

Towns Barn, Dragons Green Road Shipley, Horsham

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



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This report and survey data remains valid for 12 months from date of issue. The report, conclusions and recommendations are valid for current development plans only. Should these change, the report should be reviewed and, if necessary, further survey work and desk study review undertaken.				

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EHM Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) on 1 and at Towns Barn, Dragons Green Road, Shipley, Horsham, RH13 8GQ. This report provides an assessment of the site, including the current conditions of the habitats present and their potential to support protected and notable species.

The application site comprises two near-rectangular parcels of land connected by a narrow, curved access track (swan neck in form), with a total area of approximately 0.34 hectares. The site currently contains a single timber barn and an associated corral area.

Access to the site is gained from Dragons Green Road, which lies to the east. The site is located to the north of the village of Dragon's Green and to the east of Brooks Green. At present, it forms an isolated rural plot, with the surrounding land predominantly used for cattle grazing.

The wider landscape is characteristically rural, comprising a patchwork of agricultural fields interspersed with pockets of woodland, as well as scattered hamlets and villages. There is a reasonable degree of ecological connectivity in the area, provided by hedgerows, woodland edges, and grassland habitats, although this connectivity is locally interrupted by roads.

Species	Sites potential to support
Bat roosts- buildings.	Negligible
Bat roosts- trees	Negligible
Bat foraging/ commuting areas	Low
Dormice	Negligible
Riparian Mammals	Negligible
Other Mammals	Negligible
Reptiles	Low
Common Amphibians	Negligible
Great Crested Newts	Negligible
Breeding birds	Low
Plants	Negligible
Invertebrates	Negligible

Recommendation	Action
Protection of Reptiles	Carry out initial site clearance of vegetation and light debris by hand then works to progress under a watching brief with an ecologist on call to provide support.
Protection of breeding birds	Carry out vegetation and building clearance outside of bird breeding season or under ecological supervision of an ecologist following a breeding bird survey.
Appropriate lighting for bats	Compile a sensitive lighting plan to avoid illuminating bat foraging and commuting habitat, namely the surrounding woodland, through construction and post construction. This can be a condition of planning.

1 INTRODUCTION

EHM Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at a single cattle barn at Towns Barn, Dragons Green Road, Shipley, Horsham, RH13 8GQ, which is hereafter referred to as the 'site'. This report provides an assessment of the site, including the current conditions of the habitats present and their potential to support protected and notable species.

1.1 Project Outline

At the time of the site visit and report write-up, EHM Ltd understand that the development will involve the creation of a single residential dwelling with associated landscaping and access.

1.2 Site Location and Description

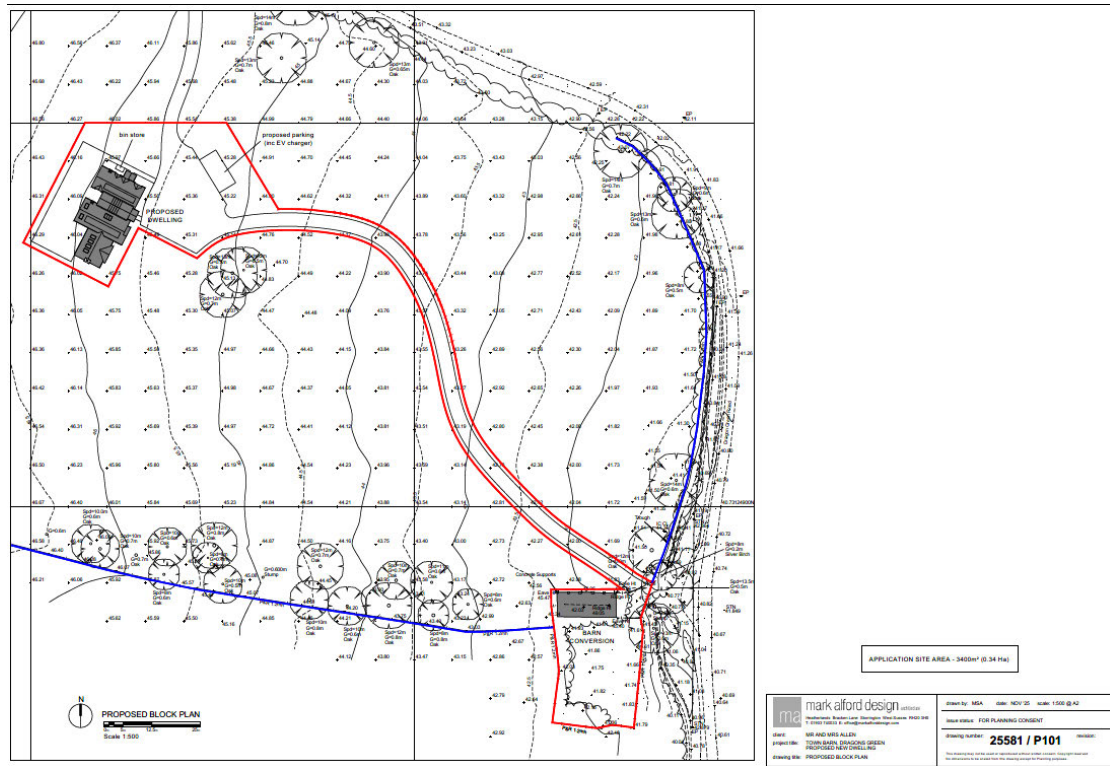
The application site comprises two near-rectangular parcels of land connected by a narrow, curved access track (swan neck in form), with a total area of approximately 0.34 hectares. The site currently contains a single timber barn and an associated corral area.

Access to the site is gained from Dragons Green Road, which lies to the east. The site is located to the north of the village of Dragon's Green and to the east of Brooks Green. At present, it forms an isolated rural plot, with the surrounding land predominantly used for cattle grazing.

The wider landscape is characteristically rural, comprising a patchwork of agricultural fields interspersed with pockets of woodland, as well as scattered hamlets and villages. There is a reasonable degree of ecological connectivity in the area, provided by hedgerows, woodland edges, and grassland habitats, although this connectivity is locally interrupted by roads.

As shown in Figure 1 (proposed block plan), the site is centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference TQ 14095 24955.

Figure 1. Proposed Block Plan (site boundary is red outline)



2 METHODOLOGY & LIMITATIONS

2.1 Scope and Assessment

2.1.1 Zone of Influence

The 'zone of influence' of a project is the area within which ecological features may be impacted by the proposed works. This may often extend beyond the site boundary due to the distance that certain species travel, the nature of the potentially affected habitats and the site's location in relation to important ecological sites.

For this assessment the following zones have been considered:

- 5km surrounding Statutory Conservation Designations relating to bats (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)).
- 1km surrounding other Statutory Conservation Designations and Non-Statutory sites of importance to biodiversity (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)).
- 1km surrounding known records of protected and notable species.
- The site and its immediate surroundings.

2.1.2 Impact Assessment

Impact assessment has been carried out based on the outline proposals provided (detailed in Section 1.2) using the findings of the desk study and field survey.

Ecological features have been scoped in and out as appropriate based on the baseline conditions of the site; i.e. what ecological features the site is likely to support, and as appropriate to the scale of the proposals.

An assessment of the potential project impacts on each ecological receptor (i.e. designated sites, protected and notable habitats and species) is provided, including the magnitude, duration and significance of the anticipated effects to each receptor. An assessment of significance has been undertaken considering the local, national and international value to ecological features as informed by the desk study.

Table 1 below includes details on how the significance has been determined.

Table 1 – General criteria for significance

Significance	Criteria
Major	Change resulting in breaches of legislation or exceeding statutory objectives.
	Likely to impact on sites designated for national or international importance.
	Likely to affect a large-scale area or a large number of species or populations on frequent or permanent basis.
	May result in an irreversible decline or rise.
Moderate	Unlikely to cause a breach of legislation but likely to impact on a site of regional or local importance.
	Likely to affect a small number of species or populations on a permanent basis.
Minor	Likely to impact an area or feature of local interest or importance.
	Likely to have a temporary impact on a small number of species or populations or be a recoverable impact.
Negligible	Indiscernible impact predicted.

Where possible significant ecological effects will be avoided through careful design and application of the mitigation hierarchy:

- **Avoidance**
Seek options that avoid harm to ecological features.
- **Mitigation**
Adverse effects should be avoided or minimised through mitigation measures, either through the design of the project or subsequent measures that can be guaranteed. Mitigation is relevant for negative impacts assessed as being potentially significant (before mitigation) or where required to ensure compliance with legislation.
- **Compensation**
Where there are significant adverse ecological effects despite the mitigation proposed, these should be offset by appropriate compensatory measures. Compensation is relevant for negative impacts assessed as being significant or where required to ensure compliance with legislation.
- **Enhancements**
Seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.

2.2 Desk Study

Biological records from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) were obtained comprising protected and notable species records and Statutory and Non-Statutory Nature Conservation Designations within a 1km radius of the site.

Data search results only give an indication of species presence in a location. The absence of recent records for certain species in an area may be due to low levels of biological recording or the non-submission of records, rather than absence. Many species records are also at low geographical resolution and do not indicate their exact location and often provide little detail about abundance.

Web-based DEFRA resource Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was consulted to identify Statutory Nature Conservation Designations within a 1km radius of the site surveyed, and for Statutory sites designated for bats within a 10km radius of the site. A search for granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) within a 1km radius relating to great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, 2km radius relating to hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* and 5km radius relating to bats was also undertaken.

2.3 Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey

A field survey identifying the habitats, legally protected and notable species and the site's potential for supporting these species was undertaken. The potential for habitats to support legally protected species is important as legal protection of some species extends to the habitats they depend on, as well as the individuals themselves.

The field survey used UK Habitat Classifications (UKHab, 2023) combined with species specific field observation techniques. The UKHab Professional edition was used with a Minimum Mapping Unit (MMU) of 25m² and habitats were classified to level 5 where possible with all secondary codes reported as necessary. Where given, habitat measurements are appropriate and based on satellite/georeferenced maps.

The nature conservation value of ecological features that may be affected by development (ecological receptors) is adapted from the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017).

This report records the habitats, flora and fauna evident on the day of the site visit. It does not record any flora or fauna that may appear at other times of the year, and as such, were not evident at the time of the field survey. The process is not intended to produce a comprehensive list of plants and animals but to evaluate the ecological resources within the site and thus identify potential issues of ecological relevance to the proposed works.

2.4 Personnel

The site survey was undertaken by on 06 August 2025 and 18 March 2026.

Adam Robbins, Ecologist, MCIEEM, Natural England Bat Class Licence CL18 (Level 2) 2016-24143-CLS-CLS, Natural England Great Crested Newt Class Licence CL08 (Level 1) 2015-3839-CLS-CLS.

2.5 Limitations

The contents of this report are based on two site visits and a search of the local records centre and available online resources. Though the survey and interpretations of the data were carried out by a competent assessor there may be things that have been overlooked, missed, or not present at the time of the visit.

3 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

3.1 Designated Sites

3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There are no statutory designated sites within a 1km radius of the site.

A map, provided by SxBRC, of the Statutory Nature Conservation Designations in relation to the site is shown at Appendix E.

3.1.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

There are no non-statutory designated sites within a 1km radius of the site.

A map, provided by SxBRC, of the Non-Statutory Nature Conservation Designations in relation to the site is shown at Appendix E.

3.2 Habitats

The site is approximately 0.34ha in size and comprises 4 UK Habitat Classification types (secondary codes have been added where applicable):

u1b6, 833	- Other developed land, Barn
u1e, 612	- Built linear feature. Fence
g4, 101	- Modified grassland, cattle grazed
g4, 839	- Track

Surrounding the southern parcel of the site is a fifth UK habitat type:

w1f7	- Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland
------	--

Adjacent to the northern parcel and proposed trackway is a sixth habitat type:

g4, 11	- Modified grassland, scattered tree
--------	--------------------------------------

A map of the habitats within the site and associated Target Notes (TN) are provided in Figure 2, Appendix B.

3.2.1 u1b6, 833 - Other developed land, Barn

Within the southern rectangle of the site is a single storey wooden barn with corrugated metal roofing. Comprising a wood frame with slat walls the barn has numerous cracks and openings within the wood and can be clearly assessed on all sides with no restrictions to viewing of both external and internal faces of the building's materials. The floor is bare earth and shows signs of use for housing of livestock.

The barn has a double door on its north face, leading to cattle grazed field and an opening to the south, the size of double doors, leading to a fenced corral area. See Appendix B Figure 2 Target Note TN1.

3.2.2 u1e, 612 - Built linear feature. Fence

To the south of the barn, running close to the boundary of the site, is a post and rail fence which forms a corral most likely for cattle.

3.2.3 g4, 101 - Modified grassland, cattle grazed

Within the corral area, the northern site parcel and the proposed trackway is modified grassland that shows evidence of periodic heavy disturbance.

The vegetation is typical of disturbed and semi-improved grassland, with species present including (but not limited to): Birds foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, Common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, Common nettle *Urtica dioica*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, Perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Prickly sow thistle *Sonchus asper*, Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, Timothy *Phleum pratense*, White clover *Trifolium repens*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, Creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Teasle *Dipsacus fullonum*, round fruit rush *Juncus compressus*, Common fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, Bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara*, Fat hen *Chenopodium album*, Black medic *Medicago lupulina*, Field speedwell *Veronica agrestis*, Ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and Slender false brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*.

3.2.4 g4, 839 - Track

Leading to the barn within the southern parcel, access from Dragons Green Road is provided by a narrow trackway comprising a mix of tarmac, compacted gravel, and stone. Sections closest to the road remain largely free of vegetation, while areas nearer to the barn have become partially overgrown with colonising species similar to those found within the adjacent cattle-grazed grassland.

3.2.5 u1, w1f7 - Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Surrounding the southern land parcel is a mixed deciduous woodland area with some large established oaks *Quercus sp.* along with Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Sloe *Prunus spinosa*.

3.2.6 g4,11 - Modified grassland, scattered tree

To the south of the northern land and proposed trackway are three oak trees in fair condition (TN3). They contain a few bat and bird suitable features although no activity or signs of activity were visible on the days of survey.

3.9 Otters

No records of otter *Lutra lutra* were recorded within 1km of the site.

The site does not contain suitable habitat for otters, and no evidence of otters was identified during the survey undertaken.

3.10 Water Voles

No records of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* were identified within a 1km radius of the site.

The site does not contain suitable habitat for water vole, and no evidence of water vole was identified during the survey undertaken.

3.11 Bats

A total of 38 records of bats were identified within a 1km radius of the site. Species recorded include Natterer *Myotis nattereri*, Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, Dauenton's *Myotis daubentonii* and Whiskered *Myotis mystacinus*.

No further records of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats were identified within a 5km radius.

The barn is of simple construction with open slat walls and negligible roosting opportunities; therefore it is assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats.

Whilst the oak trees off site could provide suitable potential for roosting bats no sign of presence could be found.

3.12 Other Notable Mammals

No records of other notable mammals were recorded within 1km of the site.

3.13 Invasive Species

A total of 2 records of invasive species were identified within a 1km radius of the site. Species recorded comprised Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* and beetle *Harmonia axyridis*

No invasive species were found on site.

4 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS, MITIGATION AND COMPENSATION MEASURES

The mitigation and compensation recommendations provided are based on the principles of established best practice guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the local planning authority and other relevant organisations. Where applicable, the cumulative effects potentially arising from other developments are discussed in this section.

4.1 *Designated Sites*

Site proposal is not considered likely to impact any designated sites.

4.2 *Habitats*

Site proposal is not considered likely to impact habitats of significant ecological value.

4.3 *Flora and Invertebrates*

The site is considered likely to support common and widespread flora and invertebrate species. There are no anticipated impacts to these species.

4.4 *Amphibians (including Great Crested Newt)*

Proposal are not anticipated to impact great crested newts or other common and widespread amphibian species.

4.5 *Reptiles*

Providing suitable and precautionary working practices are used during the development of the site the proposal is not anticipated to impact common reptiles.

4.5.1 *Potential Impacts*

Construction activities have the potential to harm common reptiles, if present on site.

4.5.2 *Mitigation and Compensation Measures*

The following mitigation measures will be incorporated to avoid, mitigate and compensate the identified impacts to ecologically important habitats:

- Clear all vegetation and other light debris by hand and allow any reptiles uncovered to move from the working area under their own motion.
- Undertake works under a watching brief with an ecologist on call to provide advice should reptiles be uncovered.

4.11 Water Voles

Development proposal is not anticipated to impact upon water voles.

4.12 Other Notable Mammals

Development proposal is not anticipated to impact upon other notable mammals.

4.13 Invasive Species

Development proposal is not anticipated to impact or support spread of Invasive species.

4.14 Biodiversity Enhancement / Net Gain

The proposed development is considered to fall below the threshold for mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements under the Environment Act 2021, as it constitutes a small-scale development with a limited red line boundary.

Notwithstanding this, the development provides opportunities to deliver proportionate biodiversity enhancements through sensitive landscaping and habitat retention, in line with national and local planning policy.

5 CONCLUSIONS TABLE

Table 2. Summary of ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures for the site: Towns Barn.

Ecological Feature	Potential Effect	Significance in the absence of mitigation	Mitigation/Compensation and Enhancement	Residual Effect
Statutory Designated Sites	None.	-	-	Negligible.
Non-Statutory Designated Sites	None.	-	-	Negligible.
Habitats	None.	-	-	Negligible.
Flora and Invertebrates	None.	-	-	Negligible.
Amphibians (including GCN)	None.	-	-	Negligible.
Reptiles	Harm during construction.	Low	Initial site clearance of vegetation and light debris by hand then works to progress under a watching brief with an ecologist on call to provide support.	Negligible.
Birds	Harm during construction.	Low	Works to commence outside of the birdnesting season or ecologist to undertake survey works.	Negligible.
██████	██████	█	█	██████
Bats	Disturbance during construction and operation.	Low	Sensitive lighting scheme to avoid illuminating bat foraging and commuting habitat such as adjacent woodland and trees.	Negligible.
Hazel Dormice	None.	-	-	Negligible.
Otters	None.	-	-	Negligible.

Ecological Feature	Potential Effect	Significance in the absence of mitigation	Mitigation/Compensation and Enhancement	Residual Effect
Water Voles	None.	-	-	Negligible.
Other Notable Mammals	None.	-	-	Negligible.
Invasive Species	None.	-	-	Negligible.

6 REFERENCES

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7 SITE PHOTOS



Plate 1. Barn (external)



Plate 2. Barn (internal)



Plate 3. Access leading to Barn



Plate 4. Corral fencing and gate



Plate 5. Corral fencing, corral and barn



Plate 6. Corral area



Plate 7. Main field



Plate 8. Scattered trees

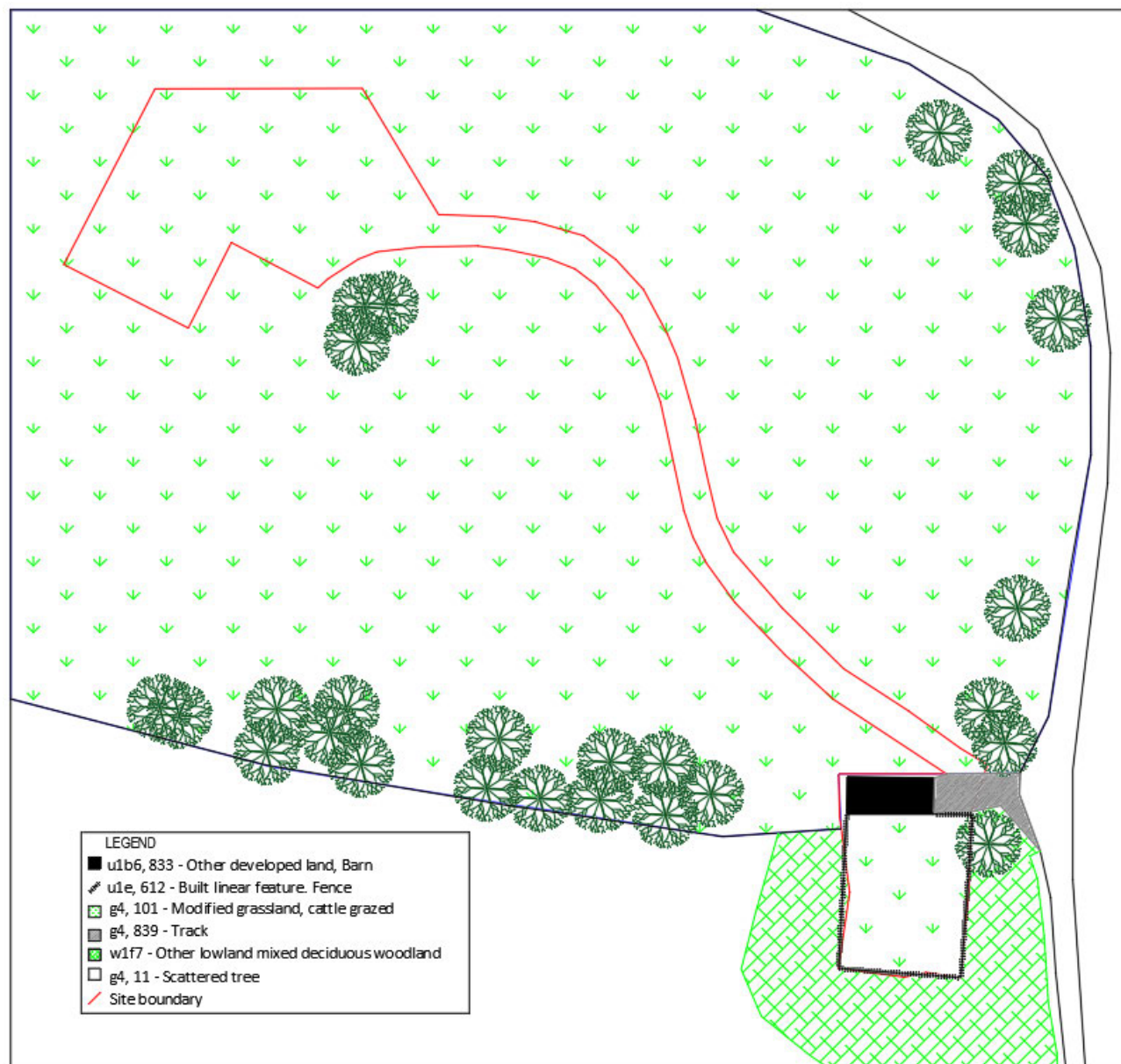
APPENDIX A - RELEVANT WILDLIFE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

Ecological Feature	Legislation / Policy
Great crested newts	Great crested newts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This makes it an offence to kill or injure great crested newts or damage or destroy a place of shelter or protection. Deliberate or reckless disturbance of great crested newts which could affect the ability of any significant group of animals to survive or breed may also result in an offence.
Reptiles	Reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill or injure reptiles.
Birds	Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to take, damage or destroy the nests of wild birds whilst being built or in use. Bird species also listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) receive additional protection including protection from intentional or reckless disturbance when they are nesting or rearing dependant young.
Badgers	Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under this legislation, it is an offence to kill or injure a badger, damage or destroy a sett or disturb a badger whilst it occupies a sett.
Bats	British bat species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This makes it an offence to kill or injure bats or damage or destroy a place of shelter or protection. Deliberate or reckless disturbance of bats which could affect the ability of any significant group of animals to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young may also result in an offence.
Hazel Dormice	Dormice are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This makes it an offence to kill or injure dormice or damage or destroy a place of shelter or protection used by this species. Deliberate or reckless disturbance of dormice which could affect the ability of any significant group of animals to survive or breed may also result in an offence.

Ecological Feature	Legislation / Policy
Otters	Otters are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This makes it an offence to kill or injure otters or damage or destroy a place of shelter or protection. Deliberate or reckless disturbance of otters which could affect the ability of animals to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young may also result in an offence.
Water voles	Water voles are protected on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a water vole, intentionally or recklessly disturb, destroy or obstruct a water voles place of shelter or protection.
Invasive non-native species	Invasive, non-native species are those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to plant or cause the spread of these species in the wild.
UK Priority Species/Habitats	UK Priority Species/Habitats are those that have been identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action.
Biodiversity Net Gain	The Environment Act 2021 and the National Planning Policy Framework require all developments to show a net gain for biodiversity.

APPENDIX B – FIGURES

Figure B1 – Habitat Plan



Not to scale. North is page up.

Red outline is site boundary

Figure B2 – Target Note Plan



Not to scale. North is page up

Red outline is site boundary

APPENDIX D - SURVEY DETAILS AND RESULTS DATA

Table D1. Details of the Personnel, Dates and Types of Survey Undertaken at the Site

SURVEY	DATE	PERSONNEL
Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey & Daytime Bat Walkover Survey (DBW)	06 August 2025 18 March 2026	Adam Robbins (Ecologist) MCIEEM, Natural England Bat Class Licence CL18 (Level 2) 2016-24143-CLS-CLS, Natural England Great Crested Newt Class Licence CL08 (Level 1) 2015-3839-CLS-CLS.

APPENDIX E – RECORD CENTRE MAPS

Map 1: Statutory site designations

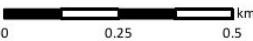
Town Barn, Horsham + 1km radius
SxBRC/25/522 - 24/09/2025



- Key to Map:
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Search area | Local Nature Reserve |
| Special Area of Conservation | National Park |
| Special Protection Area | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| Ramsar | Country Park |
| Site of Special Scientific Interest | Marine Conservation Zone |
| National Nature Reserve | |

Statutory designated site boundaries supplied by Natural England. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

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Map 2: Non-statutory site designations

Town Barn, Horsham + 1km radius
SxBRC/25/522 - 24/09/2025



Key to Map:

- Search area
- Local Wildlife Site
- Local Geological Site
- Designated Road Verge
- Marine SNC

Local Wildlife Site boundaries maintained by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) on behalf of Sussex Local Wildlife Sites Initiative. Notable Road Verge data provided by local authorities. Local Geological Site data created by SxBRC in partnership with Sussex Geodiversity Group.

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