental constraints;
- Recent aerial imagery and Ordnance Survey mapping to assess current land use, habitat connectivity and the surrounding landscape context;
- Local planning records, where available, to identify any previous ecological assessments relevant to the site; and
- Horsham District Green Infrastructure Strategy (2024) to establish whether the site forms part of any strategic green infrastructure network, Biodiversity Opportunity Area or other locally significant ecological corridor.

The findings of the desk study were considered alongside the field survey, with professional judgement applied to determine the likelihood of protected or notable ecological features occurring on or adjacent to the site and the potential for the proposed works to result in ecological effects.

### 2.2 Field Survey

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) walkover survey was undertaken on 17 June 2026 by suitably qualified ecologists with experience in habitat assessment and protected species appraisal, in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017). The survey comprised a habitat walkover, habitat condition assessment and an appraisal of trees and structures for their potential to support protected species, including roosting bats.

The survey was undertaken in suitable weather conditions, with dry, sunny weather, an air temperature of approximately 25°C, a light south-easterly wind (Beaufort Force 2) and good visibility, which were appropriate for the objectives of the survey.

Habitats were classified in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2.01, providing a standardised baseline consistent with current Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

The field survey included:

- Systematic mapping of all habitats and notable ecological features using GPS-enabled field devices and the Coreo (2025) field application;

- Assessment of habitat condition, structure, management and botanical composition, with quadrat sampling and the DAFOR abundance scale used where appropriate to characterise vegetation communities;
- Inspection of trees and built structures for features with the potential to support protected species, including bat roosting opportunities, together with an assessment of habitats suitable for other protected and Priority species;
- Recording of incidental evidence of protected or notable species encountered during the survey, together with an assessment of habitat suitability based on field observations and desk study information; and
- Collection of geo-referenced photographs and target notes to document habitats, ecological features and any constraints relevant to the proposed development

## 2.3 BNG Assessment

The baseline and post-development biodiversity values were calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric in accordance with the Biodiversity Gain Regulations and Horsham District Council's planning requirements. Habitat parcels were classified using UK Habitat Classification Version 2.01 and assigned an area or length, distinctiveness, condition and strategic significance in accordance with the metric methodology. The completed modified grassland condition assessment is reproduced in Appendix 5. Post-development habitat areas and hedgerow lengths were taken from the current proposal drawings, with landscaping outside the application red line excluded from the calculation.

Although the site falls below the threshold at which use of the Small Sites Metric may be appropriate, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been applied to provide a more detailed and robust assessment of the site's baseline biodiversity value and to ensure consistency with the habitat classification and condition assessments undertaken as part of this report.

## 2.4 Quality Assurance

All survey work, habitat classification and assessment outputs were subject to internal quality assurance procedures, including technical review by a suitably experienced senior ecologist. The survey methodologies and assessment approach were undertaken in accordance with current CIEEM guidance and relevant national guidance published by Defra and Natural England, and have been prepared to support the requirements of Horsham District Council where applicable.

## 2.5 Limitations

Although the survey effort was sufficient to inform the objectives of this assessment, no ecological survey can conclusively determine the absence of all species or fully characterise site use throughout the year. Ecological systems are inherently dynamic, and species presence and habitat use may vary seasonally and over time. The findings presented therefore represent the conditions observed at the time of survey.

A proportionate desk study was undertaken based on publicly available environmental datasets. In view of the scale and nature of the proposed works, a commissioned search from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) was not considered necessary. Consequently, protected species records presented within this report are based primarily on habitat suitability, publicly available information and professional judgement.

## 2.6 Data Validity

Unless otherwise stated, this report is considered valid for 24 months from the date of the field survey, provided there are no material changes to the site, surrounding habitats or the proposed development. Where significant changes occur, or where the report is relied upon beyond this period, an updated ecological appraisal and, where necessary, additional surveys may be required. This approach follows CIEEM's Advice Note On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys (2019).

## 3 Results

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### 3.1 Desk Study Results

The desk study was undertaken using publicly available environmental datasets, aerial imagery and mapping to establish the ecological context of the site and identify ecological constraints relevant to the proposed development. Having regard to the scale, nature and location of the proposals, a commissioned search from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) was not considered necessary. The assessment is therefore based on information obtained from the MAGIC website, Ordnance Survey mapping, recent aerial imagery, local planning information and the Horsham District Green Infrastructure Strategy (2024), together with professional judgement.

#### 3.1.1 Designated Sites

##### Statutory Designations

No internationally or nationally designated statutory sites, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), are located within 2 km of the site.

The nearest statutory sites comprise Warnham Local Nature Reserve, located approximately 2.2 km to the west, Warnham SSSI (designated for its geological interest) approximately 2.5 km to the west, St Leonard's Park Ponds SSSI approximately 4 km to the south, and St Leonard's Forest SSSI approximately 5 km to the south-east.

Given the very limited scale of the proposed landscaping works, the urban location of the site and the absence of any credible impact pathways, no likely significant effects on statutory designated sites are anticipated.

##### Non-Statutory Designations

The nearest non-statutory designated sites comprise Leechpool & Owlbeech Woods Local Wildlife Site (LWS), approximately 2.3 km south-east of the site, together with St Leonard's Forest LWS, approximately 3 km to the south-east. Warnham Local Nature Reserve is also recognised as a Local Wildlife Site.

These sites are well beyond the likely zone of influence of the proposed works and no ecological pathways exist through which the development could adversely affect their qualifying features.

##### Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitats

Priority deciduous woodland and areas identified on the Ancient Woodland Inventory occur within the wider Horsham landscape, particularly around Warnham and St Leonard's Forest.

A woodland block lies immediately to the north and west of the site, providing local habitat connectivity and contributing to the wider green infrastructure network. However, the proposed works are confined to existing landscaped areas associated with the doctor's surgery and will not directly or indirectly affect this woodland.

No Priority Habitats or irreplaceable habitats occur within the application boundary.

##### Protected and Notable Species Records

Given the limited scale and nature of the proposed landscaping works within an existing urban setting, the likelihood of significant effects on protected or notable species beyond the site was considered low and a habitat-based assessment was considered proportionate.

The site was therefore assessed principally through field survey, supported by publicly available environmental information and an appraisal of the surrounding landscape.

The adjacent woodland and connected green infrastructure have the potential to support a range of common woodland and urban-edge species, including bats, breeding birds, hedgehog and common mammals. These habitats also provide opportunities for foraging and commuting bats and nesting birds within the wider landscape.

The application site itself comprises intensively managed landscaped habitats associated with an operational doctor's surgery and provides limited opportunities for protected or notable species. Species-specific assessments are therefore based on the suitability of habitats present at the time of survey rather than the presence of historical biological records.

## 3.2 Field Survey Results

### 3.2.1 Habitats

Three habitat types were identified within the application site during the field survey: modified grassland, non-native and ornamental hedgerow, and other developed land. A habitat map is provided in Appendix 1. Table 1 summarises the habitats recorded, including their UKHab classification, condition, extent and characteristic plant species. The detailed modified grassland condition assessment is provided in Appendix 5.

**Table 1 UKHab habitat descriptions for the site, including defining species compositions.**

| Habitat Type (UKHab Code)                | Area / Length           | Habitat Photo                                                                       | Description / Justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Plant Species (indicative)                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Modified grassland (g4)                  | 0.0259 ha (two parcels) |   | <p>Areas of regularly-mown amenity grassland forming the lawns around the surgery. The sward is species-poor and moss-dominated, with scattered low-growing herbs typical of closely-managed amenity turf on compacted ground.</p> <p>Condition: Both habitat parcels were assessed as being in Poor condition, reflecting their low botanical diversity, moss-dominated sward and limited structural diversity.</p>                            | <p>Abundant: moss spp. Frequent: perennial rye-grass, red fescue, white clover, daisy, selfheal. Occasional: creeping buttercup, ribwort plantain, black medick, dove's-foot crane's-bill.</p> |
| Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (h2b) | 0.0599 km (59.9 m)      |  | <p>A clipped, species-poor boundary hedge of non-native and ornamental species enclosing the lawns and lining the access paths and car-park frontage. Maintained as a formal, dense linear feature. The hedge is maintained as a dense formal boundary feature and was mapped as a linear habitat in accordance with UKHab guidance.</p> <p>Condition: default for a non-native, ornamental hedgerow (not individually condition-assessed).</p> | <p>Frequent: garden privet, box. Occasional: Hypericum spp, dogwood, lavender, with occasional hawthorn and bramble incursion.</p>                                                             |

| Habitat Type<br>(UKHab Code)   | Area /<br>Length | Habitat Photo                                                                     | Description / Justification                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Plant Species<br>(indicative)                                     |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Other developed<br>land (u1b6) | 0.0027<br>ha     |  | Tarmac access paths linking the building entrances with the car park. Sealed surface supporting only sparse, ephemeral vegetation in cracks and edges; functions as developed land. Classified within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric as "Developed land; sealed surface". | Occasional (cracks/edges): annual meadow-grass, moss spp., daisy. |

### 3.2.2 Protected and Priority Species

The assessment below is based on habitat suitability identified during the field survey together with the ecological context established through the proportionate desk study. Given the limited extent of the site, its urban location and the nature of the proposed works, the site generally provides limited opportunities for protected and Priority species.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

#### Bats

A preliminary appraisal of the existing building found it to be of negligible suitability for roosting bats. The building is of relatively modern construction with cavity brick walls, well-maintained rooflines and tightly fitted fascia boards, soffits, windows and doors. No gaps, crevices, lifted roof tiles, open eaves or other features capable of providing bat access or roosting opportunities were identified during the survey.

The proposals comprise the construction of a single-storey extension adjoining the eastern elevation of the existing building. The works will not affect the existing roof structure or any features with potential to support roosting bats.

The existing ornamental hedgerows and landscaped grounds provide limited opportunities for commuting and occasional foraging bats within the wider urban environment. The scheme removes the mapped ornamental hedgerow within the application boundary and provides new native hedgerow and mixed scrub planting, which will restore and improve the limited connectivity as the planting establishes. New external lighting should be directed away from these habitats.

On the basis of the survey findings, the building is considered to have negligible suitability for roosting bats in accordance with current Bat Conservation Trust guidance and no further bat surveys are considered necessary. As a precautionary measure, any new external lighting should be designed to minimise light spill onto the proposed native hedgerow and mixed scrub.

#### Birds

The clipped ornamental hedge and amenity shrubs provide nesting and foraging opportunities for common garden bird species. No active nests were recorded during the survey.

The proposals require the removal of short sections of ornamental hedgerow. Any vegetation clearance should therefore be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive), or following inspection by a suitably competent ecologist to confirm the absence of active nests.

### **Great Crested Newt (GCN) and Other Amphibians**

No ponds or other aquatic habitats occur within the site and the intensively managed grassland provides only limited terrestrial habitat for amphibians. The site is surrounded predominantly by existing buildings, roads and managed landscaping, further reducing its suitability for amphibians. The likelihood of great crested newt occurring within the site is therefore considered to be low and no further survey is recommended.

### **Reptiles**

The site comprises closely managed amenity grassland with little structural diversity and very limited opportunities for basking, shelter or hibernation. No reptiles or signs of reptiles were recorded. The site is therefore considered to have low suitability for reptiles. Precautionary working methods during vegetation clearance are considered sufficient.

### **Hedgehog**

The proposed boundary hedgerows and mixed scrub may provide occasional foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehog. Given the limited extent of suitable habitat and the urban nature of the site, standard precautionary measures during vegetation clearance are considered appropriate.

### **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**

No invasive non-native plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were identified within the application site during the survey.

## 4 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

### 4.1 Baseline Habitat Units

The baseline biodiversity value of the site was calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, with the current calculation reviewed on 15 July 2026. The application site extends to 0.0286 ha (approximately 0.029 ha) and comprises predominantly low-value landscaped habitats associated with an operational doctor's surgery.

The baseline habitats comprise modified grassland and developed land; sealed surface (area habitats), together with non-native and ornamental hedgerow (linear habitat). No Priority Habitats, irreplaceable habitats or watercourses are present within the application boundary.

The site supports a total baseline value of 0.0518 area habitat units, derived from 0.0286 ha of area habitats, and 0.0599 hedgerow units, derived from 59.9 m of ornamental hedgerow. No watercourse units are generated.

The baseline habitat unit calculations are summarised in Tables 2 and 3, with the completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric provided separately and referenced in Appendix 2. The supporting condition assessment is provided in Appendix 5.

**Table 2 Baseline area habitat units.**

| Broad habitat | Habitat type                          | Distinctiveness | Area (ha)     | Baseline units |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| Grassland     | Modified grassland (g4)               | Low             | 0.0259        | 0.0518         |
| Urban         | Developed land; sealed surface (u1b6) | Very Low        | 0.0027        | 0.0000         |
| <b>Total</b>  |                                       |                 | <b>0.0286</b> | <b>0.0518</b>  |

**Table 3 Baseline hedgerow units (linear habitats).**

| Habitat type                                                        | Length (km)   | Distinctiveness / Condition | Baseline units |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (h2b) — north / around grassland | 0.0477        | Very Low / Poor             | 0.0477         |
| Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (h2b) — adjacent to building     | 0.0122        | Very Low / Poor             | 0.0122         |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        | <b>0.0599</b> |                             | <b>0.0599</b>  |

To achieve the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirement, the development must deliver a minimum post-development value of 0.0570 area habitat units and 0.0659 hedgerow units, representing a 10% net gain

over the baseline values. Area habitat units and hedgerow units are assessed independently and cannot be traded between metric modules. Any losses must be addressed in accordance with the metric trading rules.

## 4.2 Post-Development BNG

The proposed development comprises the surgery extension, new and realigned sealed paths, an area of path to be stopped up and grassed over, and new soft landscaping. The current metric assumes the creation of 0.0072 ha of mixed scrub in Moderate condition, 0.0034 ha of modified grassland in Moderate condition, 0.0180 ha of developed land; sealed surface and 20 m of native hedgerow in Moderate condition.

The post-development habitat areas total 0.0286 ha and therefore balance with the baseline application area. All 59.9 m of baseline non-native ornamental hedgerow is recorded as lost and is compensated through the creation of 20 m of native hedgerow of higher distinctiveness. Only habitats within the application red line boundary are included; landscaping shown outside the red line is excluded from the metric.

The post-development calculation delivers 0.0600 area habitat units and 0.0669 hedgerow units. This represents a net change of +0.0082 area habitat units (15.8%) and +0.0070 hedgerow units (11.8%). The statutory 10% requirement is achieved for both modules and the metric trading rules are satisfied.

Although the site is below 0.2 ha, the planning application was submitted before 6 August 2026 and remains subject to the BNG regime applying at submission. Delivery depends on establishing the proposed mixed scrub, modified grassland and native hedgerow to the Moderate target conditions entered in the metric. The net changes (+0.0082 area habitat units and +0.0070 hedgerow units) are below Horsham District Council's 0.5-unit guide for significant on-site BNG and the scheme does not otherwise meet its published significance criteria; a 30-year HMMP is therefore not considered applicable. The calculation reflects the drawings in Appendix 4 and should be updated if the red line, habitat areas, hedgerow length, habitat types or target conditions materially change.

Table 4 Post-development area habitats.

| Broad habitat       | Habitat type                   | Distinctiveness / condition | Area (ha)     | Post-development units |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Heathland and shrub | Mixed scrub                    | Medium / Moderate           | 0.0072        | 0.0482                 |
| Urban               | Developed land; sealed surface | Very Low / N/A              | 0.0180        | 0.0000                 |
| Grassland           | Modified grassland             | Low / Moderate              | 0.0034        | 0.0118                 |
| <b>Total</b>        |                                |                             | <b>0.0286</b> | <b>0.0600</b>          |

Table 5 Post-development hedgerow habitat.

| Habitat type    | Length (km)   | Distinctiveness / condition | Post-development units |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Native hedgerow | 0.0200        | Low / Moderate              | 0.0669                 |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>0.0200</b> |                             | <b>0.0669</b>          |

## 5 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

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### 5.1 Constraints

#### Designated Sites and Priority Habitats

The existing building was assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats and no features capable of supporting roosting bats will be affected. The existing ornamental hedgerow provides limited commuting and foraging value and will be replaced by native hedgerow and mixed scrub planting. No further bat surveys are required. External lighting should use warm-colour LED fittings (preferably  $\leq 2700$  K), directional luminaires and shielding to minimise illumination of the proposed habitats and adjacent vegetation.

#### Bats

The existing ornamental hedgerows and shrubs provide suitable nesting habitat for common breeding birds. Although no active nests were recorded during the survey, their removal could affect nesting birds if undertaken during the breeding season. Vegetation clearance should therefore be undertaken outside the main nesting bird season (March to August inclusive), or following confirmation by a suitably competent ecologist that active nests are absent immediately prior to works.

#### Breeding Birds

The existing ornamental hedgerows and shrubs provide suitable nesting habitat for common breeding birds. Although no active nests were recorded during the survey, vegetation removal associated with the development has the potential to affect nesting birds if undertaken during the breeding season. Vegetation clearance should therefore be undertaken outside the main nesting bird season (March to August inclusive), or following confirmation by a suitably competent ecologist that active nests are absent immediately prior to works.

#### Hedgehog, Amphibians and Reptiles

The application site provides only limited habitat for hedgehog, reptiles and amphibians owing to its intensively managed nature and urban setting. The likelihood of these species occurring within the working area is considered low, and no further surveys are recommended. Standard precautionary working methods during vegetation clearance and construction will reduce the residual risk to negligible levels.

### 5.2 Opportunities

The proposed native hedgerow, mixed scrub and replacement grassland will maintain and enhance the site's local green infrastructure and provide improved habitat connectivity as the planting establishes. Habitat creation relied upon for Biodiversity Net Gain must be located within the application red line and implemented in accordance with the approved landscape and habitat management specifications. Additional landscaping shown outside the red line provides supplementary ecological benefit but is excluded from the metric.

#### Landscape Enhancement

The proposed replacement hedgerow planting and landscaped areas will maintain the site's green infrastructure and provide improved habitat connectivity within the surrounding urban environment. Where practicable, replacement planting should comprise predominantly native woody species or wildlife-friendly ornamental species of known value to pollinating insects and birds.

#### Pollinator-Friendly Planting

Areas of ornamental planting should incorporate nectar-rich herbaceous species and shrubs that provide seasonal resources for pollinating insects throughout the year.

#### Nesting and Roosting Features

The post-development Statutory Biodiversity Metric demonstrates delivery of 15.8% net gain for area habitats and 11.8% for hedgerows. The approved landscape plan and Biodiversity Gain Plan should secure the habitat areas, lengths, target conditions and appropriate establishment and management measures entered in the metric.

## Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposed landscaping should be designed to maximise on-site biodiversity gains through the retention of existing vegetation, replacement hedgerow planting and enhancement of soft landscaped areas. A completed post-development Statutory Biodiversity Metric should demonstrate delivery of the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

## 5.3 Mitigation Hierarchy

### Avoidance

- Confine vegetation removal and ground disturbance to the defined development footprint within the application boundary.
- Protect the adjacent London plane tree root protection area and vegetation outside the working area throughout construction.
- Limit the construction footprint and temporary storage areas to the minimum extent required.

### Minimisation

- Undertake vegetation clearance outside the bird nesting season (March–August inclusive), or following confirmation that active nests are absent.
- Install sensitive external lighting using warm-colour LED luminaires (preferably  $\leq 2700$  K) directed away from the proposed native hedgerow, mixed scrub and adjacent vegetation.
- Employ standard pollution-prevention measures during construction, including appropriate storage of materials and protection of adjacent landscaped areas.

### Compensation

The loss of modified grassland and non-native ornamental hedgerow is compensated through the creation of 0.0072 ha of mixed scrub, 0.0034 ha of modified grassland and 20 m of native hedgerow within the application boundary. These measures satisfy the metric trading rules and deliver more than 10% net gain in both the area habitat and hedgerow modules.

### Enhancement

The development provides opportunities for biodiversity enhancement through:

- replacement native hedgerow planting;
- wildlife-friendly mixed scrub and grassland planting;
- installation of integrated bird and bat boxes where practicable; and
- ongoing management and monitoring of the created habitats to achieve and maintain the target conditions entered in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

## 5.4 Habitat Management and Monitoring

Horsham District Council defines significant on-site BNG as a net change of 0.5 units or more, gains involving high or very high distinctiveness habitat, or, for major development, gains involving medium-distinctiveness habitat. Holbrook is a minor development and delivers only +0.0082 area habitat units and +0.0070 hedgerow units; no high or very high distinctiveness habitat gain is proposed. The on-site gain is therefore not considered significant and a 30-year HMMP is not considered applicable. The created habitats should nevertheless be established and managed to achieve the Moderate target conditions in the metric, with establishment measures secured through the approved landscape proposals and Biodiversity Gain Plan.

## 5.5 Further Survey Recommendations

No further ecological surveys are considered necessary to support the proposed development.

The following measures should be implemented during construction:

- undertake vegetation clearance outside the bird nesting season or following confirmation that active nests are absent;
- employ standard precautionary working methods during vegetation clearance to protect hedgehog and other common fauna;
- implement sensitive lighting to avoid unnecessary illumination of vegetation; and
- should evidence of protected species be discovered during construction, works within the affected area should cease immediately and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist before recommencing.

## Conclusion

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The completed post-development Biodiversity Net Gain assessment delivers 0.0600 area habitat units and 0.0669 hedgerow units, equivalent to gains of approximately 15.8% and 11.8% respectively. The calculation includes only habitats within the application red line boundary and satisfies the metric trading rules. Delivery depends on establishing the proposed mixed scrub, modified grassland and native hedgerow at the Moderate target conditions entered in the metric. The on-site gains are not considered significant under Horsham District Council's published criteria.

The proposed extension can be undertaken without significant ecological effects provided the mitigation measures set out within this report are implemented, including appropriate timing of vegetation clearance, sensitive lighting design and precautionary working methods during construction.

The Biodiversity Net Gain strategy relies on the habitat areas and lengths shown in the completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Only habitats within the application red line boundary are included; landscaping shown outside the red line is supplementary and is not relied upon to meet the statutory requirement. A 30-year HMMP is not considered applicable because the on-site gains are non-significant. The final Biodiversity Gain Plan should secure implementation of the habitat creation and establishment measures required to achieve the target conditions entered in the metric.

Overall, subject to implementation of the recommendations contained within this report, the proposed development is considered acceptable from an ecological perspective.

## References

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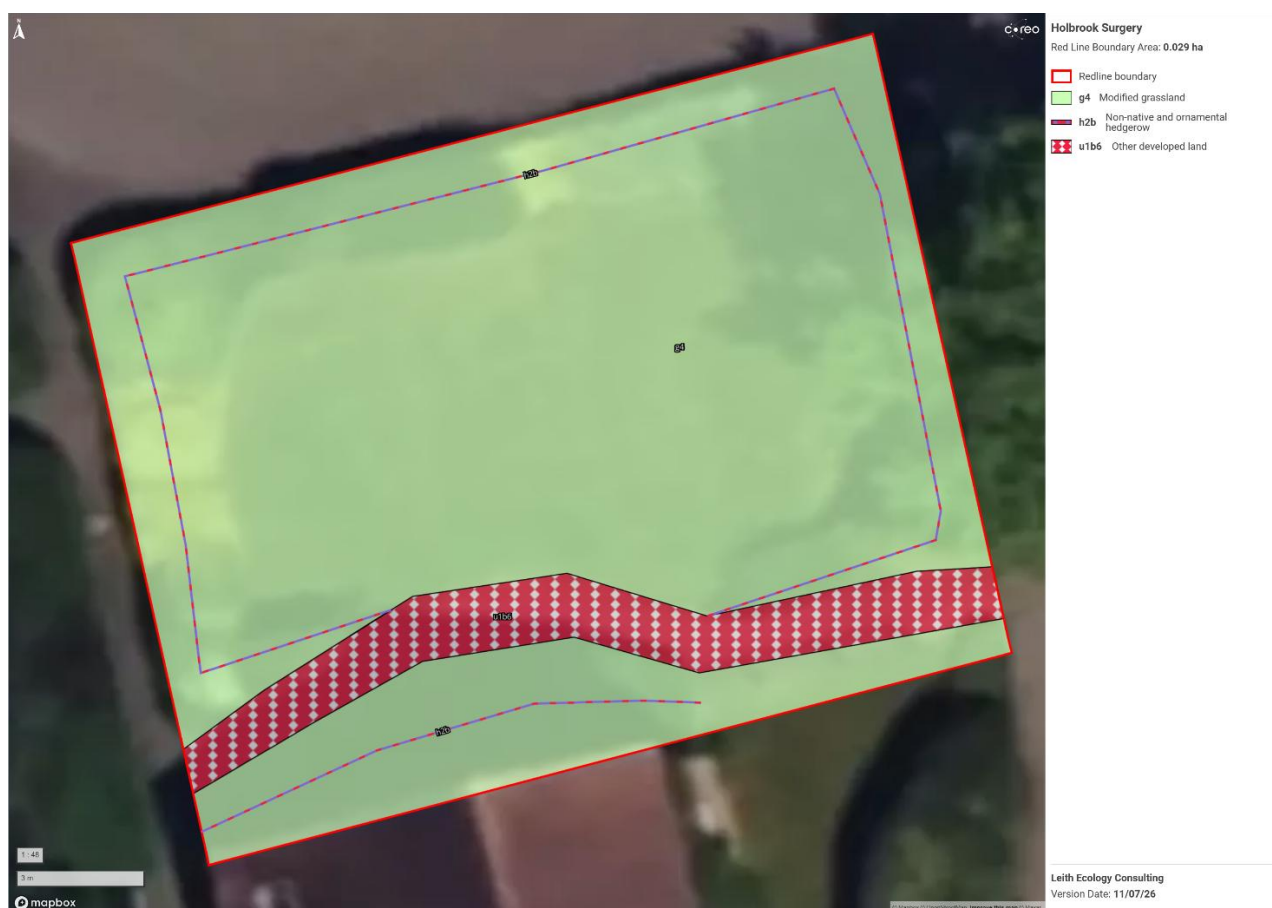
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Defra (2026) Biodiversity Net Gain: Amendments and transitional arrangements published, 14 July 2026.

Horsham District Council (2026) Biodiversity Net Gain: planning guidance, significant on-site BNG criteria and local validation requirements.

## Appendix 1 – Habitat Map – UKHab/BNG

UKHab habitat plan for Holbrook Surgery (Leith Ecology Consulting; version date 11/07/2026). Red line boundary area 0.029 ha; the boundary hedge (h2b) is shown as a linear feature.



## Appendix 2 – Statutory BNG Metric

The completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric (post-development version dated July 2026) accompanies this report and should be read in conjunction with Section 4.

## Appendix 3 – Site Photographs

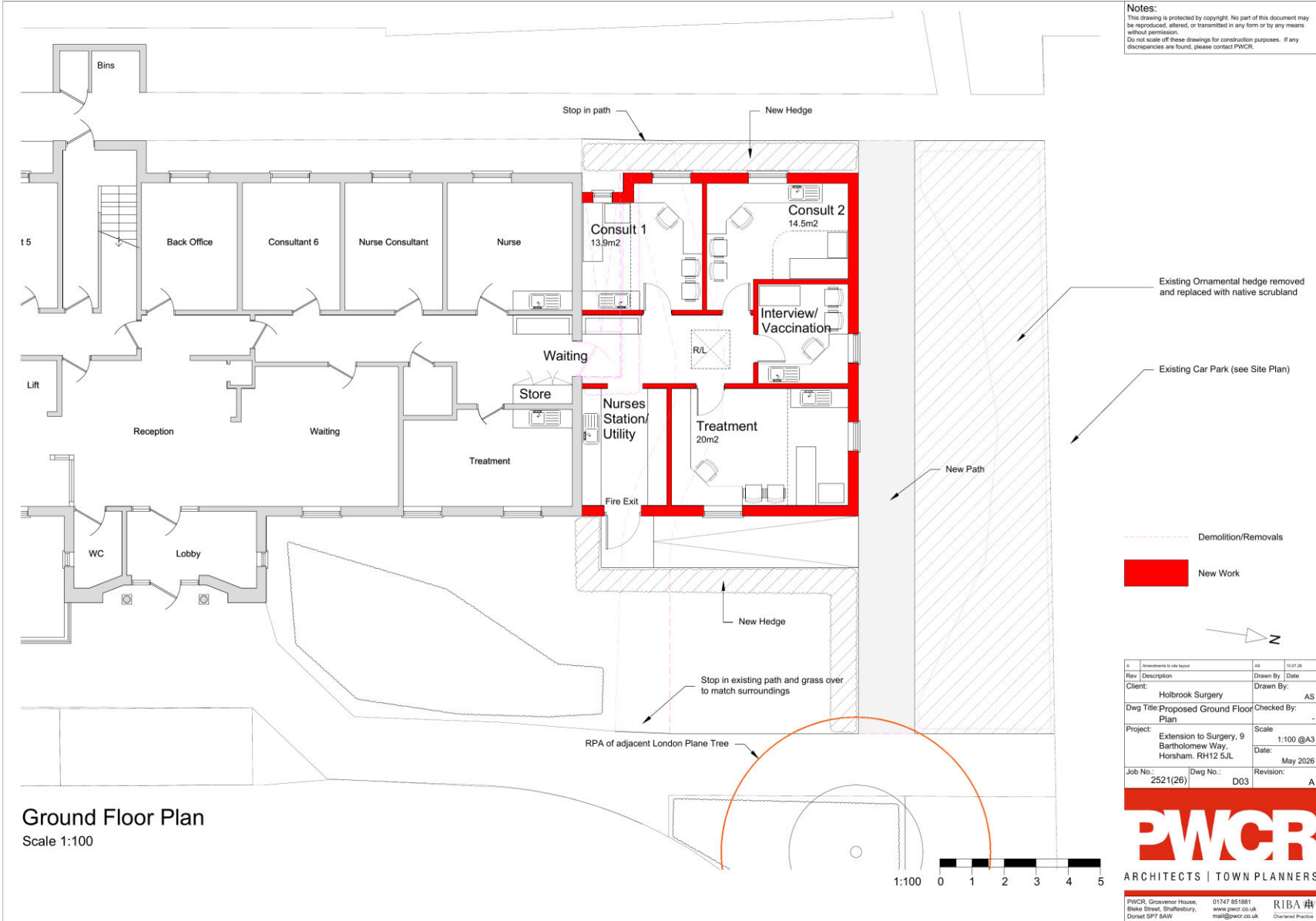
*Representative photographs taken during the survey on 17 June 2026.*



*Site photographs: clipped ornamental hedging and amenity grounds; tarmac access path between hedges; amenity (modified) grassland showing the moss-dominated, species-poor sward.*

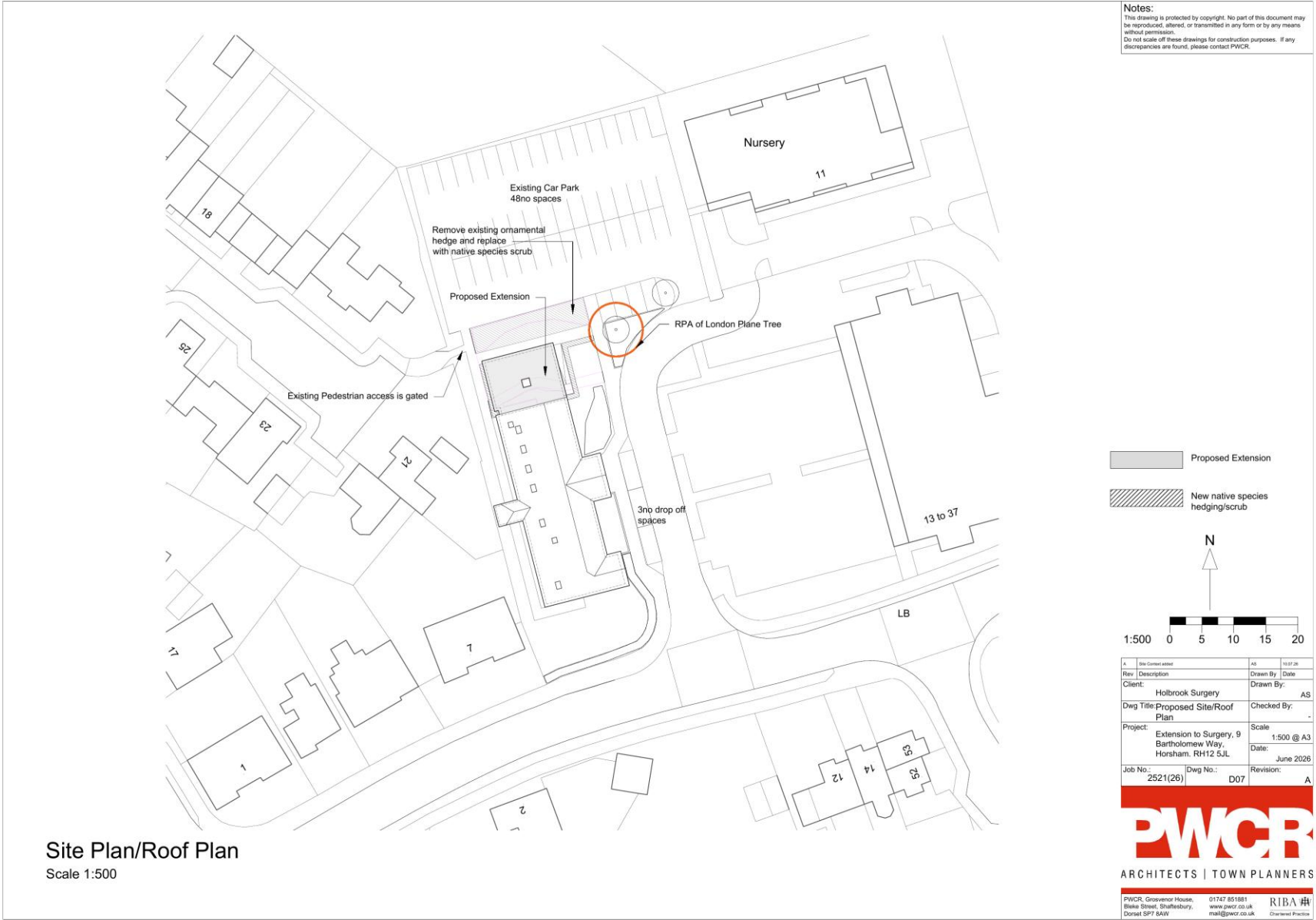
Appendix 4 – Proposed Development Drawings

Drawing 2521(26) D03 Rev A – Proposed Ground Floor Plan. Landscape features shown outside the application red line are excluded from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.



Appendix 4 – Proposed Development Drawings (continued)

Drawing 2521(26) D07 Rev A – Proposed Site/Roof Plan. Landscape features shown outside the application red line are excluded from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.



## Appendix 5 – Habitat Condition Assessment

The completed Statutory Biodiversity Metric condition assessment for the two baseline modified grassland parcels is reproduced below. Non-native and ornamental hedgerow uses the metric default condition and developed land; sealed surface is not condition assessed.

|                 |                                                  |                         |                              |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Site</b>     | Holbrook Surgery, Holbrook, Horsham, West Sussex | <b>Survey date</b>      | 17 June 2026                 |
| <b>Surveyor</b> | RJ                                               | <b>Report reference</b> | HS150726                     |
| <b>Habitat</b>  | Modified grassland (low distinctiveness)         | <b>Baseline area</b>    | 0.0259 ha across two parcels |

### Condition assessment summary

| Habitat            | Parcels | Good | Moderate | Poor | Metric condition |
|--------------------|---------|------|----------|------|------------------|
| Modified grassland | 2       | 0    | 0        | 2    | Poor             |

### Detailed condition assessment

| Criterion                           | Condition criterion                                                                                                                    | Parcel 32165164<br>0.0219 ha | Parcel 32165904<br>0.0040 ha |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A                                   | There are 6–8 vascular plant species per m², including at least two forbs. This is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. | Yes                          | No                           |
| B                                   | Sward height is varied, with at least 20% of the sward below 7 cm and at least 20% above 7 cm.                                         | No                           | No                           |
| C                                   | Scrub accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area.                                                                          | Yes                          | No                           |
| D                                   | Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of the total grassland area.                                                                | No                           | No                           |
| E                                   | Bare ground cover is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas.                                                                    | No                           | No                           |
| F                                   | Bracken cover is less than 20%.                                                                                                        | No                           | No                           |
| G                                   | Invasive non-native plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are absent.               | Yes                          | Yes                          |
| <b>Essential criterion achieved</b> |                                                                                                                                        | Yes                          | No                           |
| <b>Number of criteria passed</b>    |                                                                                                                                        | 3                            | 1                            |
| <b>Condition assessment result</b>  |                                                                                                                                        | Poor                         | Poor                         |

**Assessment note:** The pass/fail results above reproduce the completed project condition assessment workbook. Both baseline modified grassland parcels meet the Statutory Biodiversity Metric definition of Poor condition.