

Mr & Mrs Gallagher

**121 Nash Grove Lane
Finchampstead**

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Job No: 253069
April 2025**



Environmental Consultants

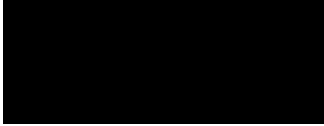
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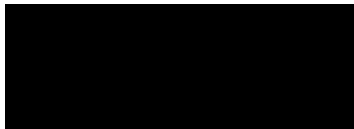
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Overview

- 1.1 AA Environmental Limited (AAe) has been commissioned by Mr & Mrs Gallagher to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the proposals at 121 Nash Grove Lane, Finchampstead. The aims of the survey were to:
- provide a description of the existing habitat types;
 - determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas; and
 - identify the presence of any protected species.
- 1.2 This information will serve to assess the ecological impact of the proposals and identify any ecological constraints and/or mitigation measures required and also identify any enhancement measures that may be available.
- 1.3 The proposals are for the construction of a replacement residential dwelling with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings. The majority of the established garden and boundary vegetation is scheduled to be retained and protected during the works.

Site Description

- 1.4 The site is located off Nash Grove Lane in Finchampstead, centred at National Grid Reference: SU 793662 and covers approximately 0.28 of a hectare. The site comprised the existing residential property and outbuildings, with associated hardstanding and garden areas. It is bordered by Nash Grove Lane to the east, a field to the west, and residential properties and associated gardens to all other sides (Figure 1).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

General

- 2.1 The study comprised two key phases: a desk-top study and a walk-over field survey. The study was undertaken with reference to the Institute of Environmental Assessment's '*Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment*' (1995), Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) '*Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*' (2017) and BS 42020: 2013 '*Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development*'.

Desk-top Study

- 2.2 Baseline data was obtained from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) for the site and the surrounding 2 km area.
- 2.3 In addition, as certain baseline data is now readily available on the internet, the Multi-agency website (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) was consulted to determine whether any part of the site or nearby habitats have been statutorily or otherwise designated and a review of Google Earth's satellite imagery (http://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/index.html) was completed to determine past land uses of the site and surrounding land.

Field Survey

- 2.4 It was necessary to supplement the information obtained from the desk-top study with a walk-over field survey, in order to:
- ascertain whether, while the site itself or nearby habitats might not be covered by any ecological designations, they could be of ecological interest and/or contain protected species; and

- establish the ecological value of the site in order for the overall disturbance to ecosystems within the area to be fully evaluated.

2.5 An initial walk-over survey of the site was carried out on Monday 17 February 2025. The dominant plant species were recorded, and habitats classified according to their vegetation types and presented in the standard UK Habitat Classification System (*UK Hab Ltd, 2023*). The weather conditions at the time of the survey were: cloud cover 0 (Oktas scale); wind speed 0 (Beaufort scale); temperature 10°C; and no precipitation.

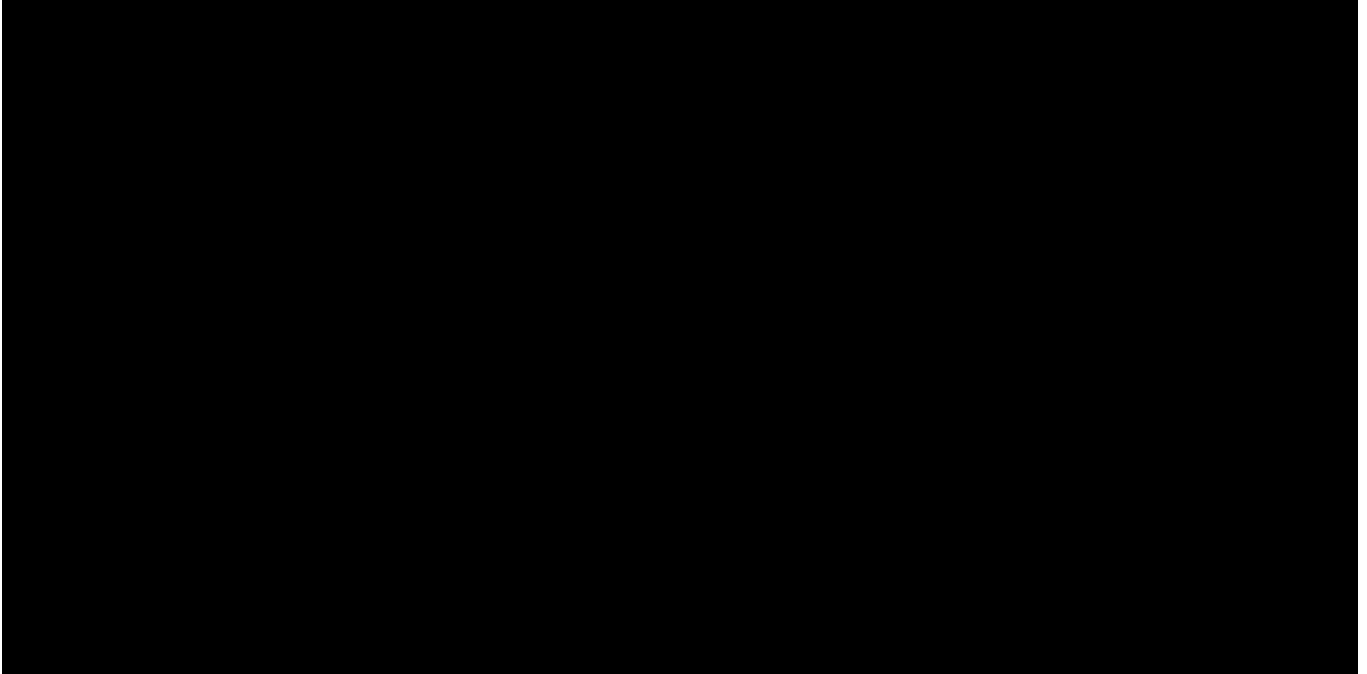
Habitat Evaluation

2.6 By applying recognised criteria produced by Ratcliffe (1977), the following seven-point scale was used to rank the importance of the habitat types and species they support. The value of each habitat was ranked according to its importance in a local context (a summary of the Ratcliffe criteria is attached at Appendix A):

- low value;
- low to intermediate value;
- intermediate value;
- intermediate to high value;
- high value (Local/District importance);
- very high value (County importance e.g. Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), County Wildlife Site); and
- exceptional value (National importance e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)).

Fauna

2.7 Particular attention was paid to record the presence of/ or suitable habitat for [REDACTED] bats and herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles) that may be present on the site or within adjacent habitats, in accordance with the following survey methodologies:



Bats

2.10 Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. As a signatory to the *Bonn Convention* (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe) the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

- 2.11 A visual survey of the site was completed to record any evidence of bats or features that could provide potential roosting opportunities. The survey was carried out following the guidelines provided by the Bat Conservation Trust¹ by an experienced and licensed ecologist². A thorough internal and external examination of the existing buildings was carried out, with any potential access points inspected for evidence of bats, and all internal roof voids/spaces, where present, accessed to check for any evidence of bats, with the buildings assessed in accordance with the following criteria:
- **None** – No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
 - **Negligible** – No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
 - **Low** - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites 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. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
 - **Moderate** - A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
 - **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 the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
- 2.12 In addition, a careful inspection of each tree within the vicinity of the works was carried out to identify those features that are important for roosting bats. Surveying trees presents particular problems at any time of the year as bats will use a wide variety of roost sites in cavities, splits, cracks, knotholes and under loose bark, many of which are not easily detected from the ground. Each tree was assessed in accordance with the following criteria:
- **NONE** – Either no PRF's in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
 - **FAR** – Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
 - **PRF** – A tree with at least one PRF present.
- 2.13 The surrounding habitat was also surveyed to identify any important features such as mature trees with suitable features for roosting bats and any established lines of vegetation that might provide important flightlines.
- 2.14 Evidence of bats is usually detected by any one or more of the following signs:
- the presence of bat droppings, which tend to accumulate under established roost sites or at roost entrances;
 - the accumulation of large numbers of moth wings, which have been discarded by feeding bats;
 - areas of staining by urine or from fur rubbing; and
 - the presence of bats themselves or their corpses.

¹ Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² Lead surveyor was Julian Thornber BSc (Hons) (License No. 2015-13307-CLS).

- 2.15 The visual survey was facilitated by the use of binoculars, ladders, powerful torches (1M candlepower) and a Ridgid Micro CA-350 Inspection Camera endoscope.

Herpetofauna

Amphibians

- 2.16 All amphibian species have some level of protection under *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) are protected under *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. The intentional or reckless killing, injury or taking, and intentional or reckless disturbance of great crested newts whilst occupying a 'place used for shelter or protection', is prohibited, as is the destruction of these places.

Reptiles

- 2.17 All reptile species are protected at some level under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)*. The more common species of reptiles, which include slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), common or viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), adder (*Vipera berus*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) are protected by the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* by part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5). This means that they are protected against intentional or reckless killing and injuring (but not 'taking') and against sale and transporting for sale.
- 2.18 An assessment of the site was carried out to determine its suitability for herpetofauna by recording the habitats present. In addition, any natural/artificial refugia present on the site was lifted to check for any sheltering animals or evidence of animals, such as sloughs (shed skins)³.

Other Species

- 2.19 In accordance with good practice, the site was checked for any evidence of other protected species or species of particular note.

3.0 RESULTS

Desk-top Study

- 3.1 A summary of the baseline data obtained from TVERC has been provided and detailed in Table 1; please note, due to sensitivity/copyright, a copy of the report cannot be reproduced but can be requested by the Local Planning Authority⁴.
- 3.2 There are no ecological statutory designated sites located on or adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory designated site is Longmoor Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located 1.23 km south-west of the site. It should be noted that the site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone⁵. The nearest non-statutory designated site is Brook Farm Meadow Berkshire Local Wildlife Site (BLWS) located 0.18 km to the west of the site. Full details of designated sites located within the 2 km search area are provided in Table 1.
- 3.3 There were no records of protected species located on or adjacent to the site. There are a number of records of protected species within the 2 km study area, the majority of which were supplied with specific 6-figure grid references allowing a high-resolution indication of their locations. Further details of protected species recorded within 2 km of the site are provided in Table 1.

³ Although considered 'out of season' when herpetofauna will not be active, certain species can still be found sheltering/hibernating under refugia.

⁴ TVERC data is subject to copyright and therefore cannot be passed on to any third parties, without express written permission.

⁵ Due to the nature of the development, Natural England does not need to be consulted.

- 3.4 According to the Multi-agency website, there are no Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) located on or adjacent to the site. The nearest HPI is an area of Deciduous Woodland, also noted in the National Forest Inventory as Broadleaved Woodland, located approximately 0.1 km to the west of the site. The site is also located within a Network Enhancement Zone 2⁶.
- 3.5 Google Earth Imagery shows that the site has remained largely unchanged since at least 2003, comprising the existing residential dwelling and outbuildings, with associated hardstanding and garden areas.

Table 1: Summary of Data Search Results (TVERC)

Statutory Designated Sites		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance/direction
Longmoor Bog	SSSI	1.23 km to the SW
Longmoor Bog	LNR	1.23 km to the SW
Non-Statutory Designated Sites		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance/direction
Brook Farm Meadow	BLWS	0.18 km to the W
The Moors (including Sand Martins Golf Course Edge)	BLWS	0.21 km to the E
Longmoor Lake	BLWS	1.27 km to the SW
Bottle Copse	BLWS	1.38 km to the N
Land to East and West of Sandhurst Road	BLWS	1.45 km to the SE
Longmoor Bog and Woodland, California Country Park	BLWS	1.51 km to the SW
Bearwood Estate – Woods and Lakes	BLWS	1.91 km to the NW
The Coombes	BLWS	1.95 km to the NW
Gorrick Plantation	BLWS	1.99 km to the E
Shepperlands Farm	BBOWT Reserve	1.99 km to the SW
Other Sites		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance/direction
Thames Basin Heaths	BOA	1.45 km to the SE
Protected/notable Species (Specific Grid References)		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance/direction
Grass Snake (<i>Natrix helvetica</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	0.03 km to the WSW
Stag Beetle (<i>Lucanus cervus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species (against sale) & Priority Species	0.12 km to the NE
Smooth Newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>)	Protected Species (against sale)	0.17 km to the E
Great Crested Newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	0.24 km to the E
Common Frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>)	Protected Species (against sale)	0.28 km to the E
Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.29 km to the S
Brown Long-eared (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	0.29 km to the SSW
Natterer's (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.29 km to the SSW
Common Toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>)	Protected Species (against sale) & Priority Species	0.32 km to the WSW
Cinnabar (<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>)	Priority Species	0.33 km to the WSW
Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>)	Protected Species	0.43 km to the WSW
Bat (<i>Chiroptera sp.</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species	0.47 km to the WNW
Myotis (<i>Myotis sp.</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species	0.47 km to the WNW
Nathusius's Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.47 km to the WNW

⁶ Land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is less likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat.

Noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	0.47 km to the WNW
Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)	Protected Species	0.47 km to the WNW
Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus</i> sp.)	European Protected Species, Protected Species	0.47 km to the WNW
Serotine (<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.47 km to the WNW
Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	0.47 km to the WNW
Western Barbastelle (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	0.47 km to the WNW
Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>)	Protected Species	0.74 km to the N
Leisler's (<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	0.75 km to the W
West European Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	Priority Species	0.79 km to the SE
Long-eared (<i>Plecotus</i> sp.)	European Protected Species, Protected Species	0.81 km to the SSE
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	Priority Species	0.83 km to the NNE
Slow-worm (<i>Anguis fragilis</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	0.95 km to the NE
Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	Priority Species	0.95 km to the W
Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>)	Priority Species	0.95 km to the WSW
Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>)	Priority Species	0.95 km to the WSW
Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)	Priority Species	0.95 km to the WSW
Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>)	Priority Species	0.95 km to the WSW
Linnet (<i>Linaria cannabina</i>)	Priority Species	0.95 km to the WSW
Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)	Priority Species	0.95 km to the WSW
Red Kite (<i>Milvus milvus</i>)	Protected Species	1.02 km to the SW
Redwing (<i>Turdus iliacus</i>)	Protected Species	1.12 km to the N
Daubenton's (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>)	European Protected Species & Protected Species	1.19 km to the SE
Eurasian Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	1.22 km to the W
Grayling (<i>Hipparchia semele</i>)	Priority Species	1.27 km to the NE
Nightjar (<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>)	Priority Species	1.28 km to the NNE
White Admiral (<i>Limenitis camilla</i>)	Priority Species	1.28 km to the SSW
Skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>)	Priority Species	1.32 km to the NNE
Adder (<i>Vipera berus</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1.33 km to the SW
Common Lizard (<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1.33 km to the SW
Brambling (<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>)	Protected Species	1.37 km to the SSW
Reed Bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>)	Priority Species	1.37 km to the SSW
European Water Vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1.37 km to the SW
Palmate Newt (<i>Lissotriton helveticus</i>)	Protected Species (against sale)	1.39 km to the SSW
Knot Grass (<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>)	Priority Species	1.39 km to the SW
Purple Emperor (<i>Apatura iris</i>)	Protected Species	1.45 km to the SSW
Small Heath (<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>)	Priority Species	1.49 km to the NNW
Wall (<i>Lasiommata megera</i>)	Priority Species	1.49 km to the NNW
Black Redstart (<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>)	Protected Species	1.5 km to the N
Shaded Broad-bar (<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>)	Priority Species	1.51 km to the SSW
Silver-studded Blue (<i>Plebejus argus</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1.67 km to the SW
Bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>)	European Protected Species	1.8 km to the WNW
White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>)	European Protected Species, Protected Species & Priority Species	1.82 km to the WNW
Spotted Flycatcher (<i>Muscicapa striata</i>)	Priority Species	1.89 km to the ENE
White-letter Hairstreak (<i>Satyrus w-album</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1.89 km to the ENE
September Thorn (<i>Ennomos erosaria</i>)	Priority Species	1.91 km to the SSW

Protected/notable Species Coarse Resolution Records		
Description	Protection/designation	Distance/direction
Cetti's Warbler (<i>Cettia cetti</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>)	Protected Species & Priority Species	1 km
Crossbill (<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Cuckoo (<i>Cuculus canorus</i>)	Priority Species	1 km
Fieldfare (<i>Turdus pilaris</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Firecrest (<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Green Sandpiper (<i>Tringa ochropus</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Hawfinch (<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>)	Priority Species	1 km
Hobby (<i>Falco subbuteo</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Lesser Redpoll (<i>Carduelis cabaret</i>)	Priority Species	1 km
Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Ring Ouzel (<i>Turdus torquatus</i>)	Priority Species	1 km
Tree Pipit (<i>Anthus trivialis</i>)	Priority Species	1 km
Whimbrel (<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>)	Protected Species	1 km
Yellow Wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava</i>)	Priority Species	1 km
Yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>)	Priority Species	1 km

NB: All distances are calculated from the centre of the site, National Grid Reference: SU 793662.

SSSI = Site of Special Scientific Interest; LNR = Local Nature Reserve; BLWS = Berkshire Local Wildlife Site; BBWOT Reserve = Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust Reserve; BOA = Biodiversity Opportunity Area. European Protected Species = species listed under *The Habitats Directive* Annexes II and IV.

Protected Species = species listed under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* Schedules 1, 5 and 8.

Priority Species = species listed under the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006* Section 41.

Field Survey

Introduction

- 3.6 The results of the survey are presented as a series of habitat descriptions for each of the areas on the site. The Existing Habitats Plan is shown on Figure 2, and the habitat descriptions should be read in conjunction with this Plan. An indicative plant species list is attached at Appendix B (nomenclature follows Stace, 2019) and a series of site photographs attached at Appendix C.

Habitat Types and Evaluation

Vegetated Garden

- 3.7 The site is dominated by garden areas, comprising lawns and ornamental planting. Species recorded in the lawns were typical of amenity grassland and included perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). Ornamental species recorded included box (*Buxus sempervirens*), magnolia (*Magnolia* sp.), camellia (*Camellia* sp.), witch-hazel (*Hamamelis* sp.), bamboo (*Pleioblastus* sp.), primrose (*Primula* sp.), honeysuckle (*Lonicera* sp.), skimmia (*Skimmia* sp.), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and bay (*Laurus nobilis*). Areas along the access track had started to be colonised by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

- 3.8 The garden, due to its previous management regime, provides limited foraging and sheltering opportunities for wildlife.

Habitat value: Low

Developed Land/Sealed Surface

- 3.9 Four buildings were recorded on the site, comprising a bungalow, detached garage and outbuildings, with associated driveway and patio areas. A description of each building has been provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Building Descriptions

Building Ref	Title	Description
B1	Bungalow	The Bungalow was of masonry construction which had been partially rendered, with a pitched and hipped concrete pantiled roof. Timber soffits/fascias were present and appeared in good condition. A single chimney stack was located on the roof with lead flashing around the base. Internally, the roof space was lined with a bitumen-based felt and insulated with mineral wool. A uPVC framed conservatory was attached to the rear of the bungalow with glass panels and no separate roof space/void.
B2	Detached Garage	The detached garage was of similar construction as the bungalow, with a pitched concrete pantiled roof. Timber soffits/fascias were present and appeared in good condition. Two metal up-and-over doors were present. Internally, no separate roof space was recorded with the roof lined with a modern membrane.
B3	Garden shed	A timber framed, clad and constructed garden shed, with a pitched bitumen-based felt roof. No separate roof space was recorded.
B4	Polytunnel	A timber framed plastic polytunnel covering a swimming pool.

- 3.10 The building and hardstanding areas were of overall limited value for wildlife.

Habitat value: Low

Hedgerow

- 3.11 A laurel (*Prunus sp.*) hedgerow was present at the eastern site boundary.

- 3.12 Although the hedgerow will provide some foraging and sheltering opportunities and bird nesting opportunities, its ecological value is limited due to the dominance of laurel.

Habitat value: Low to Intermediate

Urban Trees

- 3.13 A number of young semi-mature individual trees were recorded on site and species recorded included sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), apple (*Malus sp.*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), conifer (*Cupressaceae sp.*), spruce (*Picea sp.*), Japanese red cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*) and Lawson's cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), with two mature oak (*Quercus sp.*) trees also recorded. **N.B. the trees are scheduled to be retained (a magnolia shrub located next to the existing house will need to be removed).**

- 3.14 The trees provide sheltering and foraging opportunities for a range of wildlife and provide some bird nesting habitat.

Habitat value: Intermediate

Bats

- 3.16 During the visual inspection no evidence of bats was recorded during a careful check of the various buildings. Full details of the visual inspection are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Visual Inspection Results

Building Ref	Title	Observations
B1	Bungalow	No evidence of bats was recorded during the external inspection of the residential dwelling. The masonry was in good condition. The roof tiles were well-aligned with no gaps recorded. The soffits/fascias were in good

		condition and well-sealed. Internally, the roof space was fully inspected with no evidence of bats recorded. The building was assessed to provide negligible roosting opportunities.
B2	Detached Garage	Due to its construction type and condition, lacking any separate roof voids and/or crevice dwelling opportunities for bats, the building was assessed to provide negligible roosting opportunities.
B3	Garden shed	Due to its construction type and condition, lacking any separate roof voids and/or crevice dwelling opportunities for bats, the building was assessed to provide negligible roosting opportunities.
B4	Polytunnel	Due to its construction type and condition, lacking any separate roof voids and/or crevice dwelling opportunities for bats, the building was assessed to provide negligible roosting opportunities.

- 3.17 The site comprising a well-maintained residential plot, provides only limited foraging opportunities for bats. The majority of trees on site were assessed under the category **NONE**, due to their restricted size, age and lack of any PRF's. However, the two mature oak trees were assessed under the category **FAR**, due to their age, size and potential presence of PRFs.

Herpetofauna

- 3.18 There were no ponds on the site and therefore no breeding opportunities for any species of amphibian. The site, comprising a well-maintained residential plot, does not provide optimal terrestrial habitat for any species of herpetofauna. In addition, despite a careful search of the site, no species of herpetofauna was found sheltering under any refugia lifted during the site visit. In addition, the nearest great crested newt record returned by TVERC was located 0.24 km from the site with intervening barriers including roads and residential dwellings, with a nearby record for grass snake located approximately 0.03 km from the site within the adjacent field.

Other Wildlife

- 3.19 Apart from a few common species of birds, either recorded on the site or flying overhead, no other species of any note were recorded.

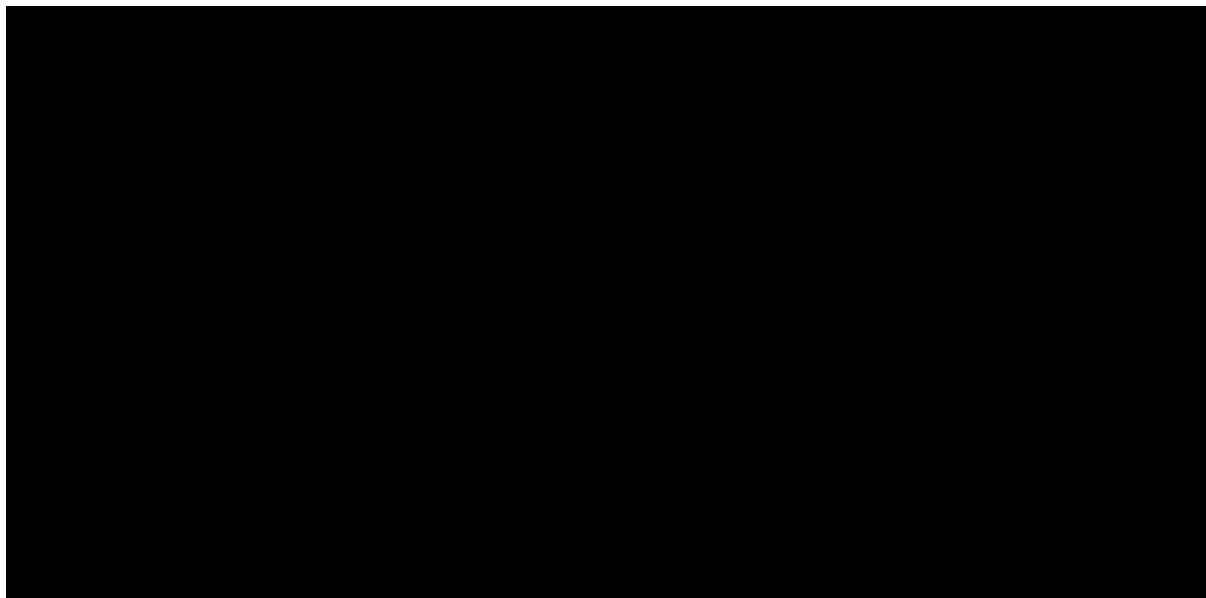
4.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The proposals are for the construction of a replacement residential dwelling with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings. The majority of the established garden and boundary vegetation is scheduled to be retained and protected during the works.
- 4.2 There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly affected by the proposals. The site is of overall low ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of protected species recorded.
- 4.3 Although there are considered to be no over-riding ecological constraints to the redevelopment proposals, a series of specific and generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, should be implemented to reduce any impact the works may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024⁷.
- 4.4 Although no evidence of bats was recorded, with the buildings assessed to provide **negligible** roosting opportunities, with no further surveys considered necessary, all site operatives should be made aware of current legislation protecting bats and their roosts. In the unlikely event of any bats being encountered on the site, then works should stop immediately and Natural England or AAe contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided.

⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*. London.

4.5 No evidence of any species of herpetofauna was recorded during the walkover survey and as the site is a well-maintained residential garden plot the likelihood of the site supporting any species is considered to be low. However, due to the proximity of the grass snake record returned by TVERC, all site operatives should be given an induction/toolbox talk on reptiles so that they are aware of the possibility of encountering them and of the current legislation protecting them (a generic toolbox talk has been attached at Appendix D for reference). In the unlikely event of any species being found, then works should stop and the Council or AAe contacted so that appropriate advice can be provided.

4.6



4.7 It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Therefore, in order to avoid contravention of current legislation, site clearance works should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, which, in general, runs from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a check should be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active nests present.

4.8 In order to protect the established vegetation to be retained, suitable fencing may be required to reduce the possibility of any damage that could be caused during the works. To minimise accidental damage, any overhanging branches should be pruned back to suitable live growth points. All works should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced specialist contractor and should conform to current industry best practice, i.e. BS 3998: 2010 '*Tree Work - Recommendations*'. The retention and protection of the established vegetation will help to maintain existing commuting/foraging routes currently utilised by bats and other wildlife.

4.9 Any new boundary treatment should be designed to promote permeability of the site to minimize fragmentation and allow free movement of wildlife throughout the site, for example by strengthening/enhancing the existing boundary vegetation, planting up a series of new hedgerows and/or installing post and rail fences. These measures will strengthen habitat connectivity and provide additional foraging habitat, cover and nesting opportunities. If close-board fences are required for security reasons, these should be minimised and raised slightly off the ground (c. 150-200 mm) to allow animals to pass underneath.

4.10 The site could be further enhanced by providing nesting and sheltering opportunities for a range of species and the creation of new wildlife habitats, such as some of those recommended by the Chartered Institute of Ecology Environment and Management's published Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Guidance, and listed below:

- Nest boxes
- Bat boxes
- Pollinator nest sites
- Planting wildflowers

- 4.11 The effects of lighting on plants and animals are difficult to assess, but it is thought that lighting can adversely affect invertebrates, birds and bats. As the site already experiences some lighting from on-site sources there should be no change in current light levels from the proposed works.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposals are for the construction of a replacement residential dwelling with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the demolition of the existing buildings. The majority of the established garden and boundary vegetation is scheduled to be retained and protected during the works.
- 5.2 An ecological survey has been carried out supplemented by obtaining available baseline data from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre. The findings from the surveys and review of baseline data have provided information to assess the impact of the proposals on species and/or features of ecological/biodiversity value.
- 5.3 There are no habitats of international, national, county or local importance that would be directly affected by the proposals. The site is of overall low ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of protected species.
- 5.4 As proportionate mitigation is available and deliverable, along with a range of enhancement measures to ensure that there would be no adverse impact on bats and local wildlife that are using the site, there are no over-riding ecological constraints to the proposals that would preclude planning permission being granted at this stage.

253069/JDT

AA Environmental Limited

April 2025

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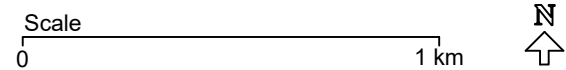
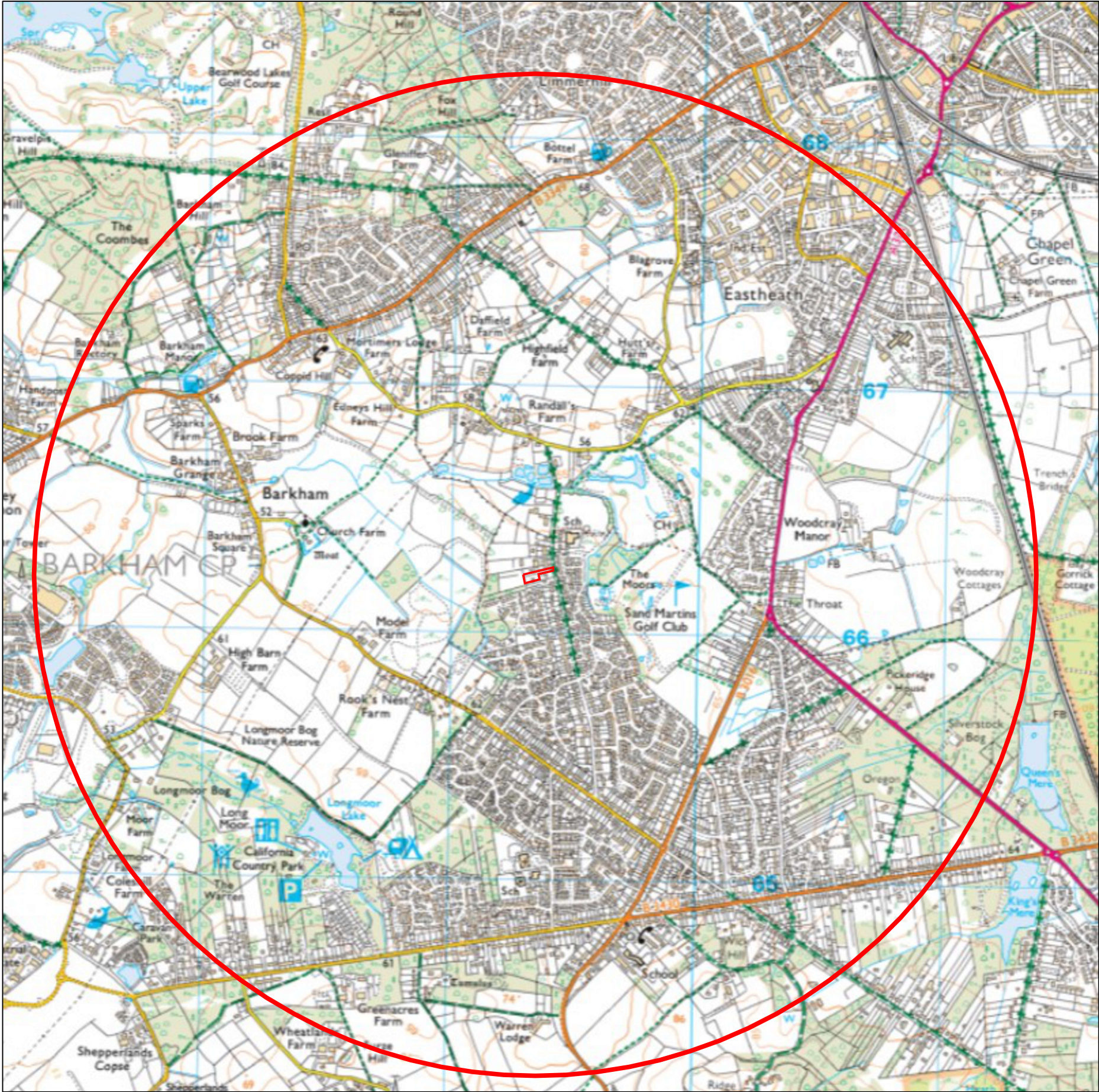
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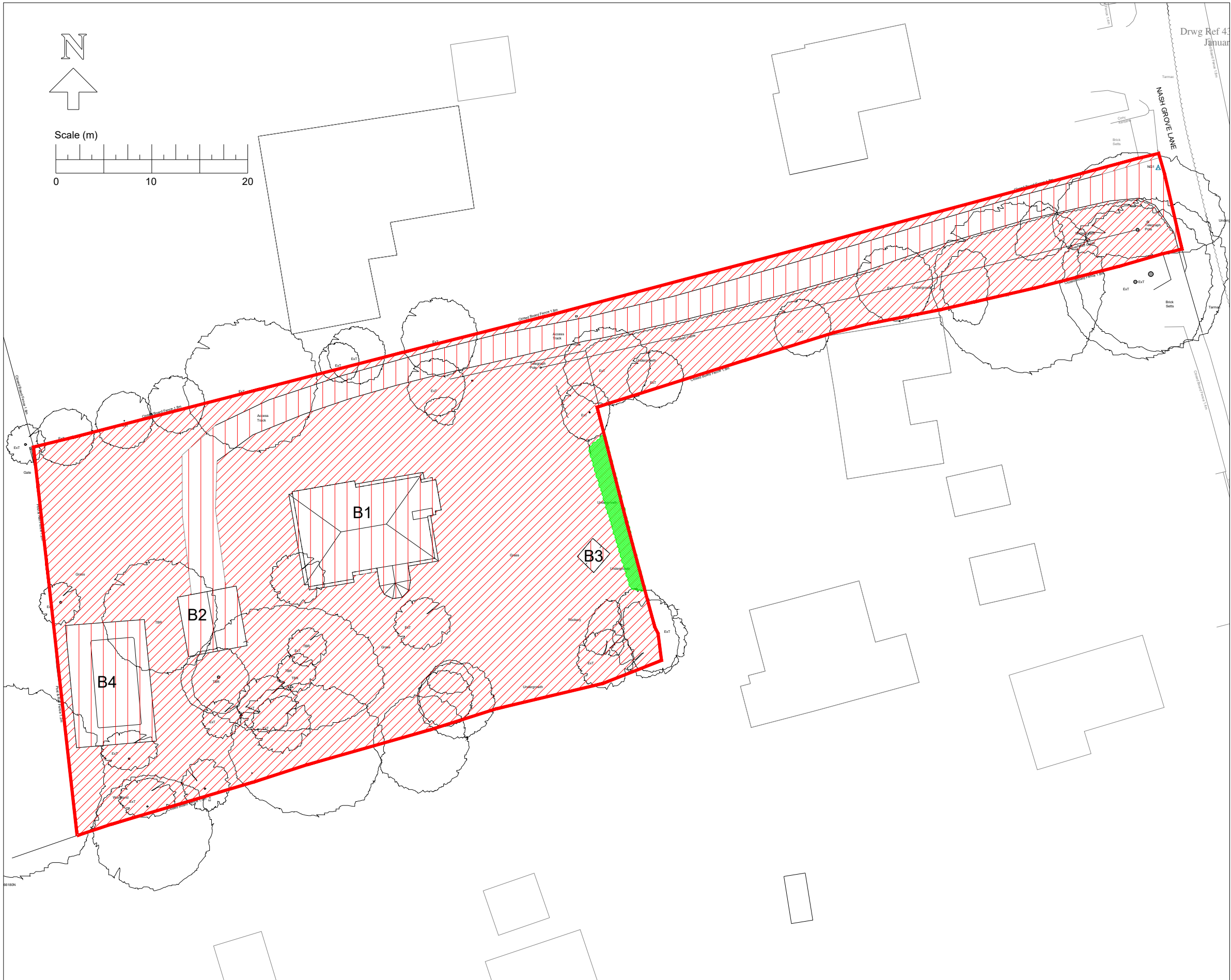


 2 km Study Area

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Rev.	Details		Drawn	Date		Project 253069 121 Nash Grove Lane Finchampstead		Title Site Location Plan			
		Chkd.									
 Environmental Consultants AA Environmental Ltd Units 4 to 8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon. OX13 6HX T: (01235) 536042 F: (01235) 523849 info@aae-ltd.co.uk www.aae-ltd.co.uk						Scale As shown		Date 04.04.25	Drg. No. Figure 1		Rev.
						Drawn NAB		Chkd. JDT			



UK HAB KEY

- Site Boundary*
 - Vegetated Garden
 - Developed Land/Sealed Surface
 - Hedgerow
 - Individual Tree*
 - B1 Building Reference
- * Indicative Location

Notes

Building Ref:

- B1: Bungalow
- B2: Detached Garage
- B3: Garden Shed
- B4: Polytunnel

Rev.	Details		Drawn	Rev.
			Chkd.	Date
Project				
253069				
121 Nash Grove Lane				
Finchampstead				
Title				
Existing Habitats Plan				
 Environmental Consultants AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippon Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T: (01235) 536042 F: (01235) 523849 info@aae-ltd.co.uk www.aae-ltd.co.uk				
Scale	Date	04.04.25	Drg. No.	Rev.
As shown	Drawn	NAB	Chkd.	
		JDT	Figure 2	

Appendix A

Summary of Ratcliffe Criteria

Fragility – some habitats, communities and species are particularly sensitive to environmental change and as such tend to be rare.

Rarity – the threat of loss of a particular habitat or species lends value to the organism and the site it occupies. Whether a species has rarity value is largely dependent upon the context, as a species or habitat can be internationally rare, but relatively common locally or nationally. Likewise, a nationally rare species can in some circumstances be more common at internationally level.

Size (area or extent) – size does play an important part in determining the ecological interest of an area, but is also a relative concept. For example, a 30 acre woodland or a one acre meadow could have a similar degree of nature conservation importance.

Diversity – the diversity of a site can be expressed in a number of ways and both low and high diversity can have a high nature conservation value under different circumstances.

Potential value – some sites have the potential to provide greater nature conservation interest than presently exists.

Position within the Ecological/Geographical Unit – a site which is near or adjacent to other similar habitats may have a higher nature conservation value than an isolated one because the range of fauna can be greater.

Typicalness – certain habitats have become important as they are good examples of what is, or has historically been, typical of the area. Efforts have been made to safeguard representative areas to prevent what was once common becoming fragmented or rare.

Recorded history – a well-documented site with detailed biological and/or natural history records presents a valuable insight into the ecology of a site. Such information is important for current and future management.

Naturalness – this is a measure of the degree to which an area has been modified by human activity. In England unmodified habitats are extremely rare being restricted to remote, inaccessible areas such as cliffs, and some saltmarshes. The bulk is either semi-improved, improved or artificial.

Intrinsic Appeal – this refers to value in a popular rather than ecological sense, and highlights the fact that value is also derived from society's preferences for landscape and other aesthetic features and is not just based on ecological considerations.

Appendix B

PLANT SPECIES LIST

<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver birch
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Box
<i>Camellia sp.</i>	Camellia
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet chestnut
<i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i>	Lawson's cypress
<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>	Japanese red cedar
<i>Cupressaceae sp.</i>	Conifer
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech
<i>Hamamelis sp.</i>	Witch-hazel
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	Bay
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye-grass
<i>Lonicera sp.</i>	Honeysuckle
<i>Magnolia sp.</i>	Magnolia
<i>Malus sp.</i>	Apple
<i>Picea sp.</i>	Spruce
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain
<i>Pleioblastus sp.</i>	Bamboo
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual meadow-grass
<i>Primula sp.</i>	Primrose
<i>Prunus sp.</i>	Laurel
<i>Quercus sp.</i>	Oak
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble
<i>Skimmia sp.</i>	Skimmia
<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelion

Appendix C



Rev.	Details		Drawn Chkd.	Date
Project 253069 121 Nash Grove Lane Finchampstead				
Title Photograph Record Sheet				
 AA Environmental Ltd Units 4-8 Cholswell Court Shippton Abingdon Oxon OX13 6HX T: (01235) 536042 F: (01235) 523849 info@aae-ltd.co.uk www.aae-ltd.co.uk				
Scale	Date	Drg. No.		Rev.
NTS	04.04.25	Appendix C		
	Drawn NAB	Chkd. JDT		

Appendix D

TOOLBOX TALK: REPTILES

Did you know?

- There are six species of reptile native to the UK, three of which are snakes and three are lizards.
- Smooth snakes and Sand lizards are very rare and are presently restricted to a few localised areas.
- Adders, Grass snakes, Common lizards and Slow-worms are widespread and found in a number of different urban and rural habitats across the UK.
- All reptiles are ectothermic. This means they rely upon the sun's heat for warmth. As a result, you may find reptiles basking in sunny places. If it becomes too warm they will seek shade, to avoid overheating.
- Reptiles movement will be slower in cooler conditions.
- Reptiles hibernate during the winter and may not wake up if disturbed. This makes them vulnerable to site works during winter months.
- Reptiles depend upon a varied habitat for survival. They need basking spots, shade, protection from predators, food resources and somewhere to hibernate!

Identification

- Reptiles may be found in a variety of habitats within a site. Most species favour scrubland, heathland or long grassland. Railway embankments are also highly favoured.
- On the right are photos of the reptiles you are most likely to encounter on a site, if any.
- Adders can be distinguished from Grass snakes by the diamond (or jagged) stripe running down the centre of their back.
- Slow-worms look a lot like a snake but are in fact legless lizards! They tend to be light brown/golden in colour, with a smooth appearance.
- Common lizards are fast-moving, but may be sighted from a distance when basking.

Legislation

- All reptile species are protected under UK law.
- This makes it **illegal** to intentionally or recklessly kill or injure and protects them against sale and transporting for sale.

Site Controls

- There is always a **risk** that as reptiles move through the habitat that they could be encountered during site works.
- **If any reptiles are encountered during works the following controls must be applied to avoid breaking the law:**
 1. If reptiles are discovered/suspected works must stop **immediately**, with any reptiles left in-situ and AAe immediately contacted (contact details above).
 2. During works, operatives must wear gloves in case of accidental contact with reptiles.
 3. Site operative must not intentionally handle reptiles.
 4. Care must be taken when moving logs, stones or rubble. These are favoured habitats for reptiles and they may be found sheltering underneath.
 5. Stockpiling of materials is only permitted within designated areas. Any building materials must be stored above ground on pallets and any waste material must be placed into skips, to prevent the risk of reptiles taking refuge within them.
 6. Trenches must be covered overnight to prevent animals falling into them.

These controls have been put in place to protect all site operatives from breaking the law. You are not expected to be able to identify reptiles or their presence so remember, **if in doubt shout and contact the relevant person.**

Key Contact

AA Environmental Ltd, Units 4-8 Cholswell Court, Shippon, Oxfordshire, OX13 6HX

Tel: 01235 536042



Adder.



Grass snake.



Pair of Common lizards.



Slow-worms.

