

Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)



Warren Crest Farm

On behalf of Tony Nasser

June 2025

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Registered in England and Wales No. 9318075.



Project Code	Title	Date of Issue
EBD04442	Warren Crest Farm EcIA	12 June 2025

	Name	Date
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1 Executive Summary

Report purpose	This report identifies the potential ecological impacts, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures for the proposals at Warren Crest Farm, Wick Hill Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 3PY (central OS grid reference SU 8008 6457), which include the demolition and replacement of buildings.
Date and methods of survey	A baseline ecological survey of the site was conducted in August 2022 which included a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, extended UKHab habitat survey, Preliminary Roost Assessment and daytime bat walkover, and building and tree assessments for roosting bats. Bat emergence surveys were conducted in May-June 2023 (Ecology by Design, 2024). An updated PEA and PRA survey was conducted in December 2024, along with aerial endoscopic inspections for bats in trees in June 2025.
Key findings and potential impacts	The site, situated in Finchampstead, Wokingham, is approximately 0.66ha in extent and includes buildings, hardstanding, modified grassland, orchard, introduced shrub, vegetable garden, sparsely vegetated urban land, hedgerows, line of trees, and a ditch. The site has a baseline biodiversity value of 5.77 habitat units and 0.83 hedgerow units. There are no ponds on site and the nearest one is ~370m away. The site is within 4.3km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Residential development within the site may increase recreational pressure within the SPA. In the absence of mitigation, the proposals are likely to result in net loss of biodiversity within the site. Protected and priority species present or potentially present include: • Opportunities for nesting birds within buildings, trees and hedgerows which may result in destruction of nests during site clearance; • Opportunities for reptiles, badger, hedgehog and other wild mammals to make use of the site, with the proposals potentially affecting their use of the landscape; and • Negligible opportunities for other protected or priority species.
Measures to avoid and/or reduce impacts and deliver biodiversity enhancements	• A tariff per dwelling will be paid to mitigate for potential impacts on the SPA. • Trees and hedgerows to be retained must be adequately protected using root protection zones. • Cherry laurel must be controlled, either through controlled burning on site or by removal by an invasive species specialist. • A Non-Licensed Method Statement is recommended to address the risks to bats in Tree T36. • A Precautionary Working Methods Statement is recommended to address the risks to nesting birds, reptiles, badger, hedgehog, and other wild mammals during site clearance. • Two woodcrete / woodstone bat boxes and two woodcrete / woodstone bird boxes will be integrated within the new buildings. • A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment must be conducted using the Statutory Metric to detail how a net gain in biodiversity will be achieved.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Ecology by Design was commissioned by Anderson Orr Architects, on behalf of Tony Nasser, to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of buildings and land at Warren Crest Farm, Wick Hill Lane, Finchampstead, RG40 3PY (central OS grid reference SU 8008 6457). This included a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Daytime Bat Walkover, Preliminary Roost Assessment, Ground Level Tree Assessment, and badger walkover survey.
- 2.1.2 Ecology by Design undertook an initial Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site in 2022 (Ecology by Design, 2022). Bat emergence surveys were conducted of B1 and B2 in 2023, in which no emergences were recorded from B2, and one potential pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus* sp.) emergence was recorded from B1 (Ecology by Design, 2024). The results of these surveys are included in this report.
- 2.1.3 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) was conducted by Venners Arboriculture in December 2023. For consistency between reports, all tree numbers in this report match the identification system set in the AIA (Venners Arboriculture, 2023).

2.2 Site Description

- 2.2.1 The c. 0.66ha site comprises buildings, hardstanding, modified grassland, vegetable garden, intensive orchard, introduced shrub, sparsely vegetated urban land, line of trees, hedgerows, and individual trees. The site lies approximately 3km south of Wokingham, Berkshire. In the wider landscape, the site is bordered by agricultural land to the east, west, and south, with residential properties to the north and scattered parcels of woodland throughout the area, particularly to the east.

2.3 Proposed Works

- 2.3.1 The proposals for the site include the demolition of buildings, including replacing the main house and the replacement of two barn buildings with cottages (planning application ID: 251233).

2.4 Aims of Report

- 2.4.1 This report is an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) which presents the approach and findings of the assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development works in accordance with industry standard guidance (CIEEM, 2024; BSI Standards Limited, 2013). It has been produced following a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and further surveys for roosting

bats. The development does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), therefore EclA has been included for clarity on the title page.

- 2.4.2 This report will be submitted to Wokingham Borough Council to inform the planning application.

2.5 Personnel

- 2.5.1 This project is led by Assistant Ecologist Jess Botha BSc (Hons), MSc who has over one year of experience in ecological consultancy, with support provided by Ecologist Sofia Sanchez Piccone MSc, ACIEEM who has five years of experience in ecological consultancy. Both are experienced in conducting habitat and protected species assessments. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal survey was completed by Jess and Sofia, who holds a Natural England Level 1 class licence for surveying bats (licence number 2024-11923-CL17-BAT). The 2024 findings in this report were written by Jess and Sofia, and the 2023 findings by Anna Kogioni BSc (Hons), MSc.
- 2.5.2 Project supervision and review of the report was provided by Associate Director Laura Grant BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM, who has been an ecological consultant for 17 years.

3 Methods

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 A desk study was carried out in 2022 to identify:

- Internationally protected sites within the potential zone of influence of the site (minimum of 7km);
- Nationally protected sites within 5km of the site; and
- Non-statutory designated sites and records of protected or priority species within 2km of the site (central OS national grid reference SU 8008 6457).

3.1.2 A 2km search radius for species and non-statutory designated sites is justified due to the small size of the site and small-scale development works being undertaken. It is thought highly unlikely that species or non-statutory sites outside this search zone would be affected by the project. A larger search radius is applied for internationally and nationally designated sites as these sites are protected to a higher level and can often be more sensitive to disturbance. These search distances are also based on industry standard guidance.

3.1.3 Sources consulted include:

- Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) (returned 16th August 2022);
- MAGIC (magic.defra.gov.uk) (last accessed 7th January 2025); and
- Local Planning Policy documents and the local planning portal.

3.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

3.2.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was conducted in 2022 and updated on 17th December 2024, using standard techniques and methodologies (CIEEM, 2017) and the nomenclature of Stace (2019). The results of the 2024 survey are detailed in this report; please refer to the previous report for the 2022 findings.

3.2.2 The PEA includes a survey of the habitats utilising the standard UK Habitat Classification system (UKHab Ltd, 2023). Weather conditions during the survey were cool (7°C), calm (wind 1 on Beaufort scale¹) and overcast (cloud 8/8²).

3.2.3 Opportunities for or evidence of protected and priority species were also identified. Where potential impacts on features of ecological interest are identified, the PEA is extended to

¹ The Beaufort scale is an empirical measure from 0-12 which relates wind speed to observed conditions. 0- Calm, 1- Light air, 2- Light breeze, 3- Gentle breeze, 4- Moderate breeze, 5- Fresh breeze etc.

² Cloud cover is measured using the system called oktas. The visible sky is divided into eight and cloud presence is determined within each section. A value of one to eight is then assigned (1 okta being cloudless to 8 oktas being total cloud cover).

include an assessment of impact. Any further surveys required are outlined and recommendations are made for appropriate avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures.

3.3 Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

3.3.1 Wherever potential impacts as a result of the proposals were identified, an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) was undertaken. The function of the EclA was to identify, quantify and evaluate the potential effects of the proposed development on designated sites, notable/protected habitats and species. The EclA was informed by the desk study, PEA and survey work described in Sections 3.4 – 3.5 below and undertaken with reference to best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2024) whereby:

- the scope of the EclA was informed by a desk study and initial site survey;
- importance of ecological features within the site was established and ecological importance identified with reference to known criteria and geographic context where appropriate and available;
- assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development was made with reference to their significance and geographic context; and
- avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures were identified and recommended as appropriate.

3.4 Bats

Daytime Bat Walkover Survey

3.4.1 A daytime bat walkover (DBW) survey was conducted by Jess Botha and Sofia Sanchez Piccone (Natural England level 1 survey class licence number: 2024-11923-CI17-BAT) whilst conducting the PEA survey.

3.4.2 During the DBW, the surveyors noted any habitats suitable for roosting, foraging or commuting bats within or adjacent to the site. This includes recording structures, habitat features and trees which could be suitable for bats.

Table 3.1: *Categorisation of Potential Suitability of Sites for Bats (Collins, 2023)*

Suitability	Description of Potential Flightpaths and Foraging Habitats
None	No suitable features for flightpaths and foraging.
Negligible	No obvious flightpath or foraging features but cannot be discounted.

Suitability	Description of Potential Flightpaths and Foraging Habitats
Low	Habitats with limited connectivity suitable for use by low numbers of bats.
Moderate	High habitat connectivity including flightpath or foraging habitats features.
High	Well-connected habitats high quality habitats for foraging which is likely to be in regular use.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.4.3 An external and internal Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the existing buildings on the site was conducted in 2022, updated in 2023, and updated again during the PEA survey in 2024.
- 3.4.4 The assessment was based on the guidance in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023) and government guidance (Gov.uk, 2015a).
- 3.4.5 The surveyors used a high-power torch and binoculars to inspect features of interest. All external areas of the buildings were inspected as well as internal areas, including all lofts.
- 3.4.6 Evidence searched for included the presence of free hanging bats and bats within gaps and crevices, bat droppings, urine stains, rub marks, scratch marks and feeding remains.

Table 3.2: *Categorisation of Potential Suitability of Structures for Bats (Collins, 2023)*

Suitability	Description of potential roosting habitats in structures
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats but cannot be discounted.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., maternity or classic hibernation site).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and suitable surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (i.e., maternity or classic hibernation site – roost type only, irrespective of species conservation status).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have potential to support high conservation status roosts (i.e., maternity or classic hibernation site).

Bat Emergence Surveys

3.4.7 In 2023, dusk emergence surveys were conducted of buildings on site which had suitability for roosting bats to confirm presence or likely absence of roosting bats, and where present, enable roost characterisation. The surveys undertaken within the site are detailed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Emergence bat survey details

Date and type of survey	Start and end times; time of sunset	Equipment used	Weather	Surveyors
09/05/23 Dusk Building B1 and B2	20:23-22:08; 21:22	Batlogger M, Batlogger M2	Start: 15°C, Cloud 8/8, Wind 1 End: 13°C, Cloud 8/8, Wind 1 Rain at start of survey, light drizzle throughout the rest survey	Anna Kogioni Rob Williams Alys Cervetto Lyvy Hall Kat Hale Raven Herald
30/05/23 Dusk Building B1 and B2	20:53-22:38; 21:08	Batlogger M, Batlogger M2 Infrared Camera, Thermal scope Whisker Infrared camera x2	Start: 16°C, Cloud 8/8, Wind 3 End: 12°C, Cloud 8/8, Wind 4	Anna Kogioni Jan Piet Stuursma ¹ Craig Brakes ² Ross Heller Evan Lohse Raven Herald
16/08/23 Dusk Building B1	21:08-22:53; 21:23	Batlogger M, Infrared Camera x2	Start: 19°C, Cloud 6/8, Wind 1 End: 18°C, Cloud 1/8, Wind 3	Jo Sykes ³ Beth England Tony Wells

Class licence registration numbers:

¹2019-44236-CLS-CLS (level 2)

²2021-54429-CLS-CLS (level 2)

³2021-10092-CL17-BAT (level 1)

3.4.8 The surveys were based on the guidance of the time, the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016). Bat detectors utilized included Elekon Batlogger M and Elekon Batlogger M2 detectors to record any bats emerging from or re-entering the buildings.

3.4.9 Surveyors were located on each aspect of the buildings, focused on features identified during the PRA as being suitable for roosting bats. During the surveys emergence and/or re-entry points were mapped, species were identified (where possible) and flightlines were noted.

3.4.10 The emergence surveys commenced approximately 15 minutes before sunset and lasted until 1.5 hours after sunset. Thermal imaging cameras were used on the dusk surveys to assist the surveyors.

- 3.4.11 A TrackIR pro 19mm thermal imaging monoscope was used to record bat activity. The monoscope records at 1280x960 HD display and 50Hz frame rate. A Canon XA40 infrared camera was used alongside a ZL-ZT T8X15-140 pair of InfraRed lamps which is a powerful infrared illuminator. The cameras record at 3840x2160 (150 Mbps) and 25p video frame rate. A Nightfox Whisker infrared camera was used to record bat activity. The camera records at digital sensor resolution of 1920x1080 with an IR wavelength of 850nm.
- 3.4.12 All night-vision equipment was used as survey aids apart from one surveyor in the last bat survey. The footage for the specific survey was reviewed in the office by re-watching the footage at normal speed. The footage for all other instances was only reviewed if and when the surveyor had indicated that a bat might have emerged.

Ground Level Tree Assessment

- 3.4.13 A ground level tree assessment was conducted by Sofia on 12th May 2025. Weather conditions were wet from overnight rain, warm (20°C), mostly cloudy (cloud 6/8) and calm (wind 2 on Beaufort scale).
- 3.4.14 The surveyor used a high-power torch (LEDLenser Lamp) and 1.8m telescopic ladder to identify and inspect features of interest. Where possible, each aspect of the tree was surveyed to identify features with potential to support roosting bats such as woodpecker holes, rot holes, splits, cracks, flaking bark and/or ivy cover. Where any evidence of use by bats such as droppings, staining or scratches around such features were present, this was noted.
- 3.4.15 Collins (2023) categorises the suitability of trees for roosting bats as follows:
- None = Either no Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) in the tree or highly unlikely to be any;
 - FAR = Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree; or
 - PRF = A tree with at least one PRF.
- 3.4.16 Where possible, each PRF was assessed using the following criteria;
- PRF-I = PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats; or
 - PRF-M = PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Aerial Endoscopic Inspections of Trees for Bats

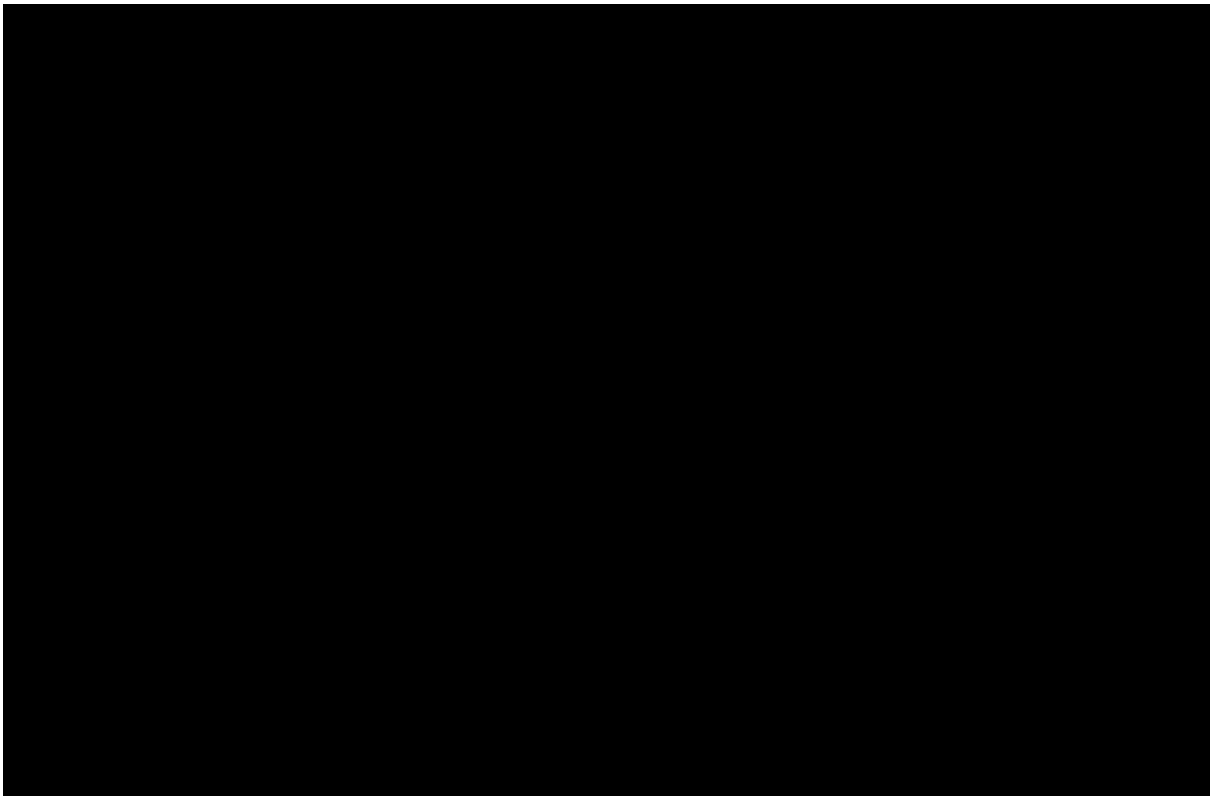
- 3.4.17 Three trees within the site (T27, T33 and T36) were subject to a detailed aerial inspection on 6th June 2025 by qualified tree climber and licensed bat (NE licence 2015-11941-CLS-CLS) and barn owl (CL-29/00501) ecologist Steve Allen with an assistant trained in aerial rescue.

Weather conditions at the time of survey were dry and sunny, with a gentle breeze and temperatures around 15°C.

- 3.4.18 The surveyors used the rope-and-harness technique to conduct inspections of the PRFs identified during the GLTA and any other features which were present using binoculars, video endoscope, torch and camera. Notes on the characteristics of the features were made and any evidence of roosting bats was recorded. The features were then classified into PRF-I or PRF-M per industry guidelines (Collins, 2023).

3.5 Badger

3.5.1



3.6 Limitations/Constraints

- 3.6.1 The wildlife and wider ecological interest of a site can change. The report presented here is a statement of the findings of surveys carried out in December 2024. For the purpose of this report the results of site visits are discussed in the present tense. Any appreciable delay in making reference to this report or changes to the proposed development boundary may necessitate a re-survey.
- 3.6.2 The species information gained from local record centres is largely derived from data submitted from members of the public and volunteers. For this reason, it should be understood that the desk study may not provide an exhaustive list of all protected species that could occur in the local area.

- 3.6.3 It is recognised that TVERC records were last requested in 2022 and that more recent records may therefore not be accounted for, however, it is not considered likely that they would materially change the assessment of potential impacts or recommendations of this report therefore an update is not considered proportionate.
- 3.6.4 The last emergence survey of B1 in 2023 was carried out by 3 surveyors and two night vision aids, one of which was used instead of a surveyor. The footage was then analysed/reviewed in the office. Several night vision aids (including infra-red cameras and thermal scopes) were used on the last two surveys to assist the surveyors; therefore, it is considered that surveys were valid and accurate.
- 3.6.5 Weather conditions as detailed in Sections 3.2.2, 3.4.7, 3.4.11 and Table 3.3 were suitable to conduct the surveys.

4 Results and Interpretation

4.1 Designated Sites

- 4.1.1 The desk study identified one internationally designated site for nature conservation within 7km of the site, nine nationally designated sites for nature conservation within 5km and fourteen non-statutory sites within 2km of the site.

Table 4.1: *Internationally classified / designated sites within 7km of the site*

Name & international reference	Distance & direction from site	Size and interest
Thames Basin Heaths (SPA ³) – UK9012141	4.3km E and S	1,283.85 ha; Lowland heath supporting important populations of Dartford warbler (<i>Sylvia undata</i>), nightjar (<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>) and woodlark (<i>Lullula arborea</i>) which are vulnerable ground nesting birds.

- 4.1.2 Only those sites of potential relevance are detailed in Table 4.1, with the remainder scoped out of further assessment due to their size, location, habitat types, lack of connectivity and/or absence of shared features of interest, therefore no potential impacts as a result of the proposals are anticipated. The LPA and Local Records Centre has access to the full list of sites. A full list can be provided upon request.

4.2 Habitats

- 4.2.1 At the time of the survey (December 2024), the habitats described in Table 4.2 were recorded on site. Photographs are included in Appendix 1 and a habitat map is included in Figure 1, Appendix 2.

Table 4.2: *Habitat types identified during the UKHab survey*

Habitat type & UKHab code	Parcel or Feature Reference and Description (Secondary codes are shown in square brackets where applicable)
Modified grassland Code g4	PR1 is located in the east of the site, extending to the areas north and south of the cattle pens. It is mown short and contains ~5 species per square metre. It has dominant perennial rye-grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>) and frequent white clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), as well as occasional creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>) and cock's-foot grass (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>). Rare instances of germander speedwell (<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>), ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>), bindweed (<i>Convolvulus</i> sp.), sweet vernal grass (<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>), herb Robert (<i>Geranium robertianum</i>), vetch (<i>Vicia</i> sp.), green alkanet (<i>Pentaglottis</i>

³ Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), which came into force in April 1979. They are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species.

	<i>sempervirens</i>), rough meadow-grass (<i>Poa trivialis</i>), dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.), daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>), common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), Yorkshire fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>) and false oat-grass (<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>) along the fence line where the area is not mown are also present. PR2 has abundant perennial rye-grass and daisy, with frequent Yorkshire fog and creeping buttercup, and occasional herb Robert. Rarely encountered in the sward are germander speedwell, bird's-foot trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>), forget-me-not (<i>Myosotis</i> sp.) and thistle (<i>Cirsium</i> sp.). It is managed in the same manner as PR1 and contains ~8 species per square metre. PR3 has notable amounts of moss, indicating dampness. It is managed in the same manner as PR1 and contains ~5 species per square metre. Abundant Yorkshire fog and white clover are present in the sward, along with frequent creeping buttercup and smooth meadow-grass (<i>Poa pratensis</i>). Occasional perennial rye-grass and rare dandelion, hawk's-beard (<i>Crepis</i> sp.) and vetch is present. PR4 is regularly mown and contains ~1.5 species per square metre. It is dominated by Yorkshire fog, with occasional sweet vernal grass.
Intensive orchard Code c1e	PR5 consists of 15 fruit trees spaced so the canopies are <2m from each other. These are dwarf trees 2-5m in height with strong evidence of intensive historical pruning. The ground flora is modified grassland PR3.
Horticulture Code c1f	There is a vegetable garden on PR5, dominated by marjoram (<i>Origanum majorana</i>) with lavender (<i>Lavendula</i> sp.), rosemary (<i>Salvia rosmarinus</i>), fennel (<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>) and gooseberry (<i>Ribes uva-crispa</i>) present.
Sparsely vegetated urban land Code u1f	Shade-tolerant short perennial vegetation comprised of ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>) is beneath heavy tree cover.
Buildings Code u1b5	B1 is the house (to be demolished and replaced with a dwelling). B2 is the garage (to be demolished). B3 is a barn (to be demolished). B4 and B5 are cattle pens (to be demolished and replaced with cottages). Full descriptions of the buildings and the results of the Preliminary Roost Assessment are detailed in Section 4.3 below.
Introduced shrub Code u(847)	Ornamental and non-native species are along the northern and southern elevations of the house B1. Species also include rose (<i>Rosa</i> sp.) and foxglove (<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>).
Hardstanding Code u1b6	The access road on site is in good condition.
Line of trees associated with ditch Code g4(33, 50)	L1 is unmanaged and ~16m tall, consists of oak (<i>Quercus</i> sp.), holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>) and non-native trees and is associated with a ditch, dry at the time of survey in 2024 and in 2025.

Native hedgerow Code h2a	H1 consists largely of hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and holly, with instances of blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>), bramble, oak, self-set ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), self-set non-native maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.), and laurel (<i>Prunus</i> sp.) observed. It is ~2.5m in height and regularly trimmed along its edges.
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow Code h2b	H2 consists of unmanaged cypress (family Cupressaceae) ~2-3m in height. Scattered within are hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) and other non-native species.
Trees	There are 34 scattered trees throughout the site. The suitability of trees for roosting bats is detailed in Section 4.3.

Adjacent habitats

- 4.2.2 There are parcels of deciduous woodland adjacent to the site in the north and east and connected to the site via hedgerow H1 in the north.
- 4.2.3 There is a single pond within 500m of the site, located ~370m to the east (Figure 2, Appendix 2).

Conclusion

- 4.2.4 The hardstanding, buildings, modified grasslands PR1-3 and line of trees L2 on site offer negligible value, comprising a limited assemblage of species which are common within a local and national context (Appendix 3). The modified grassland PR4 and the orchard PR5 have limited ecological importance but nevertheless does contribute to the biodiversity value of the site. The mature trees, hedgerow H1 and line of trees L1 are of a higher ecological value and are of importance within a local context.

4.3 Species

Bats

Desk Study

- 4.3.1 There have been 636 records of at least twelve bat species recorded within 2km of the site including barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). Of these 636 records, 105 records relate to bat roosts. Ten of the roost records are within the boundary of the site and include soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle, and long-eared species. However, the records have a low resolution of 1km square. The most recent of these records is from 2017.

- 4.3.2 35 European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) for bats have been returned within 2km, with the closest for the destruction of a brown long-eared and common pipistrelle resting place in 2015, approximately 0.3km west of the site.

Previous Surveys

- 4.3.3 There is one residential property, a garage, two large barns and a livestock pen area within the site boundary. These buildings were assessed for their ability to support roosting bats.
- 4.3.4 **Building B1 - Farmhouse and extension** – This is a red brick farmhouse property with white soffit boxes, pitched clay tile roof with two chimneys and lead flashing. All roof tiles and bricks are in good condition with no missing mortar except one lifted brick near to the chimney. The last row of clay tiles has plastic plugs however some were missing in several sections of the roof. There are numerous holes in the soffit boxes that create suitable features. The building has two loft spaces. The main house loft was assessed via the entry hatch due to health and safety restraints as the attic is un-boarded. Several bat droppings were identified around the loft hatch during the initial PRA. No droppings were present during the 2023 update. A bird's nest was also identified within the loft. The second loft, above the extension portion of the property, is a walk-in loft with plastic lining and a timber frame. It has a circular window letting in lots of light there are also two other areas of light ingress. The loft contains a moderate amount of cobwebs with many mouse droppings, but no bat droppings. This building had **high suitability for roosting bats**.
- 4.3.5 **Building B2 - Garage** – This building is red brick, has a timber frame, plastic lined roof with a high ceiling (5-6m). There is mouse droppings, wasps' and birds' nests but no evidence of bats. There is damage to the soffit box in the corner of the building creating a feature suitable for roosting bats. This building had **moderate suitability for roosting bats**.
- 4.3.6 **Building B3 - Barn** – This barn is open-fronted with a steel frame, corrugated iron and breezeblock walls, with corrugated asbestos-type material sloped roof. It has no evidence of bats or bat features but there was evidence of nesting birds. This building had **negligible suitability for roosting bats**.
- 4.3.7 **Building B5 - Barn** – This barn is partially open with an 8m tall ceiling, concrete frame, concrete, breeze blocks and asbestos like material walls. There were several gaps at base of the asbestos-like material panelling which were deemed too large for use by bats. This building had **negligible suitability for roosting bats**.
- 4.3.8 **Building B4 - Pens** – Series of small pens with open fronts, timber frames, asbestos-like material with panel roofs and plastic skylights. Evidence of nesting birds is present, and the

metal barge boards are not flush with the walls forming gaps. These gaps are too large and heavily cobwebbed giving them **negligible suitability for roosting bats**.

4.3.9 One common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) possibly emerged from the ridge or upper part of the roof (southwest elevation) at 21:43 (55 minutes after sunset) during the survey on 9th May 2023. No other bats emerged from the buildings. Common and soprano pipistrelles were briefly recorded commuting and foraging over the site. One noctule was also heard during the survey. The possible bat emergence was not recorded by a camera.

4.3.10 No bats emerged from the buildings during the survey on 30th May 2023. Similarly to the previous survey common and soprano pipistrelles and brown long-eared bats were briefly recorded commuting and foraging over the site were briefly recorded commuting and foraging over the site. One noctule and one *Myotis* bat were also heard during the survey.

4.3.11 No bats emerged from the building during the survey on 20th June 2023. Similarly to the first survey low levels of activity were heard including a few foraging/commuting common, soprano pipistrelles. Noctules were also heard during the survey.

Daytime Bat Walkover

4.3.12 Habitats with suitability for foraging or commuting bats within or adjacent to the site include:

- Orchard PR5 and neighbouring gardens
- Lines of trees L1 and L2 and hedgerow H1
- Woodland belts and woodland edges adjacent to site

4.3.13 Habitats with suitability for roosting bats are discussed within the Preliminary Roost Assessment section below.

4.3.14 Overall, the site is identified as being of moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

4.3.15 There are five buildings within the site, all of which were subject to external and internal building inspections. The findings of the PRA are detailed in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: *Suitability of buildings for roosting bats and any of evidence of bats found*

Building Reference	Description	Assessment
B1 	B1 is the house on site, which is currently uninhabited and is proposed to be demolished and replaced. Externally, the brick work is in good condition, and the soffits are also in good condition apart from two sections of rotten wood on the northeast and southeast corners of the	Moderate numbers of potential opportunities, however the 2024 PRA found no evidence of any changes in bat use since the 2023 surveys. Thus, the 2023 survey findings are considered

	house. The windows and front door are wooden and in good condition; the back door is PVC but all are in good condition with no gaps around them. The roof is pitched, with tiles in good condition. The mortar and lead flashing around the chimney are also in good condition. There is one lifted tile behind the chimney. On the conservatory extension, there is some lifted lead flashing. Internally, loft void 1 (LV1) is accessible via ladder from the first floor, is 6m wide x 7m long x 3m high to ridge. It has timber beams with queen's post tresses. There is a covered water tank, the climate inside the loft is stable with no draught. There is some light ingress at one point in the eaves. No bat signs were found within this loft. In LV2, accessible from the ground level of the first floor, there were also no bat signs found.	valid and no further surveys are recommended.
B2 	B2 is a garage, also due to be demolished as part of the proposals. This building is made of brick, which is good condition. There is some rotten wood in the soffit above the garage door but is otherwise in good condition. There are two windows which are wood and metal but are flush with no gaps. There is a metal garage door and a wooden back door but neither have gaps for entry around them. Internally there is no loft void, it is open to the pitch. It is currently used for storage. It is lined with bitumen felt which is torn in one place, with the tiles being visible through the tear. No bat signs were seen inside the garage.	Low potential due to external features, however the 2024 PRA found no evidence of any changes in bat use since the 2023 surveys. Thus, the 2023 survey findings are considered valid and no further surveys are recommended.
B3 	B3 is an open-fronted barn used for storage. The walls are made of sheet metal and breezeblocks, and the roof is made of sloping sheet metal. There are multiple wasp nests in the internal section, but no bat signs.	Negligible
B4 	B4 comprises open disused cattle sheds made of concrete bricks with a steel frame supporting a corrugated asbestos roof with skylights. It is due to be demolished as part of the proposals.	Negligible
B5 	B5 is open disused cattle pens similar in construction to B4 and due to be demolished as part of the proposals.	Negligible

4.3.16 Three bat surveys were carried out at B1 in 2023, two of which included thermal imaging equipment. The pipistrelle bat in question possibly emerged 55 minutes after sunset when it was already quite dark and the surveyor's visibility was limited. In addition, the area from which the bat possibly emerged from was later examined during daytime, and there was no obvious

feature (e.g., lifted tile) where the bat could have come out of. No roosts were recorded in the update surveys of 2024, including around the area of suspected emergence; therefore, roosting bats are considered likely absent.

Ground Level Tree Assessment

4.3.17 The bat roosting suitability of onsite trees affected by the proposals is detailed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Suitability of affected trees within and/or adjacent to the site for roosting bats

Tree ID	Location, Description and PRFs (None / PRF-I suitable for individual or very small numbers of bats / PRF-M suitable for multiple bats)	Overall Suitability
T27	T27 is a multi-stemmed cherry tree ~40cm DBH. Wisteria (<i>Wisteria</i> sp.) is growing in the canopy, obscuring any PRFs present.	FAR
T28	T28 is a cherry ~25cm DBH. This tree is intact, with no features seen anywhere on this tree. The deadwood present is restricted to twigs <3cm wide at the end of branches.	NONE
T29	T29 is a multi-stemmed apple (<i>Malus domestica</i>) tree ~40cm DBH. This tree is intact, with no features seen anywhere on this tree. The deadwood present is restricted to twigs <3cm wide at the end of branches.	NONE
T30	T30 is a multi-stemmed apple tree ~40cm DBH. This tree is intact, with no features seen anywhere on this tree. The deadwood present is restricted to twigs <3cm wide at the end of branches.	NONE
T32	T32 is a mulberry (<i>Morus nigra</i>) tree with a DBH of ~ 40cm. The aerial deadwood present is restricted to intact pruning wounds; no cavities nor splits are present. No features were seen anywhere in this tree.	NONE
T33	T33 is a group of 5 cherry (<i>Prunus</i> sp.) trees, which are all ~25cm DBH. Two of these (the easternmost trees) have ivy-covered trunks, restricting the ability to assess for PRFs. The other three trees are intact with no features.	FAR
T34	T34 is a non-native maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.) tree, measuring ~20cm DBH. This tree is intact, with no features seen anywhere on this tree.	NONE
T35	T34 is a non-native maple (<i>Acer</i> sp.) tree, measuring ~20cm DBH. This tree is intact, with no features seen anywhere on this tree.	NONE
T36	T36 is a large tulip tree (<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>) measuring ~65 cm DBH. There is a large blind ~20cm hole ~1.5m high in the trunk that is not suitable for bats. Assessment of the following PRFs could not be inspected fully from the ground due to the associated heights: • Peeling bark on the western aspect of the northern branch ~4m high. • Split in the an eastern branch ~5m high. • Cavity on the southern aspect of an eastern branch ~5m high. • Cavity on the southern aspect of a southern branch ~6m high.	FAR

Aerial Endoscopic Inspections of Trees for Bats

4.3.18 The results of the aerial inspections of the three trees requiring further assessment for bats (as per Table 4.4) are detailed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Potential roost features aerial inspection in May

Tree No.	Aerial Inspection Results	Bat Roosting Potential	Bat Evidence
T27	There are a few small decay wounds on the lower section of T27; these were all very shallow with no suitable cavities. The covering of wisteria does contain overlapping stems which could provide refuge for bats; however, this is considered unlikely due to congestion of branches/foilage.	Negligible	None
T33	T33 had very little in the way of suitable features. One dead branch did have a split; however, this was too small to be suitable. Ivy covering was very light.	Negligible	None
T36	T36 has two large wounds on the main stem. Lower wound at ~1.5m has three small cavities within it: the upper cavity of which was the most suitable, but still only PRF-I. Dead section in centre of tree did contain vertical fissures, but these were quite narrow. Superficial wounds on limb and branches were all negligible.	PRF-I	None

Badger

4.3.19

4.3.20

Other Protected, Priority or Invasive Species

- 4.3.21 The results of the PEA and desk study are presented together in Table 4.6 below. The species / species groups present or potentially present are presented in order of relevance to this development. Relevant legislation and policy are referred to as appropriate and further details are provided in Section 6.
- 4.3.22 There are no watercourses within the site or within 500m of the site therefore species associated with such habitats such as white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), fish and aquatic invertebrates will not be affected by the proposals. As such, they are not discussed further within this report.

Table 4.6: *Presence of or potential for protected / notable / invasive species within the site and local area*

Species	Protection or Status *	Presence/potential at the site
Birds	W&CA 1981 Sch1 / Sch5	10,076 records of 106 bird species were returned by the desk study, comprising a mix of species typical of urban, arable, wetland and woodland habitats. A large proportion of the records pertain to wetland habitats (Moor Green Lakes), which are not present on or near site. There are opportunities for foraging and nesting birds within the site. Nesting opportunities included buildings, trees, shrubs, and hedgerows. Adverse impacts possible, further consideration required.
Reptiles	W&CA 1981 Sch5	334 reptile records comprising grass snake (<i>Natrix helvetica</i>), common lizard (<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>), and slow-worm (<i>Anguis fragilis</i>), adder (<i>Vipera berus</i>), and smooth snake (<i>Coronella austriaca</i>) were returned by the desk study. There are areas of suitable habitats on site for reptiles, such as rough grassland PR4, however this is small in extent and unlikely to support basking, breeding or resting opportunities. There are more suitable habitats within the surrounding landscape of the farm, with potential for resting, foraging, or commuting reptiles. Some potential adverse impacts possible, further consideration required.
Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	SPI	22 records of hedgehog were returned by the desk study. There are habitats on site such as in orchard PR5 which is suitable for hedgehog. There is therefore potential for this species to use the site for foraging, commuting or resting. Some potential adverse impacts possible, further consideration required.
Brown hare (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>)	SPI	No records of the species were returned by the desk study. There are no suitable habitats for brown hare on the site, and there was no evidence of this species found during the site visit. No adverse impacts likely.
Great crested newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>)	EPS. SPI. W&CA 1981 Sch5	Three records for this species were returned for within 2km of the site, the closest of which was 1.7km from the site, of two individuals recorded in 2012. No European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) were returned for GCN within 2km of the site. Together with the fact that there are no ponds either on site or within 250m of the site, impacts upon GCN are considered to be unlikely. No adverse impacts likely.
Common toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>)	SPI	29 records of the species were returned by the desk study. Lack of ponds within the site and within 250m of the site make the area unsuitable for toads. No adverse impacts likely.

Dormouse (<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>)	EPS. SPI. W&CA 1981 Sch5	No records of the species were returned by the desk study. The site contains minimal suitable habitat for dormice to nest or forage, and connectivity within the landscape is poor, therefore they are considered likely absent. No adverse impacts likely.
Invertebrates	SPIs.	189 records of 38 protected invertebrate species were returned by the desk study. 89 of these records are for stag beetles (<i>Lucanus cervus</i>), a Schedule 5 species. There are opportunities for common invertebrates on the site. No adverse impacts likely.
Protected plants	W&CA 1981 Sch8	67 records of 17 protected plant species were returned by the desk study. The common and widespread habitats present within the site are largely unsuitable for protected plant species and therefore it is unlikely that they will be present. No adverse impacts likely.
Invasive species	W&CA 1981 Sch9; IAS Sch4	17 records of two invasive plant species were returned by the desk study, including rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>), and buddleia (<i>Buddleja davidii</i>). No records of invasive faunal species were returned by the desk study. No Schedule 9 species were found during the PEA survey. Cherry laurel was identified on site. Though not listed in Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981, care to avoid the spread of this non-native species and highly invasive into the wild is highly recommended. No adverse impacts likely.

* Where:

EPS = European Protected Species under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

SPI = Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006

W&CA 1981 = Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

IAS = The Invasive Alien Species Regulation (Regulation (EU) 1143/2014)

Sch1 = Schedule 1 Birds which are Protected by Special Penalties (W&CA 1981)

Sch4 = Schedule 4 of the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019

Sch5 = Schedule 5 Animals which are Protected (W&CA 1981)

Sch8 = Schedule 8 Plants which are Protected (W&CA 1981)

Sch9 = Schedule 9 Animals and Plants to which Section 14 Applies (W&CA 1981)

4.4 Conclusion

4.4.1 The site has the potential to support nesting birds within the buildings, trees and hedgerow.

4.4.2 The site also has limited potential to support roosting bats within tree T36, where any possible roost is considered to be of low conservation significance. There is potential for bat foraging within the gardens and nearby woodland and commuting along the hedgerows and lines of trees.

- 4.4.3 Reptiles, badger, hedgehog, and other wild mammals could make use of the site, particularly the areas of rougher grassland and garden.
- 4.4.4 The geographic context of the site's species importance is considered to be local due to the species that could move through the site offering intrinsic value (Appendix 4). Regardless, some species may have implications to development of the site as a result of legislative protection or planning policy.

5 Potential Impacts and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section presents the potential impacts and subsequent recommendations for the proposed development at the site.

Adoption of the Mitigation Hierarchy

5.1.2 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (see Section 6) and British Standard 42020:2013 'Code of Practice for Planning and Development' (BSI Standards Limited, 2013), the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' has been adopted at the site with regards to the potential ecological impacts of the proposals. The mitigation hierarchy outlines a stepwise process as follows:

- **Avoidance** – as a first option, adverse impacts should be avoided through good design, such as retaining and safeguarding important ecological features wherever practicable;
- **Mitigation** – where unavoidable, adverse impacts should be reduced as much as possible, such as reducing land-take of important habitats;
- **Compensation** – where residual effects remain, compensation should be secured to offset adverse impacts, such as through compensatory habitats creation; and
- **Enhancement** – opportunities for net gains in biodiversity should be explored and included wherever appropriate.

5.2 Designated Sites

5.2.1 Natural England defines Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) around SSSI's, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites and categories of development for local authorities to determine if they need to consult Natural England in regard to potential impacts upon them.

5.2.2 The site is within 4.3km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Natural England states, *"This development site is within the zone of influence (Zoi) for recreational pressure impacts to one or more European Sites (habitats sites). Within this Zoi, proposals for any net increase in residential units will have a likely significant effect on the qualifying features of the European Site(s) (habitats site(s)) through increased recreational pressure when considered either alone or in combination with other plans and projects."*

5.2.3 As such, Natural England advises that it is stated that, *"these measures should be formally checked and confirmed by your authority, as the competent authority, via an appropriate assessment in view of the Natural England Access to Evidence - Conservation Objectives for European Sites and in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017"*

(as amended). Providing the appropriate assessment concludes that the measures can be secured, it is likely that Natural England will be satisfied that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the European Site(s) (habitats site(s)) in relation to recreational disturbance."

- 5.2.4 The development is within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Consequently, as the proposals will result in an increase in residential units (from one to three dwellings), mitigation will need to be delivered to offset the potential for recreational impacts as a result of the proposals. This is likely to take the form of paying a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) tariffs (please see: <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/non-development-plan/biodiversity-and-thames-basin-heath-spa/samm-and-sang-tariffs>). These payments will ensure alternative sites are delivered for recreational use to avoid cumulative impacts on the bird features of interest within the SPA.

5.3 Habitats

Potential Impacts

- 5.3.1 The proposals will result in the loss of buildings B1-B5, sparsely vegetated urban land and trees T27-T30 and T32-T36; and the partial loss of the intensive orchard PR5 and vegetable garden, modified grasslands PR1 and PR3, and non-native hedgerow H2. There will be temporary impacts to modified grassland PR4 as the soakaways will be dug underground, but this area is expected to be restored to its current condition within 2 years.
- 5.3.2 In line with the mitigation hierarchy, impacts upon habitats are minimised as much as possible, particularly those of higher ecological value, such as hedgerows and mature trees. The ditch associated with L1 will also be protected from run-off during site works.

Recommendation R1: Safeguarding Trees and Hedgerows

- 5.3.3 Retained trees and hedgerows within site will be protected during the construction phase in line with standard arboriculturist best practice (BS5837:2012), or as otherwise directed by a suitably qualified arboriculturist to safeguard the root protection areas. These root protection areas must be strictly enforced to prevent further damage to the trees on site.

Recommendation R2: Native Planting

- 5.3.4 Included in the proposals wherever appropriate, biodiversity gain should be maximised, for instance through:
- the usage of Emorsgate Flowering Lawn Mixture EL1 or similar in place of traditional monoculture turfs to create species-rich lawns that can cope with frequent mowing;

- native hedges that include at least three woody species, such as holly, hawthorn, guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and dog-rose (*Rosa canina*).

5.3.5 New planting to support biodiversity may comprise a mixture of native and formal landscaping species that simultaneously provide resources to local wildlife and remain appropriate to amenity or residential settings. Examples appropriate to formal and garden settings include the usage of native species such as dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and ornamental varieties of known value to wildlife such as plants for pollinators, for example lavender 'Gros Bleu'.

Recommendation R3: Removal of Non-Native Invasive Species

5.3.6 Non-native plant species, such as the cherry laurel identified within H1, are present on site. Although it is not listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and therefore its removal is not a legal requirement, it is recommended to be removed as this non-native species can be invasive and detrimental to native woodlands should it spread.

5.4 Bats

5.4.1 Tree T36 provides opportunities for roosting bats, a pre-works inspection is therefore required prior to felling.

5.4.2 Increased levels of artificial light can cause disturbance to bats. Though several bat species can take advantage of artificial lighting systems for foraging, feeding off the insects they attract, other species avoid them as foraging within an illuminated area increases the risk of predation by nocturnal birds of prey or even domestic cats. If lighting is intensive and widespread, particularly lighting from lamps, which emit UV light (such as mercury vapour); it can deter some bats from utilising the site and in some instances can act as a barrier across commuting lines. Research has also shown that certain types of artificial lighting have been proven to disturb the emergence patterns of bats when they are placed within the vicinity of entrances to a bat roost.

5.4.3 Enhancements for local populations for bats are also recommended as part of the proposals, to provide a continuation of roosting opportunities for bats.

Recommendation R4: Non-Licensed Method Statement for Bats

5.4.4 An endoscope inspection will be conducted of T36 by a level 2 bat ecologist prior to felling. In the event roosting bats are present a licence will be sought to enable it to be lawfully felled.

Recommendation R5: Artificial Lighting

5.4.5 Any lighting for the development (if required) will need to be designed sensitively in accordance with industry standard guidance (BCT & ILP, 2023) and the following principles will need to be adopted:

- Maintaining dark corridors along bat commuting/foraging features, namely the orchard, the retained boundary trees and hedgerows, the woodland belts and edges adjacent to site, and neighbouring gardens.
- Where lighting is required, ensuring:
 - All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used;
 - LED luminaires should be used where possible due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability;
 - A warm white light source (<2700 Kelvin) should be adopted to reduce blue light component;
 - Light sources should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats;
 - Internal luminaires can be recessed (as opposed to using a pendant fitting) where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill;
 - Waymarking inground markers (low output with cowls or similar to minimise upward light spill) to delineate path edges;
 - Only luminaires with a negligible or zero Upward Light Ratio, and with good optical control, should be considered;
 - Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt;
 - Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a timer as possible as the risk assessment will allow. For most general residential purposes, a 1- or 2-minute timer is likely to be appropriate;
 - If applicable, the use of a Central Management System with additional web-enabled devices to light on demand;
 - The use of bollard or low-level downward-directional luminaires is strongly discouraged. This is due to a considerable range of issues, such as unacceptable glare, poor illumination efficiency, unacceptable upward light output, increased upward light scatter from surfaces and poor facial recognition which makes them unsuitable for

most sites. Therefore, they should only be considered in specific cases where the lighting professional and project manager are able to resolve these issues; and,

- Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

Recommendation R6: Bat Boxes

- 5.4.6 It is recommended that two woodstone/woodcrete bat boxes are integrated into the new western dwelling as part of the proposed development (see Appendix 5 for example specifications). Boxes should be installed at >3m height on a southern or western aspect, >1m from any opening doors/windows to prevent predation, and have clear flightline away from artificial light sources.
- 5.4.7 A suitably qualified ecologist must direct and/or approve the installation of bat boxes to ensure their suitable placement; this can be achieved by:
- signing off on detailed design plans showing inclusion within architectural drawings;
 - providing detailed instruction and signing off on evidence of installation such as photos; or
 - attending site to direct installation via affixture to buildings.

5.5 Other Protected or Priority Species

- 5.5.1 Site clearance and construction works could result in the killing / injury of nesting birds, wild mammals and reptiles which could make use of the site. This would be considered an offence as these species are all are protected from killing and injury (and disturbance in the case of badger in setts), as well as damage and destruction of active nests and setts (see Section 6).

Recommendation R7: Precautionary Working Method Statement

- 5.5.2 A Precautionary Working Methods Statement (PWMS) is recommended to demonstrate engagement with the ecological mitigation hierarchy and implement appropriate measures to avoid, reduce, minimise and compensate the impacts of the proposals, along with enhancement post development and best practice measures.
- 5.5.3 The PWMS will include a pre-start briefing for all personnel working on the site, regulate the phasing and timing of the works for each species, determine which works are to proceed under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW), and

prescribe habitat suitability reduction works, exclusionary methods and best practice measures to avoid attracting wildlife onto the site.

5.5.4 The following measures should be adopted to safeguard wild animals should they enter the site during construction works, and to discourage wild animals from entering the site. This can be achieved by implementing the following standard mitigation measures:

- works to suitable nesting habitat/features should be scheduled to avoid the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). Should such works take place during March-August inclusive, they must be immediately preceded by a check for any active nests by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests identified during works (regardless of time of year) would need to be protected and left with a suitable buffer (to be defined by the ecologist) until the nest is no longer active;
- any dismantling of existing brash or log piles is to be done by hand outside of hibernation season (November-March) to avoid harm to vulnerable animals;
- the creation of temporary brash or log piles within the site should be avoided as these may be adopted by wildlife for shelter;
- any newly discovered mammal entrances within the site should be safeguarded and left *in situ* until reported to a suitably qualified ecologist, who will advise on appropriate steps if needed for works to resume;
- pipes should be capped off overnight to prevent animals entering and becoming trapped;
- trenches or pits left overnight will be provided with a means of escape for wildlife should any enter such as a collapsed edge or a flat roughened stable plank (no steeper than 45°) acting as a ramp to the surface;
- all trenches and pits will be inspected each morning to ensure no wildlife has become trapped overnight. Should a badger become trapped in a trench it will likely dig itself into the side of the trench. Should a trapped badger be encountered, a suitably qualified ecologist will be contacted immediately for further advice;
- the prolonged storage of uncontained and uncovered topsoil in piles on site will be carefully considered and possibly fenced-off if needed as these are readily adopted by burrowing animals such as foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) for dens;
- chemicals will be contained in such a way that wild animals cannot access or knock them over;
- fires should be avoided altogether within the site; and
- loose litter and food will not be left in accessible areas of the site overnight.

Recommendation R8: Bird Boxes

- 5.5.5 It is recommended that inclusion of two woodstone/woodcrete bird boxes are integrated into the new western dwelling as part of the proposed development (see Appendix 5 for example specifications). Boxes should be installed at >3m height on a northern or eastern aspect, >1m from any opening doors/windows to prevent predation, and have clear flightlines. Specified boxes should target local notable species for which presence was confirmed on site or records of which were returned within the local area.
- 5.5.6 A suitably qualified ecologist must direct and/or approve the installation of bird boxes to ensure their suitable placement; this can be achieved by:
- signing off on detailed design plans showing inclusion within architectural drawings;
 - providing detailed instruction and signing off on evidence of installation such as photos; or
 - attending site to direct installation via affixture to buildings.

5.6 Biodiversity Statement

- 5.6.1 It has been identified that the proposed development is not exempt from the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements of 10%, therefore a BNG assessment has been completed to identify the biodiversity losses and gains as a result of the proposals.
- 5.6.2 A habitat condition assessment was undertaken by Sofia to inform the BNG baseline value, on 12th May 2025, within the optimal survey period (May-June). Weather conditions at the time of the survey were wet from overnight rain, warm (20°C), mostly cloudy (cloud 6/8) and calm (wind 2 on Beaufort scale).
- 5.6.3 DEFRA's Statutory Metric Calculation tool determines a baseline biodiversity value of 5.77 habitat units and 0.83 hedgerow units currently on site (Table 5.1). Appendix 6 includes the baseline habitat condition assessment tables.
- 5.6.4 The metric identifies that in order for the proposals to achieve 10% gain and meet the trading rules, a biodiversity offset of 6.34 habitat units (1.25 units of individual trees) and 0.091 hedgerow units would be required.
- 5.6.5 The Client is committed to meeting this offset within their land ownership (i.e., through a blue line boundary), as the extents of the residential curtilages limit the number of units that can be successfully secured. This approach is considered feasible through the estimated planting of 101 small trees in moderate condition (native ones oversailing vegetation) and ~50m of native hedgerow, and the securing of ~0.27ha of other neutral grassland.

Table 5.1: Results of Baseline Statutory Metric Calculator

Broad Habitat – Habitat	Habitat Condition	Baseline Unit Value	Habitat Distinctiveness	Trading Rules	Estimated Unit Loss
<i>Habitat Units</i>					
Grassland – Modified grassland	Poor	0.57	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	0.28
Grassland – Modified grassland	Good	0.59	Medium	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required	0
Cropland – Intensive orchards	N/A	0.12	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	0.06
Cropland – Horticulture	N/A	0.02	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	0.02
Urban – Vacant or derelict land	Poor	0.05	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	0.05
Urban – Introduced shrub	N/A	0.01	Low	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required	0.01
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface	N/A - Other	0.00	Very low	Compensation not required	0
Individual trees – Rural tree	Moderate	1.43	Medium	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required	0.62
Individual trees – Rural tree	Good	2.97	Medium	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required	0.64
<i>Hedgerow Units</i>					

Hedge – Native hedgerow	Good	0.67	Low	Same distinctiveness band or better required	0
Hedge –Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	Poor	0.05	V. low	Same distinctiveness band or better required	0.01
Line of trees – Line of trees (associated with a bank or ditch)	Poor	0.10	Low	Same distinctiveness band or better required	0

6 Relevant Legislation and Policy

6.1 Local Planning Policy

6.1.1 The Wokingham Borough Local Plan lists policies that are of relevance to this development:

Policy CP7 – Biodiversity

6.1.2 This policy states that: *'Sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site in terms of its international or national importance.'*

Development

- a) Which may harm county designated sites (Local Wildlife Sites in Berkshire), whether directly or indirectly, or*
- b) Which may harm habitats or species of principal importance in England for nature conservation, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna (including wildlife or river corridors), whether directly or indirectly, or*
- c) That compromises the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans*

Will only be permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation importance, that no alternative site that would result in less or no harm is available which will meet the need, and:

- i) Mitigation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts; or*
- ii) Appropriate compensation measures to offset the scale and kind of losses are provided'.*

6.2 Exit from European Union

6.2.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), referred to as the '2017 Regulations,' are one of the pieces of domestic law that transposed the land and marine aspects of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and certain elements of the Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC) (known as the Nature Directives). Changes to the 2017 Regulations have been made by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (referred to as the '2019 Regulations') to transfer functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales.

- 6.2.2 The amendments prescribed by the 2019 Regulations allow existing protections afforded by current wildlife legislation and transposed EC Council Directives to be operable from 01 January 2021.
- 6.2.3 The 2019 Regulations protect rare and vulnerable birds and the habitats that they depend upon. This is achieved in part through the classification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Habitats Directive aims to protect plants, habitats and animals other than birds. This is achieved in part through the creation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). SPAs and SACs are collectively referred to as the 'National Site Network'.
- 6.2.4 Designated Wetlands of International Importance (known as Ramsar sites) do not form part of the National Site Network, however, all Ramsar sites remain protected in the same way as SACs and SPAs.

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024 (MHCLG, 2024) thereby replacing the older version of December 2023.
- 6.3.2 In relation to planning for climate change, para 162 states: Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating and drought from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.
- 6.3.3 In relation to planning and flood risk, para 182 states 'Applications which could affect drainage on or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, and which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. These should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity. Sustainable drainage systems provided as part of proposals for major development should:
 - a) take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority;
 - b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards; and
 - c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development.'

- 6.3.4 The new framework sets out in section 15 that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs (Para 187).
- 6.3.5 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity (Para 192), plans should:
- identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 6.3.6 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles (Para 193):
- if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
 - development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.
- 6.3.7 The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites (Para 194):

- potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

6.3.8 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site (Para 195).

6.4 European Protected Species (EPS) Animals

6.4.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) transpose the EC Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into national law.

6.4.2 “European protected species” (EPS) of animal are those which are shown on Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). They are subject to the provisions of Regulation 43 of those Regulations. All EPS are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

- intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal included amongst these species;
- possess or control any live or dead specimens or any part of, or anything derived from these species;
- deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species;
- deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; or
- intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or obstruct access to such a place.

6.4.3 For the purposes of paragraph (c), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

- to impair their ability—
 - to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
 - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or

- b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

6.4.4 Although the law provides strict protection to these species, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogated) through the issuing of licences. The licences in England are currently determined by Natural England (NE) for development works. In accordance with the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), a licence can only be issued where the following requirements, known as the “Three Tests”, are satisfied:

1. The proposal is necessary ‘to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment’
2. ‘There is no satisfactory alternative’

6.4.5 The proposals ‘will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

6.5 Bats

6.5.1 Bats and their roost sites are protected by UK legislation.

6.5.2 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

6.5.3 Additionally, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or a resting place of a bat; and
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange or offer for sale or exchange a live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

6.6 Birds

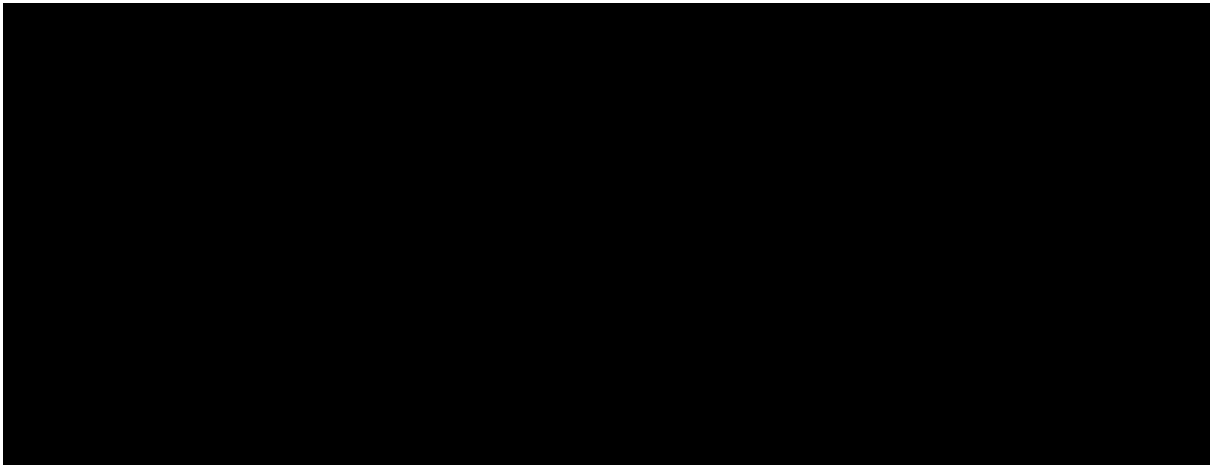
- 6.6.1 All nesting wild birds are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to disturb them whilst they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.
- 6.6.2 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) places duties on competent authorities (including Local Authorities and National Park Authorities) in relation to wild bird habitat. These provisions relate back to Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds (2009/147/EC, 'Birds Directive') (Regulation 10 (3)) requires that the objective is the 'preservation, maintenance and re-establishment of a sufficient diversity and area of habitat for wild birds in the United Kingdom, including by means of the upkeep, management and creation of such habitat, as appropriate, having regard to the requirements of Article 2 of the new Wild Birds Directive...' Regulation 10 (7) states: 'In considering which measures may be appropriate for the purpose of security or contributing to the objective in [Regulation 10 (3)] Paragraph 3, appropriate account must be taken of economic and recreational requirements'.
- 6.6.3 In relation to the duties placed on competent authorities under the 2017 Regulations (as amended), Regulation 10 (8) states: 'So far as lies within their powers, a competent authority in exercising any function [including in relation to town and country planning] in or in relation to the United Kingdom must use all reasonable endeavours to avoid any pollution or deterioration of habitats of wild birds (except habitats beyond the outer limits of the area to which the new Wild Birds Directive applies).'

6.7 Badger

6.7.1

6.7.2

6.7.3



6.8 Wild Mammals

- 6.8.1 The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (as amended) makes provision for the protection of wild mammals from certain cruel acts, making it an offence for any person to intentionally cause suffering to any wild mammal. In the context of development sites, for example, this may apply to rabbits in their burrows.

6.9 Invasive Non-Native Species

- 6.9.1 An invasive non-native species is any non-native animal or plant that has the ability to spread causing damage to the environment.
- 6.9.2 Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is an offence to release, or to allow to escape into the wild, any animal which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state or is listed under Schedule 9 of the Act.
- 6.9.3 It is an offence to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild invasive non-native plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

6.10 Hedgerows

- 6.10.1 Article 10 of the Habitats Directive requires that 'Member States shall endeavour...to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure...or their function as steppingstones...are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species'. Examples given in the Directive include traditional field boundary systems (such as hedgerows).
- 6.10.2 The aim of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, according to guidance produced by the Department of the Environment, is "to protect important hedgerows in the countryside by controlling their removal through a system of notification. In summary, the guidance states that the system is concerned with the removal of hedgerows, either in whole or in part, and

covers any act which results in the destruction of a hedgerow. The procedure in the Regulations is triggered only when land managers or utility operators want to remove a hedgerow. The system is in favour of protecting and retaining 'important' hedgerows.

- 6.10.3 The Hedgerow Regulations set out criteria that must be used by the local planning authority in determining which hedgerows are 'important'. The criteria relate to the value of hedgerows from an archaeological, historical, wildlife and landscape perspective.

7 References

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Appendix 1 - Photographs

Photograph 1: B1, northern elevation



Photograph 2: Interior of B1



Photograph 3: B2



Photograph 4: B3



Photograph 5: B4



Photograph 6: B5



Photograph 7: PR1



Photograph 8: PR2 with trees



Photograph 9: PR3 with vegetable garden



Photograph 10: PR4 and H2



Photograph 11: PR5



Photograph 12: T27



Photograph 7: T33



Photograph 8: T36



Appendix 2 - Figures

Next page:

- Figure 1: Baseline Habitats
- Figure 2: Ponds



LEGEND

Site boundary (0.66 ha)

Habitats

Developed land; sealed surface (0.1116 ha)

Buildings (0.062 ha)

Horticulture (0.0117 ha)

Intensive orchards (0.0594 ha)

Introduced shrub (0.0025 ha)

Modified grassland (0.3838 ha)

Sparsely vegetated urban land (0.0264 ha)

Hedgerows

Native hedgerow (0.11 km)

Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (0.05 km)

Line of trees (associated with ditch) (0.03 km)

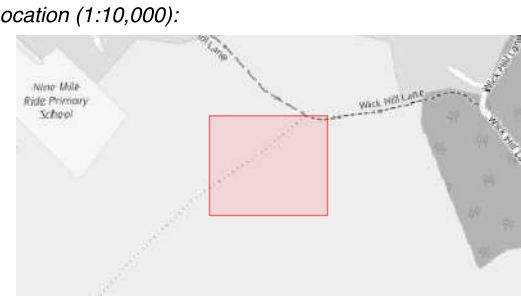
Trees

Rural tree, very large (1 tree)

Rural tree, large (1 tree)

Rural tree, medium (15 trees)

Rural tree, small (16 trees)



Project:
**Warren Crest Farm,
Finchampstead**

Client:
Tony Nasser

Drawing Title:
Baseline Habitats

Drawing No.:
EBD_4442_DR001

Central Eastings, Northings:
480082, 164591

Drawn by:
JE

Scale (@A3):
1:475

Date Drawn:
20/05/2025

Approved by:
BG

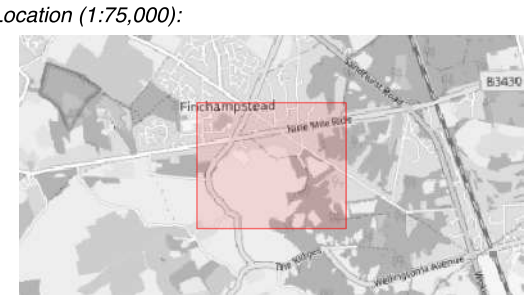
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LEGEND

- Site boundary (0.66 ha)
- 250-500m buffer
- Pond



Project:
**Warren Crest Farm,
Finchampstead**
Client:
Tony Nasser

Drawing Title:
Pond Map

Drawing No.:	Scale (@A3):
EBD_4442_DR002	1:4,500
Central Eastings, Northings:	Date Drawn:
480099, 164589	06/05/2025
Drawn by:	Approved by:
JE	BG

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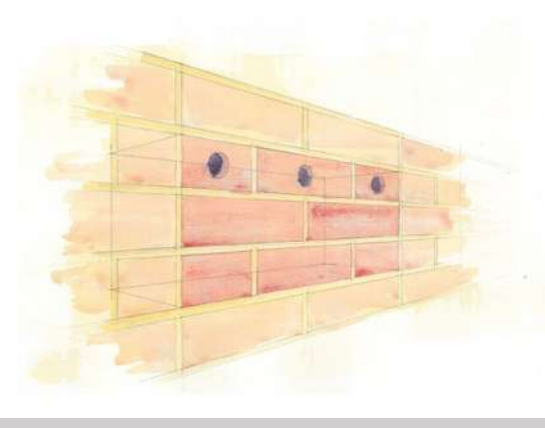
Appendix 3 - Definitions of the Geographic Context of Habitat Importance

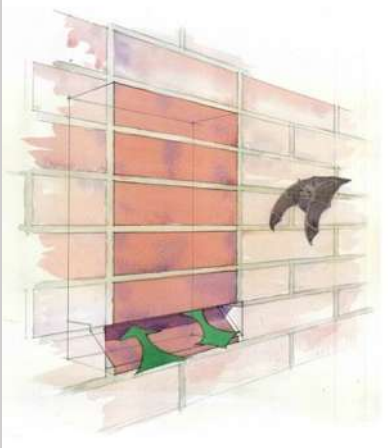
Geographic Context of Importance	Examples
International value	Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, Biosphere Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation. Sites supporting populations of internationally important species.
National value	SSSIs or non-designated Sites meeting SSSI selection criteria, NNRs, Marine Nature Reserves, NCR Grade 1 Sites. Sites containing viable areas of key habitats identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
Regional value	Sites containing viable areas of threatened habitats listed in a Regional BAP (or some Natural Areas), comfortably exceeding SINC criteria, but not exceeding SSSI criteria.
County / Metropolitan	Sites meeting the criteria for county or metropolitan designation (SINC, CWS, etc.). Ancient semi-natural woodland, LNRs or viable areas of key habitat types listed in county BAPs/Natural Areas.
District / Borough	Undesignated Sites or features considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource in the District or Borough.
Local i.e., Parish / Neighbourhood	Undesignated Sites or features which appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the Parish or Neighbourhood.
Negligible value	Low grade and widespread habitats.

Appendix 4 - Definitions of the Geographic Context of Species Importance

Geographic Context of Importance	Examples
International	Any regularly occurring population of an internationally important species, which is threatened or rare in the UK. i.e. it is a UK Red Data Book species or listed as occurring in 15 or fewer 10km squares in the UK (categories 1 and 2 in the UK BAP) or of uncertain conservation status or of global conservation concern in the UK BAP. A regularly occurring, nationally significant population/number of any internationally important species.
National	Any regularly occurring population of a nationally important species which is threatened or rare in the region or county (see local BAP). A regularly occurring, regionally or county significant population/number of any nationally important species.
Regional	Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species listed as being nationally scarce which occurs in 16-100 10km squares in the UK or in a Regional BAP or relevant Natural Area on account of its regional rarity or localisation; A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a regionally important species.
County/ Metropolitan	Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species which is listed in a County/Metropolitan “red data book” or BAP on account of its regional rarity or localisation; A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a County/Metropolitan important species.
District / Borough	A population of a species that is listed in a District/Borough BAP because of its rarity in the locality or in the relevant Natural Area profile because of its regional rarity or localisation; A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a District / Borough important species during a critical phase of its life cycle.
Local i.e., Parish / Neighbourhood	Species that are not threatened but are valued at a local level on intrinsic appeal.
Negligible	Common or widespread species.

Appendix 5 - Proposed Enhancements

Products	Description
	1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace (or similar) Designed to support a colony of house sparrows the 1SP can be hung on or installed into a wall. http://www.nhbs.com/1sp-schwegler-sparrow-terrace
	Habibat Terraced Sparrow Box Three-chambered box designed for sparrows that can be integrated into a wall and faced with the same material as the wall to leave only small holes for bird access. http://www.habibat.co.uk/category/bird-boxes/habibat-terraced-sparrow-box
	Habibat Bat Box The Habibat Bat Box is a solid box made of insulating concrete with an internal roost space, which can be incorporated into the fabric of a building as it is built or renovated. A variety of facings can be fitted to suit any building. The box is suitable for Pipistrelle bats and other common UK species. https://www.nhbs.com/habibat-bat-box-plain-for-rendering



Appendix 6 - Baseline Habitat Condition Assessments

Next page:

- Grassland – Modified grassland
- Urban – Vacant or derelict land
- Hedgerow – Native hedgerow
- Line of trees – Line of trees
- Individual trees – Rural trees

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)												
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type												
Grassland - Modified grassland												
Habitat Description												
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification												
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Warren Crest Farm	Survey date and Surveyor name		12/05/2025 SSP								
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)										
Limitations (if applicable)		Habitat parcel reference										
		House - PR1	House - PR2	House - PR3	House - PR4							
		Grid reference										
Condition Assessment Criteria												
		Criterion passed (Yes or No)										Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	0	1	0	0							
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	0	1	0	0							
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	1	1	1	1							
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	1	1	0	1							
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	1	0	0	0							
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> less than 20%.	1	1	1	1							
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	1	1	1	1							
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		0	1	0	0							
Number of criteria passed		5	6	3	4							
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓										
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		X									
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)											
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	X		X	X							
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score												
Footnotes												
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> , broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> .												
Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.												
Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement.												

[illegible]

Number of criteria passed												1											
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score		Score Achieved x/✓																			
Results for habitats requiring assessment of 3 core criteria only (all listed urban habitats except Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land, Bioswale, SuDS and Green roofs) :																							
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Good (3)																					
• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Moderate (2)																					
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.		Poor (1)		X																			
Results for Green roofs and Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land (requiring assessment of 4 criteria only - core criteria plus additional criterion specified for habitat type):																							
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C; AND • Passes additional criterion relevant to specific habitat type (D, F or G).		Good (3)																					
• Passes 2 or 3 of 4 criteria; OR • Passes 4 of 4 criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Moderate (2)																					
• Passes 0 or 1 of 4 criteria.		Poor (1)																					
Results for Bioswale or SuDS (requiring assessment of 5 criteria - core criteria plus additional criteria specified for habitat type):																							
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C; AND • Passes all additional criteria relevant to specific habitat type (Group E).		Good (3)																					
• Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria; OR • Passes 5 of 5 criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.		Moderate (2)																					
• Passes 2 or fewer of 5 criteria.		Poor (1)																					
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score																							
Footnotes																							

Condition sheet: HEDGEROW Habitat Types				
Habitat Type				
Native hedgerow				
Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch				
Native hedgerow with trees				
Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch				
Species-rich native hedgerow				
Species-rich native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch				
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees				
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch				
Habitat Description				
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification				
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Warren Crest Farm		Survey date and Surveyor name	12/05/2025 SSP
Limitations (if applicable)			Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference			Habitat parcel reference	House - H1
Condition Assessment Details				
A series of ten attributes, representing key physical characteristics are used for this assessment. Each attribute is assigned to one of five functional groups (A – E) and the condition of a hedgerow is assessed according to the number of attributes from these functional groups which pass or fail the 'favourable condition' criteria.				
This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook ¹ and Favourable Conservation Status document ² . For further clarification please refer to the Hedgerow Survey Handbook.				
Best practice would be to record the species, age, spacing and other key information about all trees present along a hedgerow within the 'Habitat Description' box, as well as other key features of the hedgerow.				
Hedgerow favourable condition attributes				
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D and E)	Criteria - the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Criteria description	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
Core groups - applicable to all hedgerow types				
A1.	Height	>1.5 m average along length	1	
A2.	Width	>1.5 m average along length	1	
B1.	Gap - hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	0	
B2.	Gap - hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m	1	
C1.	Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: · Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and · Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least).	1	

C2.	Nutrient-enriched perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	1	
D1.	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species.	Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website ⁴ , as well as the BSBI website ⁵ where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' ⁶ contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website ⁷ .	1	
D2.	Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).	1	

Additional group - applicable to hedgerows with trees only

E1.	Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient ⁸), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.		
E2.	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.		

The hedgerow condition assessment generates a weighting (score) ranging from 1 - 3, which is used within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The scores for each are set out in the tables below.

Condition categories for hedgerows without trees		
Category	Category Requirements	Metric Score
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3
Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and C2 = Moderate condition).	2
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1
Score achieved:		Good
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees		
Category	Category Requirements	Metric score
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.	3
Moderate	No more than 5 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 and E1 = Moderate condition).	2
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (for example, fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = Poor condition).	1
Score achieved:		
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score		

Condition Sheet: LINE OF TREES Habitat Type			
Habitat Types			
Line of trees			
Line of trees – associated with bank or ditch			
Ecologically valuable line of trees			
Ecologically valuable line of trees – associated with bank or ditch			
Please see the separate Individual trees condition sheet for linear blocks and groups of trees in an <u>urban</u> setting. You should only use this Line of trees condition assessment and record this habitat type in <u>rural</u> locations.			
Habitat Description			
See the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide. This assessment is based on the Hedgerow Survey Handbook¹. For further clarifications please refer to the Handbook. Where ancient and veteran trees are present within the line of trees, see Footnote 2 for standing advice.			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Warren Crest Farm	Survey date and Surveyor name	12/05/2025 SSP
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	House - L1
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	At least 70% of trees are native species.	1	
B	Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide.	1	
C	One or more trees has veteran features and or natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates, such as presence of standing and attached deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	1	
D	There is an undisturbed naturally-vegetated strip of at least 6 m on both sides to protect the line of trees from farming and other human activities (excluding grazing). Where veteran trees are present, root protection areas should follow standing advice ² .	0	
E	At least 95% of the trees are in a healthy condition (deadwood or veteran features valuable for wildlife are excluded from this). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	1	
		Number of criteria passed	4
Condition Assessment Result (out of 5 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓	
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)	X	
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)		
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
Footnotes			

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type															
Habitat Types															
Individual trees – Urban trees Individual trees – Rural trees Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.															
<i>Please see the separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of rural trees. You should only use the Line of trees condition assessment and record that habitat type in rural locations.</i>															
Habitat Description															
Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment): Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.															
Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only): Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.															
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Warren Crest Farm				Survey date and Surveyor name		12/05/2025 SSP								
					Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)		House								
Limitations (if applicable)					Habitat parcel reference										
					T27	T29	T30	T32	T33	T34	T35	T36	T10		
					Grid reference										
Condition Assessment Criteria															Notes (such as justification)
					Criterion passed (Yes or No)										
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.				0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.				1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0		
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Number of criteria passed					4	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	5		
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score			Score Achieved x/✓										
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good (3)						X				X	X		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)			X	X	X		X	X	X				
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)													
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.															
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score ²															

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type																
Habitat Types																
Individual trees – Urban trees																
Individual trees – Rural trees																
Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.																
Please see the separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of <u>rural</u> trees. You should only use the Line of trees condition assessment and record that habitat type in <u>rural</u> locations.																
Habitat Description																
Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment): Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.																
Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only): Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.																
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Warren Crest Farm				Survey date and Surveyor name		12/05/2025 SSP									
					Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)											
Limitations (if applicable)					Habitat parcel reference											
					☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐
					Grid reference											
Condition Assessment Criteria					T11	T12	T13	T14	T15	T16	T17	T18	T19	T20	Notes (such as justification)	
					Criterion passed (Yes or No)											
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).				0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0		
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.				0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Number of criteria passed					3	5	5	4	4	5	4	5	4	4		
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score			Score Achieved x/✓											
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good (3)				X	X			X		X				
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)			X			X	X		X		X	X		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)														
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.																
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score ²																

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type															
Habitat Types															
Individual trees – Urban trees															
Individual trees – Rural trees															
Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.															
Please see the separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of <u>rural</u> trees. You should only use the Line of trees condition assessment and record that habitat type in <u>rural</u> locations.															
Habitat Description															
Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment): Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.															
Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only): Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.															
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Warren Crest Farm				Survey date and Surveyor name		12/05/2025 SSP								
					Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)										
Limitations (if applicable)					Habitat parcel reference										
					T21	T22	T23	T24	T25	T26	T31	T37	T38	T39	
					Grid reference										
Condition Assessment Criteria															Notes (such as justification)
					Criterion passed (Yes or No)										
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1				
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				
Number of criteria passed		4	6	4	4	5	4	4	5	5	5				
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score		Score Achieved x/✓											
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good (3)			X			X			X	X	X		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)		X		X	X		X	X					
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)													
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.															
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score ²															

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type															
Habitat Types															
Individual trees – Urban trees Individual trees – Rural trees Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees.															
<i>Please see the separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of rural trees. You should only use the Line of trees condition assessment and record that habitat type in rural locations.</i>															
Habitat Description															
Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment): Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.															
Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only): Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.															
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Warren Crest Farm				Survey date and Surveyor name		12/05/2025 SSP								
					Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)										
Limitations (if applicable)					Habitat parcel reference										
					T40	T41	T42	T43							
					Grid reference										
Condition Assessment Criteria															
					Criterion passed (Yes or No)								Notes (such as justification)		
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).				0	1	1	0							
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).				1	1	1	1							
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .				1	1	1	1							
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.				1	1	1	1							
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.				0	0	0	0							
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.				1	1	1	1							
Number of criteria passed					4	5	5	4							
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score			Score Achieved x/✓										
Passes 5 or 6 criteria		Good (3)				X	X								
Passes 3 or 4 criteria		Moderate (2)			X			X							
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)													
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.															
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score ²															