# Former Bearwood Golf Course

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of Feltham Construction

September 2026



PV PROJECTS LTD t/a PRO VISION - UK Registered Office - Unit 15A, Hazeley Enterprise Park, Hazeley Road, Twyford, Winchester, SO21 1QA | Reg No. 03296321
Winchester: 01962 677044 | Newbury: 01635 40184 | www.pro-vision.co.uk

# Former Bearwood Golf Course

# Ecology 9066

# Version 02

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Prepared by:** | David Casson ACIEEM | V.01 | July 2026 |
| **Authorised by:** | Alex Hannam MCIEEM | V.01 | July 2026 |
| **Updated by:** | Alex Hannam MCIEEM | V.02 | September 2026 |

**Pro Vision Ecology**

Unit 15A Hazeley Enterprise Park,

Hazeley Road,

Twyford

Winchester

SO21 1QA

**COPYRIGHT:** The contents of this document must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part without the prior written consent of Pro Vision Ecology.

# Contents

**Page**


**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 1**

**2.0 INTRODUCTION ..... 2**

PROJECT BACKGROUND ..... 2
BRIEF ..... 2
RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY ..... 2

**3.0 METHODOLOGIES ..... 4**

DESK STUDY ..... 4
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT ..... 4

**4.0 RESULTS ..... 8**

DESIGNATED SITES ..... 8
ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT ..... 9
PROTECTED AND/OR NOTABLE SPECIES ..... 13

**5.0 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION ..... 21**

FURTHER SURVEY WORK ..... 21
IMPACTS AND REQUIRED MITIGATION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ..... 21
ENHANCEMENT MEASURES FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ..... 23

**6.0 REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 24**


## Appendices


Appendix A: Survey Area

Appendix B: Habitat Survey

Appendix C: Preliminary Roost Assessment Results

Appendix D: Relevant Legislation

# 1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 The Client is proposing a residential development at the former Bearwood Golf Course, Sindlesham. Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in March 2026 to provide the ecological assessment to inform development designs.

1.2 The ecological appraisal comprised a desk study of existing ecological data in relation to the site, and an assessment of the sites habitats and suitability to support protected species within the application site.

1.3 The site has been subject to extensive ecological surveys which informed planning permission F/2014/2119 (amended by 173015); this report relates to the residential phase of the development.

1.4 The site comprises nine derelict buildings, short sward modified grassland, areas of bramble scrub and cleared scrub and artificial unvegetated surface associated with access to the site. In addition to the habitats listed above a small area of woodland is present in the south of the site.

1.5 Previous surveys confirmed the majority of the buildings support bat roosts and other buildings were assessed as holding low potential to support roosting bats. The bat surveys which supported the original application are now out of date and update surveys are required to inform the mitigation strategy and licence application. Further details are provided in **Section 5.0**.

1.6 The site has been assessed as holding low suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Mitigation measures have been provided in **Section 5.0** to ensure bats can continue to utilise the site post development.

1.7 The woodland and buildings provide foraging and nesting opportunities for common bird species. It is recommended that any vegetation clearance or building demolition should avoid the bird nesting season (1st March – 31st August) unless inspection by an ecologist concludes that there are no nesting birds present immediately prior to the commencement of works. If the presence of nesting birds is confirmed, any works which may disturb them will be delayed until the young birds have fledged the nest of their own accord. Details regarding this are provided in **Section 5.0**.

1.8 The development will provide ecological enhancements in line with national and local planning policy to secure net gains on the site. Details regarding this are provided in **Section 5.0**.

## 2.0 Introduction

**Project Background**

2.1 Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in March 2026 to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the land at the former Bearwood Golf Course, Sindlesham. For the survey area refer to **Appendix A**.

2.2 The site has been subject to extensive ecological surveys which informed planning permission F/2014/2119 (amended by 173015) and the client is looking at bringing forward the residential phase of the permission.

2.3 This report describes the current ecological baseline of the site based on the findings of the ecological assessment and provides information for further survey requirements and potential mitigation on the site.

**Brief**

2.4 To carry out an update PEA of the land within the site boundaries, to inform the Client of any further survey work required and of the ecological implications of their proposals.

2.5 This includes justification why a mitigation strategy for reptiles and great crested newts (conditions 43 and 45 of planning consent 173015 is not relevant to this phase of the development and includes ecological enhancements in accordance with condition 44

**Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy**

2.6 The key legislative provisions of relevance to this report with respect to the development proposals and their potential effects on ecological features are listed below:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- [redacted]
- Environment Act 2021

2.7 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was the Governments response to the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity (The Rio Convention), with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity in the UK. The new UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework replaced the previous BAP and is the government's response to the new strategic plan on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although the UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework supersedes the UK BAP, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats still remain an important reference source for identifying habitats and species of principal importance within the UK. Within England, Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) lists species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

2.8 The Government has set out its policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the planning system in the National Planning Policy Framework Section 19 (NPPF, 2026).

1.9 The Environment Act 2021 includes the requirement for developments to provide 10% biodiversity net gain, to be evidenced with the use of the statutory metric. Unless identified as being exempt under The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

2.10 The development site is located within Wokingham Borough Council. The Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy document (2010) policy CP7: Biodiversity states:

*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 principle 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 and river corridors), whether directly or indirectly, or*

*C) That compromises the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans will be only 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."*

# 3.0 Methodologies

### Desk Study

3.1 The desk study methodology is based upon guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management (CIEEM, 2017). A data-gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain any available information relating to statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites and protected species (**Table 1**).

**Table 1**: Summary of information sources used for the Desk Study

| Organisation / Source | Information Sought |
|---|---|
| Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre | Records of the presence of key protected and notable species and non-statutory wildlife sites within two kilometres of the site. |
| MAGIC | Locations of and citations for all national statutory wildlife sites, including SSSI, within two kilometres and all international sites including SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites within five kilometres of the site.<br>Records of European Protected Species Licences (EPSL's) and class licence returns within two kilometres. |
| Ordnance Survey Maps | Large scale habitat information and identification of off-site habitats which may require consideration (such as ponds) within 500m. |

### Ecological Assessment

*Habitats*

3.2 A site visit was undertaken on the 8th April 2026 by experienced ecologist Alex Hannam MCIEEM in clear, still and dry weather conditions, with an ambient temperature of 24°C. The survey employed techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System.

3.3 The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to allow allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4 and where relevant to identify any priority habitats which are present on site.

3.4 Any habitats identified as having potentially high botanical value will be subject to further botanical surveys, if deemed necessary.

*Protected species*

3.5 The PEA included an assessment of the potential for habitats on or immediately adjacent to the site to support legally protected or conservation-notable species. The location and nature of any signs of the presence of protected species (such as droppings, footprints, burrows, etc.) were documented and mapped accordingly. Indicative survey methods for protected species are outlined below.

[redacted]

*Bats*

3.7 A preliminary roost assessment was undertaken on the buildings on site by CL20 bat licence holder Alex Hannam MCIEEM (licence number available upon request) during the PEA. During the survey any evidence of bats such as droppings, urine staining, claw marks, feeding remains or bats themselves were recorded. An assessment of the potential of the buildings to support roosts was then made in line with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (2023) shown in **Table 2** below.

**Table 2**: Assessment of buildings to support roosting bats

| Suitability | Criteria |
|---|---|
| None | No features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year |
| Negligible | No obvious features on site likely to be used by bats |
| Low | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. |
| Moderate | A structure with one or more potential roost sites due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation significance. |
| 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. |

3.8 The majority of bat species roost within trees. Therefore, an assessment of trees recorded on site was undertaken identifying any Potential Roost Features (PRFs). The assessment was undertaken from the ground looking for features which may support bats such as cavities, crevices, and peeling bark. The assessment was based on BCT guidelines (Collins, 2023) shown below in **Table 3**.

**Table 3**: Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees to support bat roosts

| Suitability | Criteria |
|---|---|
| None | No PRFs on the tree or highly unlikely to be any present. |
| FAR | Further assessment required to establish if PRFS are present in the tree. |
| PRF | A tree with at least one PRF present |

3.9 Bats use features in the landscape to navigate and also habitats may provide key foraging areas. Foraging and commuting habitat was assessed based on BCT guidelines (Collins, 2023) shown in **Table 4** below.

**Table 4**: Assessment of foraging/commuting habitat

| Suitability | Criteria |
|---|---|
| None | No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year |
| Negligible | No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight paths or by foraging bats |
| Low | Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats |
| Moderate | Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats |
| High | Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and is likely to be regularly used bats.<br>Sites that are close to and connected to known roosts |

*Birds*

3.10 Any habitat features, for example, scrub and trees, which could potentially be used by nesting birds, were surveyed and any nesting activity was noted. The habitat was also assessed regarding its potential for bird activity.

*Great Crested Newts (Triturus cristatus)*

3.11 Ponds within the vicinity of the site were noted and the potential of the land to act as a commuting route, shelter or foraging resource for great crested newts was assessed.

*Hazel Dormouse (Muscardinus avellanarius)*

3.12 An assessment of the suitability of the habitat to support hazel dormouse was undertaken in accordance with The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright *et al*, 2025). Any small mammal feeding signs were checked and assessed, including:

- Examination of hazel nuts; and
- Evidence of nest building.

*Invasive Species*

3.13 During the survey any invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were noted.

*Invertebrates*

3.14 An assessment was undertaken to assess the potential of the habitats recorded on site to support diverse communities of invertebrates, or any Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species. The assessment was based on the presence of a number of habitat features which may support important invertebrate communities such as:

- An abundance of deadwood;
- Presence of diverse plant communities;
- Presence of varied woodland structure and sunny woodland edge;
- Presence of ponds or watercourses; and
- Presence of free draining soil exposures.

*Reptiles*

3.15 Habitat features that could be suitable as hibernacula, foraging or basking areas were noted. Extant refugia were lifted and examined for evidence of reptiles, including sloughs (shed skins).

# 4.0 Results

**Designated sites**

*Statutory Designated Sites*

4.1 The data search returned no records of international sites within five kilometres of the site boundary and no records of national sites within two kilometres of the site boundary.

*Non-Statutory Designated Sites*

4.2 The data search returned records of ten non-statutory designated sites within two kilometres of the development site. One of these is located partly within the wider development site which was discussed further in the report by Aspect Ecology (2014). The **Bearwood Estate – Woods and Lakes Local Wildlife Site (LWS)** is identified as an extensive area of woodland with a large lake and most of the woodland is long established broadleaved woodland. This site is located immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the site.

4.3 The other non-statutory designated sites returned are designated as LWS and one site designated as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) and World Heritage Site (WHS):

- **The Coombes LWS:** This site comprises a stream and mixed, secondary broadleaved woodland, which support a number of bird species and is also designated as a Local Geological Site (LGS). There are some features indicative of long-established woodland, including bank and ditches with associated mature trees, and 23 long-established woodland indicators. This designated site is located 0.7 kilometres southeast of the development site.
- **Gravel Pit Wood, The Holt LWS:** This site comprises lowland mixed deciduous woodland, dominated by oak (*Quercus* sp.) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The site also comprises a stream and a number of ponds. This site is located 0.75 kilometres west of the development site.
- **Hazelton's Copse LWS:** A lowland mixed deciduous woodland containing a relatively high 23 indicator species of long-established woodland for its size. The site connects to two nearby woodland LWS via the green lane. The ditch and brook to the east joins with the River Loddon to the north. located one kilometre south of the development site.
- **Loaders Copse LWS:** The site is a small area of ancient woodland, surrounded by grassland /marshy grassland located 1.1 kilometres west of the development site.
- **River Loddon (Part) LWS:** River known to support water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and Loddon pondweed (*Potamogeton nodosus*) located 1.3 kilometres northwest of the development site at its closest point.
- **Alder Carr, adjacent to River Loddon LWS:** An alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) coppice located 1.5 kilometres northwest of the development site.
- **Rushy Mead LWS:** A wet woodland with areas dominated by Alder and willows (*Salix sp*.), drier areas comprise coppice woodland and scrub. Wetland plants are present throughout the woodland. This site is located 1.8 kilometres west of the development site.
- **Lodden Bridge/ Lower Earley Community Woodland LWS:** A grassland planted in part with trees as a community woodland site. Previously a species rich grassland now

managed as a public open space. The site is located 1.9 kilometres north of the development site.

- **Loddon Valley South BOA and WHS:** Mosaic of lowland meadow, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wet woodland located 0.85 kilometres west of the larger site boundary.

4.4 The development will likely result in impacts to the Beardwood Estate Woods and Lakes LWS associated with the construction phase of the development, mitigation measures are provided in **Section 5.0**. The other non-statutory sites are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed works to the intervening distance, as well as the localised nature of the development proposals.

## Ecological Assessment

*Introduction*

4.5 The results of the PEA are presented below. A habitat survey map is provided in **Appendix B**. The map illustrates the location and extent of the site surveyed, along with additional notable features.

### *Habitats*

*Surrounding habitat*

4.6 The site is located adjacent to Bear Wood Lake and areas of woodland associated with the lake. Amenity areas and sports pitches are present to the north of the site, this area was previously a golf course. Bearwood Lakes Golf Course is located to the east of the site, beyond the lake. Habitats to the west of the site are predominantly agricultural fields and arable land.

*Bare Ground*

4.7 Areas of bare ground are present where the main access track meets the courtyard of the site and along the eastern boundary of the site. These areas of bare ground are disturbed from regular use and have very little vegetation present. The area in the west of the site is becoming colonised with ephemeral species but these are currently scarce.



**Figures 1 and 2:** Bare ground track and colonised bare ground, respectively.

*Bramble Scrub*

4.8 Areas of scrub remnant of being dominated by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) are present in the west of the site (**Figure 3**), these areas have been recently cut back.



**Figure 3:** Cleared and remnant bramble scrub in west of site.

*Developed Land; Sealed Surface*

4.9 Buildings are present across the site, situated around the edges of the previously present courtyard. The buildings are discussed further in the bat section of the report.

*Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface*

4.10 The access track to the site runs along the southern boundary and comprises gravel. No vegetation is present.

*Modified Grassland*

4.11 The majority of the site comprises modified grassland which is frequently disturbed and managed to a short sward (**Figures 4 and 5**). The grassland comprises Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and fescue (*Festuca* sp.) with broadleaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), stinking iris (*Iris foetidissima*), thistle (*Cirsium sp.*) and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), with common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and encroaching bramble.




**Figures 4 and 5:** Modified grassland.

4.12 An area of grassland is also present in the northwest corner of the site, adjacent to the buildings and western track (**Figure 6**). The grassland is maintained at a short sward and comprises cock's foot, Yorkshire fog, perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and fescue with herbaceous species including daisy, dandelion, primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), springy turf-moss (*Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*), vetch (*Vicia sativa*), thistle, white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and yarrow.

4.13 Much of this section of grassland is damaged and bare ground is present.



**Figure 6:** Modified grassland in the north west of the site.

*Other Woodland, Broadleaved*

4.14 An area of woodland is present in the southwest of the site and comprises a small number of trees (**Figure 7**). The woodland comprises ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and cedar (*Cedrus libani*). The understorey has been cleared with very scarce vegetation remaining.



**Figure 7:** Other broadleaved woodland.

**Protected and/or notable species**

[redacted]

*Bats*

4.17 The TVERC data search returned 696 records within two kilometres of the site post-2009 for the following bat species:

- Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*)
- Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)
- Myotis species (*Myotis sp.*)
- Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)
- Natterer's (*Myotis nattereri*)
- Nyctalus species (*Nyctaluss* spp.)
- Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*)
- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*)
- Pipistrelle species (*Pipistrellus* sp.)
- Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)
- Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
- Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
- Long-eared species (*Plecotus sp.*)
- Brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)

4.18 The DEFRA run website MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted European Protected Species Licenses (EPSL's). Six EPSLs were granted for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*) and noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*).

4.19 The closest of which allowed for the destruction of a breeding place for all the recorded species and is likely associated with works previously completed in the wider site within Bearwood Lakes which included demolition of previously present buildings on site.

Buildings

4.20 There are nine buildings within the development site. Descriptions and photos are provided below (**Table 5**) with building locations provided in **Appendix C**. Since the previous surveys, buildings 7, 8, 9, 11, 13a, 13b, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20a, 21a and 21b have been demolished or part demolished.

**Table 6:** Building descriptions.

| Building reference | Photo | External description | Internal description |
|---|---|---|---|
| B7 |  | • Brick elevations<br>• Open doorways and windows<br>• Roof missing<br>• Small section of lifted bitumen roofing felt | • The building is open to the elements with no roof present<br>• Internal scaffolding was present to support the structure. |
| B10 |  | • Brick elevations<br>• Hipped and pitched slate roof<br>• Clay ridge and hip tiles<br>• Two internal chimneys<br>Two-storey extension<br>• Concrete tile roof, partially collapsed | • Roof void present, assumed to span the entire residential dwelling.<br>• The roof void was full of pigeon detritus and considered unsafe to enter without respiratory protection.<br>• Roof void collapsed in two storey extension. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| B12 + B13 |  | B12<br>• Dilapidated building, connected to B13<br>• Brick elevations<br>• Missing windows<br>• Pitched roman tile roof and clay ridge tiles<br>• Chimneys removed<br>B13<br>• Brick elevations<br>• Pitched roman tile roof, clay ridge tiles<br>• Internal chimney with lead flashing | B12<br>• Open to the apex<br>• Roof lined with bitumen felt<br>B13<br>• Cellar space, open on west elevation<br>• Roof space on first floor full of pigeon detritus and considered unsafe to enter without respiratory protection. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| B19 – B23 | <br> | • Terraced buildings – all similar composition<br>• Hipped and pitched slate tile roof<br>• Series of dormer windows with slate cheeks<br>• Clay ridge tiles<br>• Open windows and doorways<br>• Lean-to present on northern elevation of B23 | • Roof voids present – full of pigeon detritus and considered unsafe to enter without respiratory protection.<br>• Sections of roof visible from the hatch sections comprising bitumen felt and timber sarking<br>• Some sections were unlined |

4.21 A summary highlighting bat potential and access points for each building assessed on site is shown below (**Table 6**) and in **Appendix C**.

**Table 6:** Results of Preliminary Roost Assessment

| Building reference | Potential access points | Potential roosting locations | Evidence of bats/ Previous survey results | Bat roost potential |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| B7 | • Open widows, doorways and roof | • Internal and external cracks in brickwork | • Two myotis Sp. Were recorded possibly re-entering building in a previous survey on the 21/08/2013 | • Negligible – roof no longer present so building open, brickwork cracks too shallow for roosting bats |
| B10 | • Hole in roof near northeast ridge<br>• Hole in roof near northwest side of roof<br>• Lifted lead flashing around internal chimneys<br>• Broken windows and open doorways | • Roof void present, not fully assessed in 2026 | • Soprano pipistrelle droppings previously recorded at northern gable end wall. | • Confirmed Roost – Droppings previously recorded. |
| B12 | • Holes in roof from removed chimneys, missing tiles, | • Opportunities at ridge | • None<br>• No bats recorded emerging or re-entering the building on previous surveys of the site | • Low potential – multiple access points potential roosting opportunities at the ridge which could be used opportunistically. |
| B13 | • Broken roof tiles<br>• Lifted timber fascia<br>• Cellar open on western elevation | • Roof void present, not fully assessed in 2026 | • 30-50 soprano pipistrelle droppings previously recorded scattered through the void | • Confirmed roost- common pipistrelle emergence and soprano pipistrelle droppings recorded previously |
| B19-23 | • Windows and doorways open<br>• Holes in roof on western elevations<br>• Lean-to on B23 has open eaves | • Roof void present, not fully assessed in 2026 | • Soprano pipistrelle droppings recorded in voids of B21 and 22<br>• Possible soprano pipistrelle emergence from bargeboards on northern elevation and roof tiles of northern lean-to of B23 | • Confirmed roost – previous possible emergences and droppings recorded. |

Summary

4.22 The buildings on site were previously assessed and surveyed by Aspect Ecology in 2013. Buildings 7, 10, 13, and 19-23 were confirmed roosts due to emergences by soprano pipistrelle and possible emergences by myotis bats from building 7. Other buildings were also surveyed, however some of these have either been demolished since the initial surveys or not included within the red line boundary.

4.23 Building 7 is no longer considered suitable for roosting bats due to the building being part demolished; the roof is no longer present and previously present potential roost features have been removed.

4.24 Building 12 is considered to have low potential for roosting bats, whilst having multiple access points, there are very few potential roost features.

4.25 Buildings 10, 13 and 19-23 are previously confirmed roosts and will require further surveys to determine if the buildings are still in use by bats. Building 12 will also require a further survey to determine if bats are present. Details regarding these surveys are provided in **Section 5.0**.

Trees - Ground Level Inspection

4.26 It is anticipated that the trees present in the small woodland parcel on site will be retained in the proposed development.

4.27 However, should plans impact these trees, the trees present within the woodland were assessed to have no potential for roosting bats.

4.28 Bat boxes were recorded on two of the trees present on site. Where possible these should be retained within the development. If they cannot be retained it should be confirmed if these were installed in relation to a bat licence and if there is a requirement to retain them.

Foraging and Commuting Suitability

4.29 The site was previously more vegetated; however, the site is now mostly short sward grassland, and heavily managed and cleared scrub. The site is considered to have low suitability for foraging and commuting bats however there is connectivity to high quality habitat off site.

4.30 The development may result in increased lighting on site, mitigation measures are provided in **Section 5.0**.

*Birds*

4.31 TVERC provided records for the following red list bird species of conservation concern that may be present on the site: greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*), grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*), grey wagtail (*Motacilla cinera*), hawfinch, (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), house martin (*Delichon urbicum*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), lapwing (*Vanellus Vanellus*), lesser spotted woodpecker (*Dryobates minor*), linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), swift (*Apus apus*), tree pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*) and yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*).

4.32 In addition to these records, the following Schedule 1 and/or Annex I species were returned which may breed in the area: barn owl (*Tyto alba*), crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*), hobby (*Falco Subbuteo*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) and red kite (*Milvus milvus*).

4.33 Multiple wading birds species were also recorded and may be present on the lake adjacent to the development site.

4.34 Much of the site comprises cleared and managed habitats; however, the trees within the woodland parcel and the buildings provide suitable habitat for common nesting bird species. Extensive pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) nesting and roosting was recorded within all the building present on site.

4.35 No evidence of barn owls was recorded within any of the buildings present on site.

4.36 Mitigation measures will be required to ensure nesting birds are not impacted during the development. This is discussed in **Section 5.0**.

*Great Crested Newts*

4.37 The TVERC data search returned 25 records of great crested newt presence within two kilometres of the site. The Defra run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted EPSL's, no records of granted EPSL's and no positive class licence returns within two kilometres of the site were returned. The majority of the records returned were located in ponds approximately 1.1 kilometres north and 1.7 kilometres southwest of the development site.

4.38 Following a review of the of the Wokingham Borough Council Impact Map (NatureSpace, 2024) the site is located in a green risk zone and adjacent to an amber risk zone, indicating moderately suitable habitat is present and great crested newts may be present.

4.39 There are no suitable waterbodies within 500 metres of the development site. Whilst the site lies adjacent to Bearwood lake, the lake is too large, lacks suitable egg laying habitat and has a high level of waterfowl and fish present. Therefore it is not considered suitable breeding habitat for great crested newts.

4.40 The habitats on site are considered to have limited suitability for great crested newts as they are managed to a short sward and cleared to ground level. It is recommended that the habitats continue to be managed to prevent suitability of the site increasing and great crested newts colonising the site. It is considered that great crested newts are not present on site and will not be impacted by the proposed development, no further action is required.

*Hazel Dormouse*

4.41 The TVERC data search returned no records for hazel dormouse within two kilometres of the site. The Defra run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted EPSL's and no records were returned.

4.42 No evidence of hazel dormouse were recorded during the targeted surveys in 2013.

4.43 The habitats on site are considered unsuitable for hazel dormice due to the lack of suitable foodplants and the scarce nature of the habitats. The woodland lacks an understorey and there is a break in aerial connectivity between this habitat parcel and the wider woodland recorded off site. It is considered that hazel dormice are absent from the site and no further action is required.

*Other Mammals*

4.44 The HBIC data search returned 28 records of European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within two kilometres of the development site.

4.45 The site has potential to support hedgehogs, which roam an average of two kilometres per night. Mitigation will be required to ensure there are no adverse impacts upon hedgehogs. This has been outlined in **Section 5.0**.

*Invertebrates*

4.46 The TVERC data search returned 53 records of stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) and two records of purple emperor (*Apatura iris*) which are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. During the assessment no habitats of particular note were identified which could support these species and therefore it is considered unlikely rare or notable invertebrates will be present on site.

4.47 The development provides opportunities to enhance the site for local invertebrates. This is discussed further in **Section 5.0**.

*Reptiles*

4.48 The HBIC data search returned 78 records of reptiles within two kilometres of the site. The species returned include:

- Common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*)
- Grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*)
- Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*)

4.49 The grassland recorded on site is maintained at a short sward and scrub habitats have been cleared from the site. It is considered that there is no suitable habitat on site for reptiles, and it is recommended that the current management regime is continued to prevent reptiles from colonising the site. No further action is required.

# 5.0 Impacts and Mitigation

**Further Survey Work**

*Bats*

Buildings

5.1 Buildings 10, 13 and 19-23 were previously confirmed roosts. Building 12 is considered to have low potential for roosting bats.

5.2 Three emergence surveys must be conducted on building 10, 13 and 19-23 in accordance with the current bat survey guidance (Collins, 2023) and must be completed during the peak time of year, May to September, with at least two surveys completed between May and August. Surveys must be spaced a minimum of three weeks apart.

5.3 A single emergence survey must be completed on building 12 between May and August. If bats are recorded emerging from the building, further emergence surveys will be required to classify the roost present.

5.4 No further surveys are required on building 7 as it is no longer considered suitable to support bat roosts. Other buildings have since been demolished.

**Impacts and Required Mitigation for the Proposed Development**

*Non-Statutory Designated Sites*

5.5 The site is located directly adjacent to the Bearwood Estate Woods and Lakes LWS. The development proposals are small in scale and are largely restricted to the conversion of the existing buildings on the site.

5.6 There is potential for indirect impacts from pollution incidents from surface water run-off and dust deposition during the construction phase on the LWS.

5.7 This potential impact was identified within Chapter 9 of the Environmental Statement and mitigation proposed included:

"*Standard safeguards and mitigation measures will be put in place during construction activities, including protective fencing around hedgerows and trees within construction areas, damping down of potential sources of dust, and management of drainage (as set out within a CEMP and also at Chapter 5 of the ES).*"

5.8 These measures are still considered relevant and will be implemented to mitigate impacts to Bearwood Estate Woods and Lakes LWS.

*Bats*

5.9 The site provides limited potential for foraging and commuting habitat for bats. If any lighting is proposed, it should adhere to the following guidelines (ILP, 2023):

- LED luminaires should be used of a warm white spectrum (<2700 Kelvin) which will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550 nm.
- Internal luminaires should be recessed to reduce light spill outside the property.
- 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 as possible.

5.10 A detailed lighting mitigation plan should be produced following the completion of the bat surveys results to avoid impacts on key foraging areas and mitigation roosts.

*Birds*

5.11 The trees and buildings within the site may provide habitat for nesting birds. It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use. Any vegetation clearance or demolition works required must be scheduled to avoid peak bird nesting season (1st March to 31st August, although this will vary between species and local conditions) to avoid contravention of protected species legislation; unless inspection by an ecologist concludes that there are no nesting birds present immediately prior to the commencement of works.

5.12 If the presence of nesting birds is confirmed, a 5-metre buffer will be implemented for vegetation clearance, and no works will be permitted within this buffer. If bird nests are present in the buildings, no demolition works will be permitted on the building. Works will be able to proceed once the young birds have fledged the nest of their own accord.

*Other mammals*

5.13 Hedgehogs are listed as a UK 'Priority Species' under S41 of the NERC Act (2006). The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Guidance on the Natural Environment (2019) states that developments should provide safe routes for hedgehogs between different areas of habitat as a measure to secure biodiversity net gain. The site and residential dwelling boundaries should therefore be permeable to hedgehogs, with the use of 13 x 13 centimetres ground level access holes. Specific hedgehog holes can be built into gravel boards, and gates can have a gap height of 13 centimetres to ensure permeability.

**Enhancement Measures for the Proposed Development**

5.14 In accordance with the Natural Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2026) plans should minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swift, bats and hedgehogs.

5.15 The proposed development is implementing the existing consent (173015), therefore it is anticipated that the proposed development will be exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain.

5.16 To provide enhancements and to secure net gains which are specific to protected species the site, the following measures will also be included within the development design:

- The new residential buildings will include integrated bat bricks or boxes. These should be placed on suitable elevations without being placed above windows.
- Any planting of trees and shrubs for any supplementary planting scheme should incorporate native species which benefit a range of wildlife.

## 6.0 References and Bibliography


Aspect Ecology (2014). *Bearwood Park, Wokingham – Ecological Baseline Assessment*.

Bullion, S., Wolton, R & White, I. (2025). *The Hazel Dormouse Conservation Handbook*, 3rd Edition. The Mammal Society. ISBN: 978-1-0687982-3-8.

CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal,* 2nd edition*.* Chartered *Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester*

CIEEM (2018). *Guidelines for* Ecological *Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine,* version 1.1*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester*

CIEEM (2020). *Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK,* 2nd Edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental* Management*. Winchester, UK.*

Collins, J (Ed) (2023). *Bat Surveys for* Professional *Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines,* 4th Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.*

ILP (2023). *Guidance note 8/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*.

National Planning Policy Framework (2026). *National Planning Policy Framework.* Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.

NatureSpace (2024). Wokingham Borough Council Impact Map.

ODPM (2005). *Government Circular 06/2005*: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System*. London; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus).* Herpetological Journal 10(4), 143-155.

UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at https://www.ukhab.org).

Wokingham Borough Council (2010). *The Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy document, adopted January 2010*.

# Appendices

**Appendix A**: Survey Area

© The copyright of this drawing remains with Pro Vision and may not be reproduced in any form without prior written consent. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

Legend

Survey Area



0 60 120 180 240 300 m

N

| ISSUE | DATE | DESCRIPTION | DRAWN | CHECKED |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| v1 | 11/06/26 | First Issue | DC | AH |
| v2 | 28/09/26 | Amend to survey area | AH | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CLIENT: | **Feltham Construction** | |
| PROJECT: | **Former Bearwood Golf Course** | |
| DRAWING: | **Survey Area** | **1:5000** |
| NUMBER: | **9066-XX-E0-04** | **A4** |
| ISSUE: | **v2** | **28.09.26** |

PRO VISION

PLANNING | ARCHITECTURE | URBAN DESIGN | ECOLOGY

www.pro-vision.co.uk

**Appendix B**: Habitat Map

© The copyright of this drawing remains with Pro Vision and may not be reproduced in any form without prior written consent. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

| ISSUE | DATE | DESCRIPTION | DRAWN | CHECKED |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| v1 | 17/06/26 | First Issue | DC | AH |
| v2 | 28/09/26 | Amend to survey area | AH | |

0 6 12 18 24 30 m




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CLIENT: | **Feltham Construction** | |
| PROJECT: | **Former Bearwood Golf Course** | |
| DRAWING: | **Habitat Survey** | **1:800** |
| NUMBER: | **9066-XX-E0-01** | **A4** |
| ISSUE: | **v2** | **28.09.26** |

PRO VISION
PLANNING | ARCHITECTURE | URBAN DESIGN | ECOLOGY

www.pro-vision.co.uk

**Appendix C:** Preliminary Roost Assessment Results

© The copyright of this drawing remains with Pro Vision and may not be reproduced in any form without prior written consent. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

The plan shown here is for the purpose of supporting a planning application only. Only scale from this drawing for the purposes of determining a planning application. Do not scale from this drawing for construction purposes.

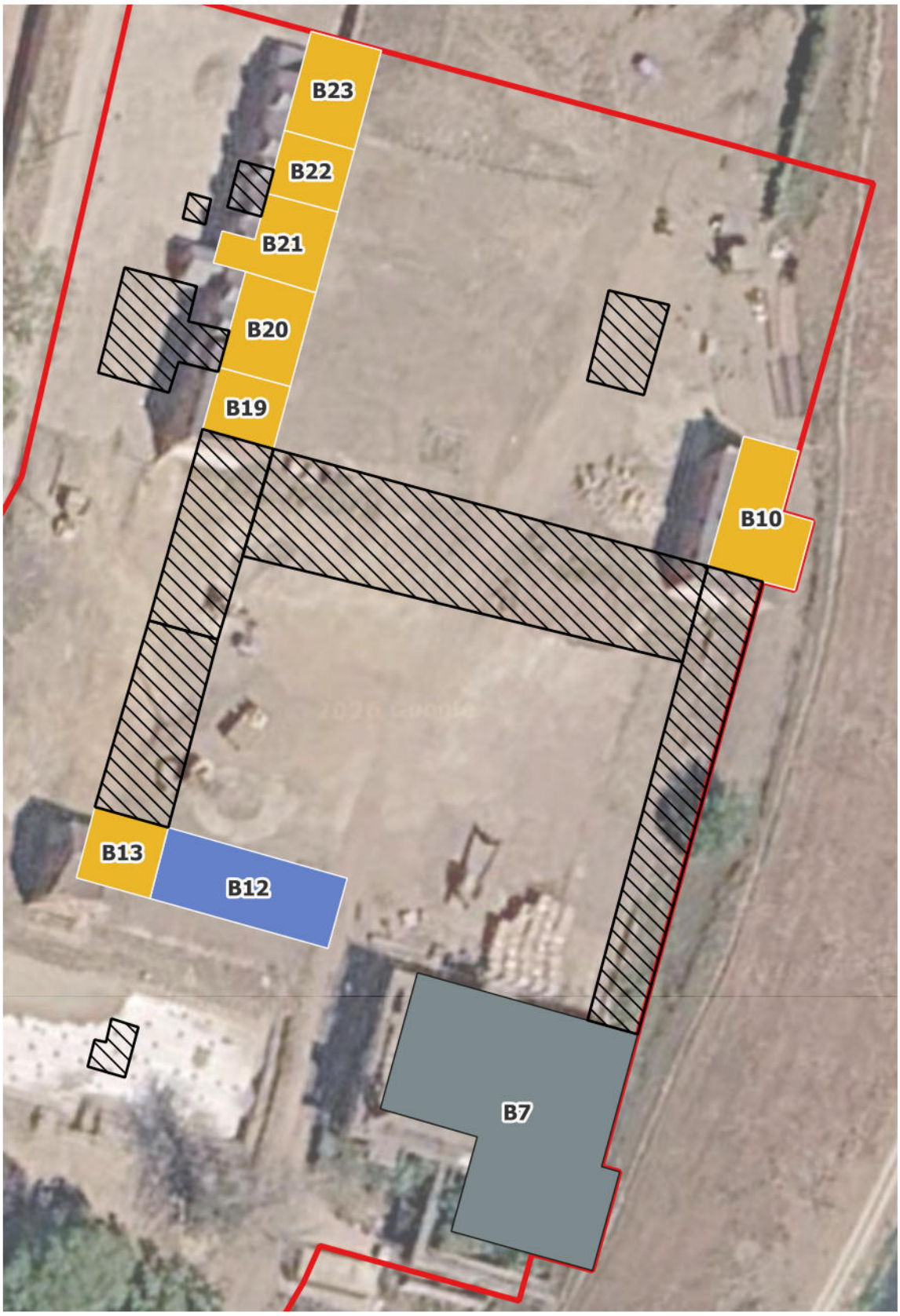
The proposal presented here is subject to review by specialist consultants, and is to be read in conjunction with all relevant specialist's drawings and information where available. Any discrepancies between this and any other consultant's drawings and information should be reported to Pro Vision immediately.

| ISSUE | DATE | DESCRIPTION | DRAWN | CHECKED |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| v1 | 11/06/26 | First Issue | DC | AH |
| v2 | 28/09/26 | Amend to survey area | AH | |

0 4 8 12 16 20 m

Legend

- Survey Area
- Soprano Pipistrelle Roost
- Low Potential
- Negligible Potential
- Demolished




| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CLIENT: | **Feltham Construction** | |
| PROJECT: | **Former Bearwood Golf Course** | |
| DRAWING: | **Preliminary Roost Assessment** | **1:600** |
| NUMBER: | **9066-XX-E0-02** | **A4** |
| ISSUE: | **v2** | **28.09.26** |

PRO VISION
PLANNING | ARCHITECTURE | URBAN DESIGN | ECOLOGY

www.pro-vision.co.uk

# **Appendix D**: Relevant Legislation

**The Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017**

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose Habitats Directive into UK legislation. The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites and European Protected Species. European Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across Europe.

European Protected Species (EPS) are those listed under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations and include dormouse, great crested newt, otter and all species of bat. The regulations prohibit the deliberate capture, killing or disturbance of any EPS; it is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any of these species. In order to carry out a lawful operation (e.g. development work which has full planning permission) that may result in an offence under the Habitats Regulations, it is necessary to obtain a licence from Natural England. EPS Licences will only be granted after Natural England has been satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternative and that there will not be any adverse impacts on the favourable conservation status of the species.

**WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981**

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principle piece of legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Various amendments have occurred since the original enactment. The Wildlife and Countryside Act contains both habitat and species protection. Certain bird, animal and plant species are afforded protection under Schedules 1. 5 and 8 of the Act. Measures for the protection of the countryside, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also included within the Act.

**THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006**

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 improved wildlife protection by amending the WCA. The main function of the NERC Act was to raise the profile of biodiversity amongst public authorities. Section 40 (S40 of the Act places a 'Biodiversity Duty' on all public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their normal functions.

[redacted]

**ENVIRONMENT ACT 2021**

The Environment Act 2021 received royal assent in November 2021 and introduces new environmental protection regimes. This includes the creation of the Office for Environmental Protection who will oversee the framework. The Act includes several measures that will impact on the planning application process to provide measures to ensure developments result in a net gain in biodiversity. The Act includes the mandatory requirement of 10% net gain for new developments, unless listed within the exemptions, which includes householder applications, self-build and developments below the threshold of impacts. Biodiversity net gain must be evidenced with the use of the statutory metric and associated documents.