

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment

Survey site:

42 Pound Lane, Reading, RG4 6GG

Client:

Mark Bromley

Survey date:

14th March 2024

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Wokingham Borough Council. The proposal is described as:
The relocation of existing garage with amenity space, updating of existing portico, and adding soft planting.
[Unsubmitted]

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

The site survey was undertaken by Jamie-Lee Anderson BSc (Hons) (Accredited Agent on Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2019-41480-CLS-CLS).					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (mph)	Rain
14/03/2024	9.8	92	100	13.1	None

Ecological Survey Factor	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	
Habitats and plants (see Habitat Map in Appendix 1, Location Plan in Appendix 2, Proposal Plan in Appendix 3 and Photos in Appendix 4). Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> <i>(UKHabs codes used)</i>	The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 76328 74610 and has an area of approximately 0.15ha. The site consists of two buildings (B1a and B1b). B1a is a residential dwelling, and B1b is an adjoining garage. B1 is surrounded by a vegetated garden with a gravel access driveway. The site is set within a suburban area of Reading. The site is surrounded by residential dwellings and their accompanying enclosed gardens. There is a golf course located to the northeast of the site (see Appendix 2). <u>Buildings (u1b5)</u> There is one main building on site, B1. B1 is separated into B1a and B1b. B1a is a double-storey brick-built residential dwelling, with a pitched and hipped roof clad in clay tiles. There are two chimneys on the roof. The door and window frames, as well as the soffit boxes, are of wooden construction.



Photo 1: B1a – Southeast elevation.

B1b is adjoined to the southwestern elevation of B1a. B1b is a single storey brick-built double garage, with a pitched and gabled corrugated roof.



Photo 2: B1b – Southeast elevation.

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (u1c)

The entrance to the site is at the southern extent of the boundary and gravel is used to provide vehicular entrance and parking.



Photo 3: Looking at the entrance to the site from the southern elevation of B1a.

Modified grassland, hedgerows with trees (g4, 11)

The site contains amenity lawn of short sward length throughout, there are small areas of ornamental shrubbery and potted plants. Species comprise:

D: Perennial rye, common bent

A: Cleaver, creeping buttercup, sphagnum moss

F: Narrow-leaf plantain

O: Lawn daisy

R: Ragwort

There is an ornamental hedgerow at the south, and west, of the site comprised of conifer. The hedgerow is >2m in height throughout its length, and >1.5m in width (see Appendix 1 for location).

	There are scattered trees within the site, an arboricultural survey has been commissioned and details of the species present can be seen in the report (Arbtech Consulting Ltd, 2024). There is an area of bare ground in the east and north of the boundary, along which new hedgerow has been planted, and is not yet fully established, species comprise laurel and beech. <u>Local notable habitats</u> Approximately 110m south of the site is a priority habitat deciduous woodland. No others are known.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The habitats on site are widespread and not notable. The boundary hedgerow, tree line and scattered trees are expected to be retained based on the proposed plan. No impact on adjacent or nearby habitats off site is foreseen.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution affecting the nearby deciduous woodland must be implemented during construction. As the site is >100m away, a mitigation plan is not required. A biodiversity net gain (BNG) report is unlikely to be required for the proposal, as less than 25m² of habitat is affected by the proposal (one of the exemptions). A small area of developed land (B1b) will be affected, which has no value for biodiversity. The modified grass and hedgerow habitats can all be retained unaffected.
Locality and Designated Sites	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Ali's Pond Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 750m northwest of the site. The LNR is rich in wildlife and has great crested newt and pipistrelle bat species. Alder Moors LNR is located approximately 1100m southeast of the site. The site is dominated by ancient woodland and has a variety of wildflowers.

<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Owing to the significant distance between the site and the designated site, no impacts are foreseen.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None.
Invasive / Non-native species	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No problematic invasive and non-native species recorded on site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	N/A
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys but remain vigilant.
Invertebrates	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No habitat for protected or notable invertebrates is found on site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	None foreseen.
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys.
Bats	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	A review of magic maps returned 13 granted EPSL's within a 2km search radius. The closest is located approximately 260m west of the site for the damage of a resting place for brown long eared bats, common pipistrelle, and soprano pipistrelle. The local area is of good bat habitat with significant woodland, linear commuting routes and other foraging areas. B1a, is assessed as 'low' habitat value due to a handful of raised clay tiles on the southeast elevation, which create suitable gaps for crevice dwelling bats. These roof features will not be affected by the proposed development.



Photo 4: B1a – Southeast elevation.

The brickwork of B1 is well-mortared and in good condition throughout, with no gaps or cracks. There are no missing roof tiles.



Photo 5: B1a – West elevation.

There is lead flashing on numerous areas of the roof. it is tight-fitting to the tiles and brickwork and well-sealed. There are no gaps or cracks, and there is no missing mortar in the hipped tiles.

There is one loft space inside B1a. The loft space is fully boarded and therefore could be thoroughly assessed. No evidence of bats was found internally. The roof is lined with mineral wool and bitumen felt. No daylight could be seen entering from the exterior. The internal abiotic recordings of the loft space were recorded at 16°C and 72% humidity.



Photo 6: B1a – Interior

The interior of B1b is single skinned and there is no separate loft space. B1b is assessed as 'negligible' habitat value for roosting bats.

	 Photo 7: B1b – Interior.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	As the proposed development is due to only affect B1b, there are no impacts foreseen to any bats. The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats. This may disturb commuting bats.
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys are required. A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting-2 Bat boxes can be installed on retained trees or buildings post-development to enhance the area for bats. Bat boxes should be installed approximately 3-5m above ground in a south or south-westerly facing

	direction and should be specification for crevice dwelling bats such as https://www.nestbox.co.uk/products/crevice-bat-box or similar alternative brand.
Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No evidence of nesting birds was found on site during the surveys; however, birds could use B1b or the hedgerows and scattered trees for nesting. No habitat for schedule 1 birds was observed.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed development may result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests, if present.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Any building or vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged.
Reptiles	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No reptile habitat is present within the site interior, although the thin areas of boundary hedgerow has low value. Isolated individuals may still be present at the time of survey in the site interior.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	Although no areas of suitable habitat is being removed as part of the development, there is a low risk that a low number of reptiles could be present in the vicinity of the works. These could be injured or killed without mitigation.
<i>Recommendations</i>	A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures:

	• Vegetation will be maintained at a short sward (5cm) to discourage reptiles. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. • In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist. The site could be enhanced for reptiles' post development with the inclusion of log piles and a compost heap.
Amphibians	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Amphibians require suitable aquatic habitat in which to breed. A review of aerial imagery revealed no ponds or water bodies within 500m when consulting OS maps. There are no suitable terrestrial habitat within the interior of the survey site. The interior of the site has negligible habitat value for amphibians. Therefore, protected amphibians are likely be absent from the interior of the survey site year-round.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	None foreseen. The boundary hedgerow and scattered trees are set to be retained.
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys are required.
Badger	

<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No evidence of badgers was found on site or suspected within 30m of the survey boundary.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	None foreseen
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys. In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified within 30m, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Riparian animals	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	There are no watercourses on or connected to the site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	N/A
Hazel dormouse	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	Although connected to a deciduous woodland to the south-west, there is no suitable dormouse habitat on the site itself and the local habitats are heavily fragmented and not connected to core habitats for the species. There are no dormouse European Protected Species License (EPSL) within 4km.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None.
Other e.g. hedgehog	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	The vegetated garden onsite provides limited foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, with woodland habitat nearby.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The hedgerows and trees will be retained during construction. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.
<i>Recommendations</i>	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

	• Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
--	--

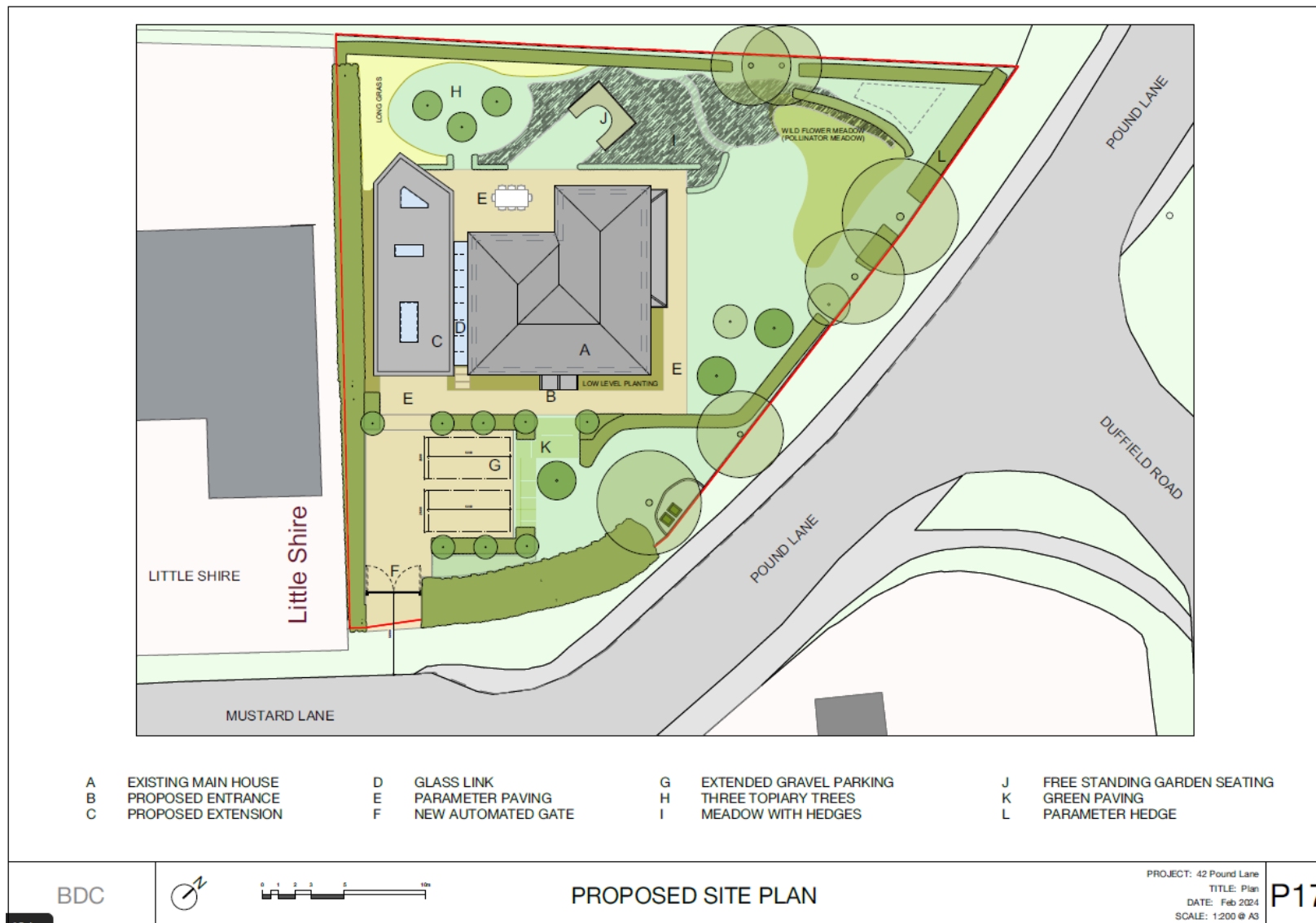
Appendix 1: Survey/Habitat map



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed plan



Appendix 4: Photos



Bare ground at the north of the site.



Amenity modified grassland at the south of the site, with artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface to the right of the photo.



Northwest elevation of B1a, showing the structure that will become a flat patio.

Limitations and Copyright

Legal

Arbtech Consulting Limited has prepared this report for the sole use of the above-named client or their agents in accordance with our General Terms and Conditions, under which our services are performed. It is expressly stated that no other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by us. This report may not be relied upon by any other party without the prior and express written agreement of Arbtech Consulting Limited. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are based upon information provided by third parties. Information obtained from third parties has not been independently verified by Arbtech Consulting Limited.

© This report is the copyright of Arbtech Consulting Limited. Any unauthorised reproduction or usage by any person other than the addressee is strictly prohibited.

Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Jamie-Lee Anderson BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist	14/03/2024
Final	1.0	Jamie-Lee Anderson BSc (Hons), Graduate Ecologist	19/03/2024