

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

July 2025

Project Reference: PR-25-0109

Land at the Tally Ho Public House

Fleet Hill

Eversley

Wokingham

RG27 0RR

National Grid Reference: SU 7762 6252



Land at the Tally Ho Public House, Fleet Hill, Eversley, Wokingham, RG27 0RR
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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Surveyor	Mr. B. Richards ACIEEM	
Author	Mr. B. Richards ACIEEM	
Survey Date	28/04/2025	
Reviewed by	Mr. H. Mulligan Qualifying CIEEM	Mr. J. Pescod ACIEEM
Review Dates	24/07/2025	25/06/2025
Approved by	Mrs. K. Wilding CEnv MIEMA ACIEEM	
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Executive Summary

As part of a proposed planning application with Wokingham Borough Council concerning land under the ownership of the Tally Ho Public House in Eversley, Tyrer Ecological Consultants carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in April 2025.

The PEA was commissioned by Branching Out Two Ltd on behalf of their clients Brunning & Price; proposals include the formation of an outdoor seating area on an area of existing land with the addition of a number of benches, and associated landscape enhancements.

Extensive findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented throughout the report; however, the reader should be aware of the following further surveys and key recommendations.

Key recommendations:

Designated Sites

An LWS is present within close proximity of the site; given the presence of woodland within the site boundary and the proximity of this to the site-adjacent LWS, any impact to the woodland on site could have deleterious impacts upon the LWS woodland and the contained species.

It is therefore recommended that measures are implemented at the site, during and following works, to avoid impacting upon the LWS and its citation features, which would therefore negate the requirement for an LWS Impact Assessment to be carried out. See section 7.13 & 7.17.

Habitats

The lowland fen habitat which makes up the eastern portion of the site is classed as an Irreplaceable Habitat under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements and is additionally listed as a priority habitat under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act.

*It is recommended that the scope of works is amended to remove any direct impacts to the lowland fen habitat, with the removal of any outdoor seating, tree planting or any other measures within the defined boundaries of this habitat. It would additionally be beneficial to implement a locked gate over the access point to the fen to prevent increased disturbance. It is also recommended that a 20m buffer from the border of the habitat is created, within which no additional tree planting should occur. This will aim to prevent additional water extraction from the orchard tree species which are proposed to be planted within the space; see **Figure 7.1** for further details.*

The lowland mixed deciduous woodland to the fringes of the site is a priority habitat under national policy and likely forms an important part of the citation features of the adjacent LWS.

The arboricultural statement confirms that the nature of the proposals is not damaging to trees and provides further information in relation to Root Protection Areas (RPAs) and general site rules. No further recommendations in an ecological sense are deemed appropriate.

Vegetation

One specially protected species was identified at the site in the form of native bluebell, which is located within the fringes of the site in the priority woodland parcel; this species is protected from intentional damage or destruction under Schedule 8 of the WCA and is likely to form a component of the site adjacent LWS citation.

As per the above, no impacts will occur to the woodland or within any tree RPAs. No further recommendations are therefore deemed necessary to prevent impacts to this Sch.8 species.

Bats

A single individual tree within the site, T1, was identified as pertaining to a bat roost suitability of **PRF-I**, in accordance with BCT guidance.

Table 7.2. Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).		
Low roost suitability or PRF-I	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability or PRF-M
One survey visit. One dusk emergence survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .	Three separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .

No further works are proposed to T1 and thus no further recommendations apply.

The site provides valuable habitat for commuting and foraging bats, forming a constituent part of a wider habitat network in the area.

*No significant habitat loss is proposed that would reduce favourability of the site for bats, though the proposals may result in an increase in lighting post-development. Recommendations in relation to sympathetic lighting schemes are provided in **Section 7.22**.*

Birds

In relation to common breeding birds, the woodland and trees are considered to offer viable nesting platforms for breeding birds during the nesting season of March – August inclusive.

In order to prevent impacting upon these potential nesting sites, it is recommended that any vegetation clearance is undertaken outside of the nesting bird season of March – August inclusive. If works are proposed during this period, then a pre-commencement check should be carried out by a competent and professional Ecologist for signs of nesting behaviour within 48 hours or less prior to works commencing.

Other Terrestrial Fauna

The habitats onsite offer suitability for a variety of terrestrial fauna, including badger, hedgehog and common amphibians.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) are recommended at the site to avoid any impacts to any of these species groups in section 7.0.

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1.0 Introduction & Scope

- 1.1 As part of a proposed planning application with Wokingham Borough Council concerning land under the ownership of the Tally Ho Public House in Eversley, Tyrer Ecological Consultants carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in April 2025.
- 1.2 The PEA was commissioned by Branching Out Two Ltd on behalf of their clients Brunning & Price; proposals include the formation of an outdoor seating area on an area of existing land with the addition of a number of benches, and associated landscape enhancements. See **Figure 1.1** for a site plan.

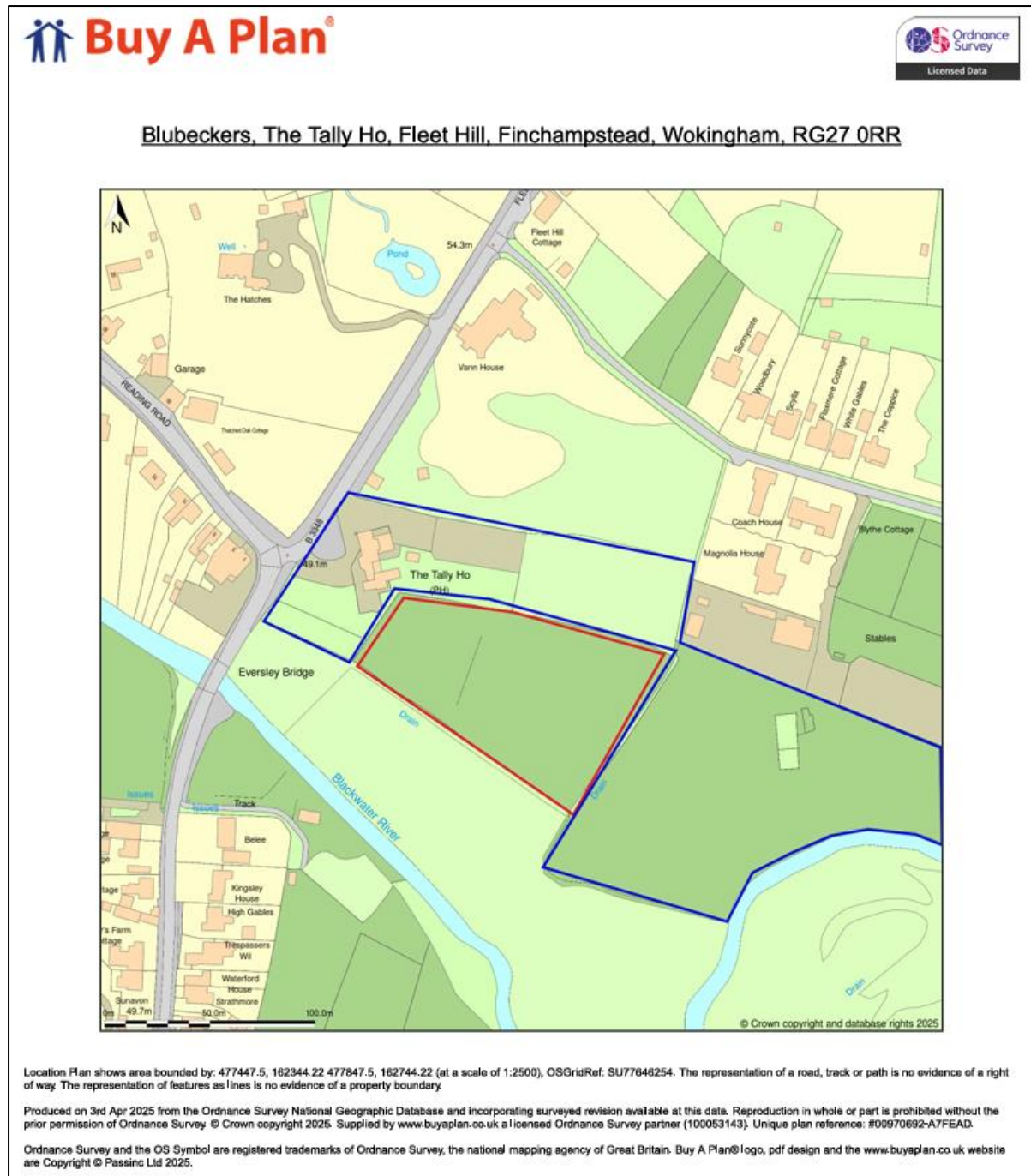


Figure 1.1 – Site plan with red line boundary (© Branching Out Two)

- 1.3 As part of the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) planning policies and obligations to the Planning Framework, ecological surveys are generally required prior to planning permission

being granted, particularly where protected / priority habitats or species are, or may be, present, and where these species have the potential to be impacted by the proposals for which the applicant seeks consent.

- 1.4 The PEA was carried out in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition' (CIEEM, 2017) and all associated 'CIEEM Competencies for Species Survey (CSS)', whilst this report has been presented in accordance with the British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

Aims & Objectives

- 1.5 The appraisal aims to ascertain the baseline nature of the site and, where possible, obtain information on any priority wildlife habitats, or species, that may be present and if so determine if they will be affected by the proposals. The survey, therefore, includes the following objectives:
- Gather and present baseline ecological information on site / off site (as necessary) within a suitable report,
 - Identify, measure and map habitats using UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (2023) habitats,
 - Identify any likely ecological constraints associated with the proposals for the site (i.e. the presence of protected / priority habitats or species that exist within the confines of the application boundary, or zone of influence (ZOI),
 - Identify measures likely to be required in line with the mitigation hierarchy (i.e. impact avoidance > minimisation > mitigation > compensation),
 - Identify any additional survey requirements,
 - Identify general enhancement opportunities for biodiversity in line with national and local planning policy,
 - Set out any requirements for post-development monitoring, management, or other commitments, and how they can be secured, where required.
- 1.6 As a functioning component of this specific ecological appraisal:
- Habitats on site were identified, measured and mapped using the UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (2023),
 - Any buildings and trees, where present, were subject to preliminary roost assessment (PRA) for bats and scored against the bat roost suitability parameters defined in the Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023),
 - Any accessible ponds located within a 250m radial buffer of the site were subject to the industry standard Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment in relation to great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), in accordance with ARG UK Advice Note 5 (2010), where applicable,
 - Watercourses were assessed to a buffer zone of up to 250m in relation to their suitability regarding species such as water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), where relevant.
- 1.7 This report therefore provides important baseline information as derived from the diurnal appraisal process outlined above and recommends any necessary additional surveys, or work, where applicable, to provide a conclusive ecological impact assessment.

- 1.8 The Applicant should be aware then that if during the appraisal:
- The application site/area was found to be suitable for any European Protected Species (EPS), otherwise protected, or priority habitats / communities / species, or,
 - Signs of use by particular protected species were found, or suspected, or,
 - Seasonal constraints significantly limit the gathering of ecological information to arrive at an accurate conclusion upon which the planning application can proceed;

Then more detailed surveys may be recommended where necessary, to allow the ecologist to arrive at a conclusive impact assessment.

- 1.9 If protected species were subsequently found either during appraisal or during detailed further surveys and / or may be affected by the development proposals, then a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) may be required to proceed with the development.
- 1.10 Where more detailed surveys are recommended by the Ecologist, following ecological appraisal, then LPAs, on the advice of their ecological advisors, may not grant permission until such time that all relevant material information is gathered in accordance with their obligations to the legislature.
- 1.11 Protected / priority species omitted from this report have been discounted due to negating factors including obvious absence / isolation of suitable habitats, and / or distributional aspects negating the necessity to survey for them, and / or the proposed works were not considered to impact the species or encroach on areas where the species may be present.

2.0 Legislation & Policy

2.1 The legislature considered for the purposes of this report includes the following:

- Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development (2019),
- BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development (2013),
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit),
- Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000),
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006),
- National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (as last revised),
- Protection of Badgers Act (1992),
- The Environment Act (2021),
- The Hedgerow Regulations (1997),
- The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (2019),
- Town and Country Planning Act (1990),
- Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996),
- Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).

2.2 These acts entail relevance to both protected and invasive species. The degree of protection offered to taxa provided within existing UK and EU legislature often varies depending on species / group, for example, some species may purely be protected during one of its life stages (e.g. common species of breeding bird whilst nesting / with eggs / young); some species may receive full protection within the EU, whereas others may be protected solely on a national basis (e.g. grass snake).

2.3 **Table 2.1** contains appropriate legislature to each species / group specifically respective to the site and provides the relevance of said legislation.

Table 2.1 – Relevant legislation

Species Group / Species	Relevant Legislation	Level of Protection
Badger	Protection of Badgers Act (1992), Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)	Illegal to: Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempt to do so), cruelly ill-eradicate a badger, dig for a badger, Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a badger sett or obstruct access to it, cause a dog to enter a badger sett, disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.
Bats	CRoW Act (2000) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)	All British bats and their roosts are afforded full protection from damage/destruction and bats may not be injured/killed/taken at any life stage. Once identified, roosts are protected whether the bat is in occupation or not.

Species Group / Species	Relevant Legislation	Level of Protection
Birds	CRoW Act (2000) Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)	All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young are protected. Birds listed on Schedule 1 Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) are afforded a greater level of protection.
Great Crested Newt	CRoW Act (2000) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)	Great Crested Newts (GCN's) are fully protected from disturbance, killing, injuring or possession at any life stage. Confirmed breeding ponds and resting places are afforded the same protection.
Hazel Dormice	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)	It is an offence to: deliberately kill, injure, disturb or capture, damage or destroy their breeding sites and resting places & possess, control, transport (alive or dead). Also illegal to disturb hazel dormice while they occupy a structure or place used for shelter or protection & obstruct access to a place of shelter or protection.
Invasive Plant Species	Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019	Species listed within Schedule 9/Schedule 2 as invasive, including Japanese knotweed (<i>Reynoutria japonica</i>) and Himalayan balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>), for example, carry notoriety regarding development. The Acts make it an offence for any person to grow or cause to grow in the wild any plants listed as invasive.
Reptiles	CRoW Act (2000) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)	All native reptile species have some degree of protection in the UK, through section 8(1) and (5) (specified in Schedule 5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Sand lizard and smooth snake are species of principal importance however with greater protection.
Terrestrial Invertebrates	CRoW Act (2000) Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit) Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)	Only certain terrestrial invertebrates (e.g. some butterflies, beetles, and spiders) are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act or the Habitats Regulations. These species are protected from killing, injuring, taking or selling, and in some cases, from disturbance or habitat destruction.
Water vole	CRoW Act (2000) Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)	Water voles are fully protected against intentional killing, capture or injury and intentional or reckless disturbance, obstruction, damage or destruction of their burrows.

Relevant Policy

- 2.4 Guidance for Local Authorities: Extract from Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – Circular 06/2005:

“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision”.

- 2.5 Paragraph 193 of the National Policy Planning Framework (as revised in December 2024) states:

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons¹ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”

- 2.6 The above is reflected within the local planning policy, with the Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (January 2010)², with policy CP7, titled Biodiversity, stating the following:

“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*

¹ For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat

² See: <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/sites/wokingham/files/2023-06/Final%20adopted%20Core%20Strategy%20inc.%20cover.pdf>

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.”*

Priority Habitats & Species

- 2.7 In the United Kingdom, legal protection and otherwise legislative recognition is afforded to particular habitats and species based on a variety of ecological factors. These are typically referred to as priority habitats and species and can be identified under a variety of legislation and local policy, notably the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), Section 41 (s.41) of the NERC Act as well as under Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPS).

3.0 Methodology

- 3.1 As part of the ecological appraisal report, a desk-top and field-based study is conducted. Methods for both components of the appraisal are given below.

Desktop Study

- 3.2 Prior to a site visit, a desktop study was conducted using online resources to obtain information pertaining to any sites afforded statutory (e.g. SSSI) and non-statutory (e.g. LWS) designations for nature conservation within 2.0 kilometres of the site boundary. To do so, the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGiC – provided by DEFRA) was accessed to gather such information; this particular interactive mapping service was also used to locate any locally granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licenses (EPSML) and species records to further inform conclusions concerning such species in the context of the study site and its proposed development.
- 3.3 Historic satellite imagery was reviewed using sources such as Google Earth (© 2024/25) to help establish past use of the land and determine the nature of adjoining and extending habitats; such information aids in the understanding of how the site might interact with its surroundings ecologically and its value in that context, and how the development may impact at a wider scale.
- 3.4 In addition, the Wokingham Borough Council ‘Comment on a planning application’ online function, including the ‘Search planning applications by map’ was utilised to help inform the desktop study by analysis of existing publicly accessible ecological survey results that have been carried out locally within the previous five years.
- 3.5 A commercial data request to the Local Environment Records Centre serving the area, which in this case includes two distinct centres based on the location of the site close to the boundary of each, notably Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC), has not been sourced at this time. **If, however, a data search is considered to be necessary by the Local Authority or advisory body to better inform the appraisal, a proportionate data search should be commissioned with results interpreted into the conclusions and recommendations of a re-issued / updated report.**
- 3.6 Given the overlap between part of the site boundary and a Local Wildlife Site³, a data search is likely to be an important constituent of predicting the impact of any development work of the site on the LWS. Should a data search be commissioned, the results will be incorporated into an amended version of this report to further inform recommendations.

Field Survey

- 3.7 A daytime preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) was conducted on the 28th of April 2025 in dry, sunny conditions (22°C), average wind 1/12 (Beaufort scale), average 10% cloud cover, by the following surveyor (see **Table 3.1** overleaf).

³ Extracted from: https://www.tverc.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Wokingham_Map_2024_v1.1.pdf

Table 3.1 – Site surveyor credentials

Name	Description of most relevant credentials
Mr. B. Richards ACIEEM	• Senior Ecologist with 3 years training and experience, • MBiolSci in Biological Sciences (Zoology), • Holder of a Natural England Bat Level 2 Survey Class Licence (2025-12596-CL18-BAT), • Accredited agent on the Natural England Great Crested Newt: CL08 Class 1 licence (2022-10653-CL08-GCN) of Mr. J. Pescod ACIEEM, • Holder of a FISC Level 3 (2023) (Botanical competency), • Meets the requirements of CIEEM's Competency Framework Section S (Surveying) to Capable level.

Floristic assessment

Habitats

- 3.8 The survey followed the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHabs, 2023) methodology, which was introduced as the successor to the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Phase 1 Habitat Methodology standards (JNCC, 2010) in conjunction with the nationwide roll out of Biodiversity Net-gain. Survey techniques were also carried out with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Technical Guidance Series "Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition" (CIEEM, 2017).

Vegetation

- 3.9 During the survey walkover, botanical assemblages were assessed, and the land was inspected for the presence of red-listed (Stroh et al., 2014; Hodgetts, 2011), s.41 and LBAP species alongside specially protected species as listed under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981) (as amended) and / or Schedule 5 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (EU Exit). Species nomenclature follows Stace, C. (2019) – definitive English names.
- 3.10 In addition to attributing ecological value to red-listed / BAP species, in accordance with existing CIEEM guidance, a geographic frame of reference is also adopted. Plant species and habitats may be recognised for their ecological value on a geographical scale which is adopted on a site-to-site basis (*International – National – Regional – County/Vice-County – Local*). For botanical species list compiled in full, see **Appendix II**.
- 3.11 In combination with assessing the area in relation to flora and habitats of conservation importance, the land was also assessed in relation to the presence of invasive non-native species (INNS) as listed under Schedule 9 (Part II) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 (IASO).

Faunal assessment

- 3.12 During site walkover, direct presence and / or evidence of priority fauna encountered was documented, whilst in tandem the area was assessed for the potential to support the priority species discussed in **Section 6.0**. The walkover also aimed to identify any ephemeral pools or unmapped waterbodies.

Bats

- 3.13 Criteria for preliminary bat roost assessment are based upon the determinants given in the Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023) (see **Figures 3.1 – 3.3**).
- 3.14 The site was assessed for bats; a daytime bat walkover (DBW) was undertaken to observe, assess and record any habitats or features suitable for usage by bats, either as commuting, foraging or roosting provision. Wider connectivity to other habitats was also considered during the DBW.
- 3.15 Buildings and other permanent / semi-permanent structures were subject to a preliminary roost assessment (PRA), to identify potential areas which may be of value to bats and to determine evidence of use. This typically involves a systematic search of the external aspects of any structure(s), comprising an investigation of features known to be used by bats (for example roofing material, soffits, fascia, lead flashing hanging tiles) using a high-powered torch and close-focus binoculars, where necessary. Where possible, an internal assessment of any structures was also carried out, with the aid of a high-powered torch and endoscope, where necessary, to identify any evidence of bat use of a structure. Field signs of bats typically comprise bat droppings, urine splashing, fur-oil staining, incidental animal presence, dead specimens and / or the presence of prey items, such as moth wings.
- 3.16 Trees (where present) would be subject to a ground level tree assessment (GLTA) using equipment such as close-focus binoculars and a high powered-torch. Potential roost features (PRFs) can include woodpecker holes, rot holes, hazard beams, other vertical or horizontal cracks or splits in stems and branches, partially decayed lifted bark, knot holes, man-made holes, tear-outs, cankers in which cavities have developed, other hollows or cavities, including butt-rots, double-leaders forming compression forks with included bark, gaps between overlapping stems or branches, partially detached climbing species with stem diameters in excess of 50mm or pre-existing bat / bird boxes. These PRFs can then be determined as PRF-I or PRF-M, dependent on their suitability for individual / low numbers of bats or their capability to host multiple bats.
- 3.17 Factors considered during the preliminary roost assessment include:
- Practical experience of the surveyor,
 - Knowledge of bat species relevant to the site location and geographical range,
 - Nature of the immediate / surrounding habitat in relation to foraging opportunities,
 - Presence / absence of roost potential,
 - Value and types of roost potential, if present (i.e. – maternity, hibernation, transitional).

Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
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).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	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.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
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 ^b 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 ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b 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).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
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 ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

Figure 3.1 – BCT guidelines extract

Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.	
Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs 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

Figure 3.2 – BCT extract on tree roost suitability criteria

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.	
Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Figure 3.3 – BCT extract on tree roost categorisation criteria

Birds

3.18 The site was inspected for evidence of nesting and suitability for relevant species. Bird species observed and heard were recorded on site, and a search was made for nest material, or areas suitable for nesting – this can take the form of searching structures, woody vegetation, semi-aquatic vegetation such as reeds and / or ground flora. Elevations of any buildings or structures on site were inspected for evidence of birds that show a high dependency upon built structures, many of which are in a state of decline. These might include the following species for example (list non-extensive):

- House martin (*Delichon urbica*): Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) red status,
- House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*): BoCC red status,
- Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*): BoCC red status,
- Swift (*Apus apus*): BoCC red status.

3.19 Additional to the site's capacity to support generally common species for breeding, the area was also subject to an assessment for wider capacity to support species with extra protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and other priority species.

Other Terrestrial Mammals

3.20 The walkover included an assessment for the presence / suitability of badger (*Meles meles*), which includes signs of activity such as prints, hairs, digging, setts, 'runs' leading to and from a sett and the existence of latrines or 'snuffle' holes where badgers have foraged in the ground.

3.21 The site was also assessed for the presence / suitability of European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and other priority mammals including brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*).

3.22 Any ditches and / or watercourses were assessed relative to their potential to offer suitable habitat for water vole, which includes a preliminary search for:

- Sightings – confirmed sighting of a water vole during the survey,
- Latrines – collections of droppings,
- Burrows – holes along the water's edge and in the bank above,
- Footprints – forefoot and hind foot,
- Pathways in vegetation – low runs or tunnels pushed through vegetation,
- Feeding remains – piles of chewed lengths of vegetation with 45-degree cuts to the ends,
- Cropped grass around tunnel entrances – grazed vegetation to form a 'lawn' around burrow.

3.23 The methodology and impact assessment for water voles followed guidance within the Water Vole Conservation Handbook, 3rd Edition (Strachan & Moorhouse, 2011) and the Water Vole Mitigation Handbook – The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series (2016), notably the flow chart shown in **Figure 3.4** below.

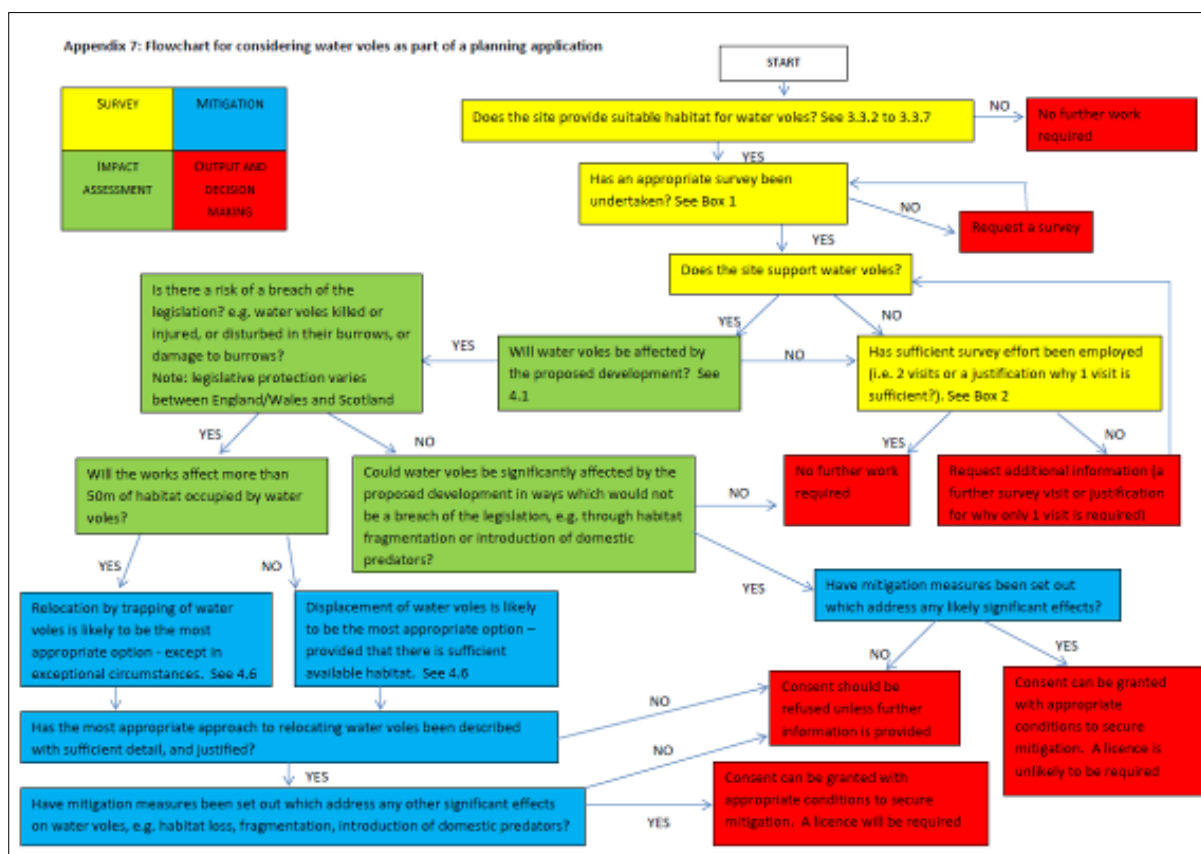


Figure 3.4 – Flowchart from Water Vole Mitigation Handbook © Mammal Society 2016

- 3.24 The water vole habitat suitability assessment has been designed by Harris et al. (2009). The method grades sites by a simple scoring index with each character scoring 1 if present and 0 if absent. These scores are then applied to habitat categories of: <3: Unsuitable, 3-5: Sub-optimal, >5 Optimal. The criteria are as follows:
- Well-developed (>60%) bank-side and emergent vegetation to provide cover;
 - Year-round availability of food sources;
 - Suitable refuge areas above extremes in water levels;
 - Steep banks suitable for burrowing;
 - Permanent open water;
 - Presence of berm (ledge at water level);
 - Lack of disturbance through poaching, grazing and/or recent management; and
 - Nest building opportunities in vegetation above water level.
- 3.25 A site-based assessment was undertaken in reference to hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Direct evidence can include gnawed hazel nuts with smoothed edges or nests in suitable vegetative features, though the surveyor also aimed to assess general suitability for this species, which are known to utilise a wide variety of 'woody' habitats such as plantations, hedgerow and scrub, as per The Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition (English Nature, 2006). Signs of browsing by deer and other grazing animals, which are known to suppress scrub regeneration which provides suitable habitat for this species, were also recorded by the surveyors.
- 3.26 Where potential habitat suitability is confirmed, in areas where this species is known to be present, survey methodology can include searching for the aforementioned evidence, alongside the usage of hair tubes, nest boxes and nest tubes.

Herpetofauna

- 3.27 During desktop assessment, a 250 metres radial search was undertaken from a site central grid reference in relation to the presence of ponds, ditches or other water bodies that may support great crested newt (GCN). The information gathered would then be used to aid in establishing if more detailed surveys are required.

NB: *English Nature's (now Natural England) Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (2001) states ponds within 500m of a proposed development site should be considered for their potential to support GCN, however, in some instances this distance may be reduced to 250m due to the presence of physical barriers and obstructions or based on the likely magnitude of impacts arising from the proposed development.*

- 3.28 Following current best practice considering the partial roll out of District Level Licencing (DLL) across England and based on likely effects, a proportionate assessment of the water bodies range within 250m from site has been applied. Where a development is anticipated to affect GCN the search can be extended up to 500m or more.
- 3.29 The GCN Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) is a quantitative measure of habitat quality evaluating the suitability of habitat for GCN. The HSI outputs a result of between 0 and 1, derived from an assessment of ten habitat variables known to influence the presence of newts, with a result of 1 being optimal habitat (high probability of occurrence), while an HSI of 0 is very poor habitat (minimal probability of occurrence). The HSI is calculated on a single pond basis but takes into account surrounding terrestrial habitat and local pond density. The tool is particularly useful in survey and mitigation; one benefit is that it can be undertaken in a single field visit

(with supporting desk work) and at any time of the year (though some variables are more easily measured in spring and summer).

Its main uses are:

- *In surveys, to assess habitat quality in a repeatable, objective manner. In particular, the HSI allows individual factors that influence newt presence to be easily identified. These factors could help explain a very high or very low count. A high HSI can justify employing additional survey effort or methods if no newts are found initially.*
- *In impact assessments, to allow a measure of how damaging a development could be. HSI might also be used as a screening tool to select no impact or minimal impact options.*
- *In risk assessments, helping to decide whether an offence might be committed, and therefore whether a licence should be applied for. If a pond has a very low HSI score (say <0.5) then there would typically be a minimal chance of GCN presence. Hence, with due care and in limited circumstances the HSI might be used in the absence of newt surveys to help conclude that an offence is highly unlikely and therefore work could proceed in that area without a licence. This application of the HSI should only be used where the predicted impacts - were newts to be present - would be low (e.g. development at least 100m from pond, permanent habitat loss <0.5ha or temporary habitat loss <5ha). The developer should be aware that there would still be a risk of committing an offence, but it would typically be so low as to be negligible. Obviously, note that if HSI >0.5, this is not confirmation of newt presence; a newt presence/absence survey would be required to confirm this.*
- *In habitat enhancement, HSI could be used to identify the low-scoring factors in an existing pond that need addressing to improve its quality for newts.*
- *In post-development monitoring, to allow an assessment of habitat condition.*

3.30 GCN HSI Limitations:

The GCN HSI is not a substitute for undertaking newt surveys; it indicates but cannot confirm presence or absence of GCN. A licence application that infers GCN presence solely from HSI data (i.e. no newt survey data presented) will be rejected. Very low HSI scores may be used along with scheme details to infer a minimal chance of committing an offence in low impact situations. This is on a risk assessment basis and developers should be aware of the potential hazards of this approach. Care should be taken when interpreting low HSI scores; for example, a low scoring pond close to an occupied newt pond may still support newts.

3.31 The site and surrounding habitats were also assessed relative to their potential to offer suitability for wider, generalist amphibians, in addition to GCN, for example common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and common frog (*Rana temporaria*).

3.32 The site and its surroundings were assessed for suitability for use by reptiles, with particular attention paid to features that could be used as basking areas (e.g. south-facing slopes), hibernation sites (e.g. banks, walls, leaf litter, piles of hardcore) and opportunities for foraging (e.g. rough grassland and scrub). Beebee & Griffiths (2000) state specific habitat preferences of common UK reptiles:

- Common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) use a variety of habitats from woodland glades to heaths, walls and pastures, as well as brownfield sites.
- Grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) have broadly similar habitat requirements to the above species, but with an increased reliance on wetland habitats where they prey on amphibian species.

- 3.33 In assessment of a site for reptiles several important habitat characteristics are considered, outlined in **Table 3.2** below, as derived from the Reptile Habitat Management Handbook (Edgar, 2010).

Table 3.2 – Important habitat characteristics for reptiles

1. Location (in respect of species range)	7. Connectivity to good quality habitat
2. Vegetation structure	8. Prey abundance
3. Insolation	9. Refuge opportunity
4. Aspect	10. Hibernation habitat potential
5. Topography	11. Disturbance regime
6. Surface geology	12. Egg-laying site potential

Invertebrates

- 3.34 The site was assessed for the presence of features that should be considered of high value to other invertebrates. Several important features were considered, based on the assemblage descriptions provided within the Research Report “Surveying terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates for conservation evaluation” (NERR005, 2007), including but not limited to:
- Wood decay,
 - Early successional mosaic habitat,
 - Shaded ground layer,
 - Still and flowing water.

Quality Assurance (QA)

- 3.35 The results, conclusions and recommendations of this report are based on a number of factors i.e.
- Skills and experience of the surveyor,
 - Knowledge of flora and fauna relevant to the site location and geographical range,
 - Nature of the immediate and surrounding habitat in relation to shelter, foraging and commuting opportunities.
- 3.36 The results, conclusions and recommendations of this report have been assessed by Mrs. K. Wilding, Director of Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd, and her assessment concurs with the findings and recommendations of the surveyor and author Mr. B. Richards.

4.0 Limitations

- 4.1 This report does not contain a comprehensive list entailing the totality of botanical taxa on site. Species listed within **Appendix II** are recorded from a combination of the seasonal timing that the survey took place and botanical identification skills of the surveyor. Many plant species are only evident at certain times of the year; consequently, it is possible that some plant species may have gone undetected.
- 4.2 The optimal time of the year to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal / UK Habitats survey is April to October; the survey was therefore undertaken within the optimum period.
- 4.3 The survey took place within a period of time when bats are known to be active in favourable weather, but prior to the full bat active season (broadly acknowledged to be May – September). Given the suitable weather conditions on and around the date of survey it is considered highly likely that bats, subject to their presence in proximity to the site, were likely active at night, foraging in suitable habitats on invertebrate prey items, with female bats likely to have been moving towards established summer breeding roosts. Survey timings are therefore not considered to be a limitation in relation to bats.
- 4.4 The survey was conducted within the breeding bird season, when evidence of nesting and other breeding behaviours can be most readily identified.
- 4.5 The survey was carried out within the optimal period for water vole surveys (typically April – September); whilst an assessment of habitat suitability for this species can be undertaken year-round, given that the survey was within the optimum period this is not considered a constraint.
- 4.6 Two ponds are present within 250m of the application site; these are both within land under private ownership, and thus were not able to be fully accessed. A partial assessment is possible from a combination of satellite imagery and from viewpoints onto the waterbodies from public rights of way. A precautionary approach has been applied regardless, and thus is it not considered a significant constraint for this preliminary assessment.
- 4.7 In considering all potential survey constraints, no further significant limitations were experienced that might adversely influence the results, conclusions, and recommendations of this report.

5.0 Desk Study Results

- 5.1 The site of the proposed works (referred to in-part as “the application site” and “the site”) is located south-east of Fleet Hill in Eversley, approximately 7.0km south-west of Wokingham town centre. The red line boundary of the site comprises two distinct areas of open space, bordered by mature, individual trees and woodland blocks. The site totals an area of 0.80 hectares (ha); see **Figure 5.1** below for location of the site within the surrounding landscape.



Figure 5.1 – Location of red and blue line boundaries within surrounding landscape © Google Earth Pro 2025

- 5.2 The surrounding environment is largely rural in nature, but with some level of sub-urban / village development to the north and west, comprising of large, detached dwellings with expansive amenity garden space with scattered mature trees and hedgerows. To the immediate south of the site is a large block of deciduous woodland associated with the River Blackwater, with associated riverine habitats also present.

Relevant Planning History

- 5.3 A number of planning applications have been undertaken at the site address and are visible on the Wokingham Borough Council planning map, though the most recent of these (Application Reference: F/2011/1695⁴) was undertaken in 2011, and no ecological documentation was produced.

⁴ See:

<https://planning.wokingham.gov.uk/FastWebPL/fulldetail.asp?AltRef=111935&ApplicationNumber=111935&AddressPrefix=&Postcode=&KeywordSearch=&Submit=Search>

- 5.4 There are also a variety of planning applications which have been made in proximity to the site; whilst the majority of these have been considered, a live application (Application Reference: VAR/2013/2552⁵) is present adjacent to the east of the blue line ownership in relation to a variation of conditions for a large scale minerals application for proposed sand and gravel extraction. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was produced in support of the original application by WYG (now Tetra Tech); where relevant, results from this assessment have been included in the relevant sub-headings below.

Designated Sites

- 5.5 A total of two statutory designated sites are present within 2.0km of the site (see **Table 5.1** below for details and **Figure 5.2** overleaf for a visual aid).

Table 5.1 – Statutory designation types and reasons for designation within 2.0 kilometres buffer

Site name	Designation type	Interest features
Bramshill (1.4km west)	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	The Natural England SSSI citation ⁶ states the following: “Bramshill comprises extensive areas of conifer plantation together with a series of shallow acidic ponds within relic wet heathland and a small unimproved grassland area adjacent which provides habitat for the nationally rare small fleabane <i>Pulicaria vulgaris</i> . This site is notified for a series of shallow acid ponds and associated mire, which support a rich assemblage of dragonfly and damselfly, and rotationally felled conifer plantation, which provides habitat for internationally important populations of nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler.”
Thames Basin Heaths (1.4km west)	Special Protection Area (SPA)	The Natural England SPA citation ⁷ states the following: “The open heathland habitats overlie sand and gravel sediments which give rise to sandy or peaty acidic soils, supporting dry heathy vegetation on well-drained slopes, wet heath on low lying shallow slopes and bogs in valleys. The site consists of tracts of heathland, scrub and woodland, once almost continuous, but now fragmented into separate blocks by roads, urban development and farmland. Less open habitats of scrub, acidic woodland and conifer plantations dominate, within which are scattered areas of open heath and mire. The site supports important breeding populations of a number of birds of lowland heathland, especially nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> and woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i> , both of which nest on the ground, often at the woodland/heathland edge, and Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i> , which often nests in gorse <i>Ulex sp.</i> Scattered trees and scrub are used for roosting.”

⁵ See:

<https://planning.wokingham.gov.uk/FastWebPL/detail.asp?AltRef=131571&ApplicationNumber=VAR%2F2013%2F2552&AddressPrefix=&Postcode=&KeywordSearch=&Submit=Search>

⁶ See: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1003946.pdf>

⁷ See: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/6402779023147008>

Land at the Tally Ho Public House, Fleet Hill, Eversley, Wokingham, RG27 0RR Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

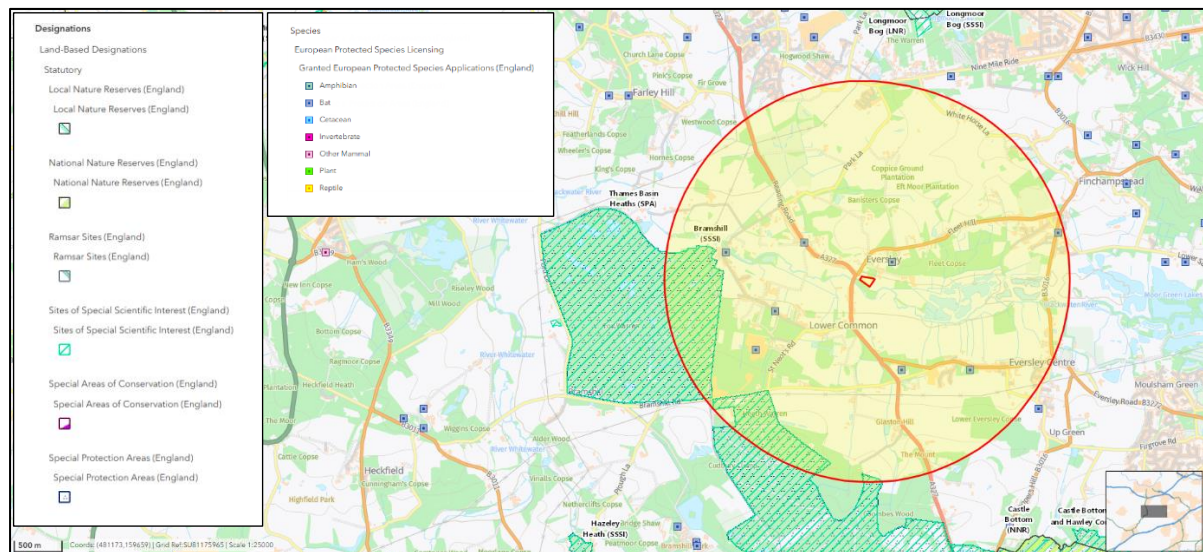


Figure 5.2 – EPSML (circled) & designated site data within 2.0km of application site © MAGiC Maps 2025

- 5.6 The site is positioned within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for several SSSIs, with the nearest being Bramshill SSSI as discussed previously.
- 5.7 Based on the IRZ – Threshold Checker⁸ on MAGiC Maps 2025 for the location of the site, the site does not meet any of the listed development descriptions and thus the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial SSSIs or the SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites which they underpin.
- 5.8 As per the ‘Local Wildlife Sites in Wokingham 2024’, an LWS is present within close proximity of the site, though at this stage it is unclear whether this LWS boundary overlaps with part of the site boundary. No further information is available regarding this LWS in the absence of a further data search.
- 5.9 Given the presence of woodland within the site boundary and the proximity of this to the site-adjacent LWS, any impact to the woodland on site could have deleterious impacts upon the LWS woodland and the contained species.

Habitats

- 5.10 An online search of MAGiC Maps identified the following priority habitats within a 2.0km search radius (see **Table 5.2** below).

Table 5.2 – Priority habitats located within 2.0km buffer

Habitat Type	Designation	Distance to site
Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	Ancient Woodland	0.5km east
Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	Priority Habitat Inventory	0.1km south-east
Deciduous Woodland	Priority Habitat Inventory	Adj. to site south
Good quality semi-improved grassland	Priority Habitat Inventory	Adj. to site west

⁸ See:

[https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0111344322302¬es=11401&location=477922,162551%20%20\(IRZ%20polygon%20centre\)](https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0111344322302¬es=11401&location=477922,162551%20%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre))

Habitat Type	Designation	Distance to site
Lowland dry acid grassland	Priority Habitat Inventory	1.7km south-west
Lowland heathland	Priority Habitat Inventory	1.0km south
Lowland meadow	Priority Habitat Inventory	0.2km east
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	Priority Habitat Inventory	Adj. to site east
Wood-pasture and Parkland	UK BAP Habitat	0.6km south

- 5.11 The Wokingham BAP⁹ includes a number of Habitat Action Plans (HAPs), many of which appear to occur in the site-surrounding ecosystem, notably woodland, grassland and hedgerow, wetland and heathland.

Vegetation

- 5.12 The site is positioned within a **moderate** zone of the summarised botanical value map 2022¹⁰ under monad reference SD7762, with survey data indicating that the area has moderate proportion of species indicative of priority habitats in the boundary, fen marsh & swamps and the woodland broad habitat types. No indicators for Rare, Scarce and Threatened (RST) botanical species were recorded, though survey coverage was noted as being poor.

Bats

- 5.13 An online search of MAGiC maps revealed that ten EPSMLs, some with multiple iterations, have been granted for bats within a 2.0km radius of the site (see **Table 5.3** below for further information and **Figure 5.2** previous for a visual aid).

Table 5.3 – Bat EPSML data records from MAGiC Maps

Licence Number	Distance from site	Context (where relevant)
EPSM2012-4018	0.9km south	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long eared & Natterer's; destruction of resting place
EPSM2013-6071	0.9km south-west	Common pipistrelle & brown long eared; destruction of resting place
2014-67-EPS-MIT(1)	0.9km south	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long eared & Natterer's; impact unknown
2014-5482-EPS-MIT	0.7km west	Common pipistrelle & brown long eared; destruction of breeding site & resting place
2015-8925-EPS-MIT	0.9km south-west	Brown long eared; destruction of resting place
2015-10969-EPS-MIT(1)	1.4km west	Soprano pipistrelle; destruction of resting place
2015-15593-EPS-MIT	1.3km south-west	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle & brown long eared; destruction of breeding site & resting place

⁹ See: <https://wokingham.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Executive%20-%20Individual%20Member%20Decisions/201402180945/Agenda/266687.pdf>

¹⁰ Further information available: <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/86b755f2-b28f-48c9-b5b6-648d6bab6c40/summarised-botanical-value-map2022>

Licence Number	Distance from site	Context (where relevant)
2018-34986-EPS-MIT	1.3 km south-east	Common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle & brown long eared; destruction of resting place
2019-40646-EPS-MIT	2.0km north-east	Nathusius' pipistrelle; destruction of resting place
2019-41720-EPS-MIT	0.2km north-east	Brown long-eared & common pipistrelle; destruction of breeding site & resting place

- 5.14 The EIA associated with the mineral development to the south-east of the application site recorded the presence of a total of two Day roosts within trees, one for a soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and another for a Myotis bat (*Myotis sp.*); the application site for this application was stated to be of 'District' level importance in relation to bats.
- 5.15 The surrounding land provides high value foraging and commuting habitats for bats, with the network of broadleaved woodland along the river Blackwater providing an unilluminated, prey-species rich linear commuting feature which would facilitate the movement of bats between the large, occupied residential dwellings within Eversley and blocks of deciduous woodland, some of which is ancient & semi-natural, which provide foraging habitats of the highest value. The regions of pastoral grazing land in the vicinity of the site are typically delineated by linear strips of established woodland, which again would facilitate both the commuting and foraging of bats. Given the diverse habitat mosaic in proximity to the site, it is considered highly likely that the majority of the 12 species of bat which are known to inhabit the local region are present, given the abundance and diversity of foraging habitat. This includes edge-feeding species such as the common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), species more adapted to foraging in riverine habitats such as the Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), larger bat species such as the noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) which typically favour open pasture in proximity to woodland, as well as bat species which show a strong affinity for broadleaved and ancient woodland, including the brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).

Birds

- 5.16 The mosaic of open grassland and wetland habitats alongside the dense broadleaved woodland indicates that the site-surrounding habitats are potentially suitable for Sch.1 listed species such as woodlark, which are known to be present within designated sites in the wider area and typically favour heathland and woodland fringes within which to make their nests within shallow scrapes on the ground. Whilst no heathland is present within the immediate vicinity, several fragmented, relict areas are present within feasible connectivity of the site.
- 5.17 Given the presence of broadleaved and ancient woodland, priority grassland, wetland features and the River Blackwater within proximity to the site, a wide variety of more common bird species would find favourable nesting habitat, including tree nesters, ground nesters and potentially species adapted to riverine habitats also. The aforementioned linear and area features suitable for bats would also afford connective habitat for bird species in the wider landscape.

Other Terrestrial Mammals

- 5.18 The site is located in proximity to areas of extensive broadleaved woodland, including some ancient woodland and large parcels of priority deciduous woodland, with clear connectivity between these and the site in the form of the aforementioned linear scrub and woodland

blocks. Species such as badger and hedgehog would, therefore, find highly suitable habitat in the site-surrounding environs.

- 5.19 Site-surrounding habitats include the River Blackwater with associated tributaries and drainage channels which funnel into this feature; whilst they may hold some habitat suitability for species such as water vole, they are generally disconnected and isolated from one another and thus are unlikely to provide the required interconnected network of slow-moving waterbodies which are typically favoured by this species.
- 5.20 The EIA conducted in proximity of the site noted that no evidence of water vole was located, and they were reasonably scoped out of further assessment.
- 5.21 Otter (*Lutra lutra*) can also use features such as brooks and streams, though the site surrounding habitats are not considered highly suitable for this species in that they lack the required interconnectivity of running watercourses of a suitable size to host prey items favoured by this species. Otter have therefore been scoped out of further assessment.
- 5.22 The dense broadleaved woodland in proximity to the site would likely provide suitable structural heterogeneity for hazel dormouse, given the arboreal nature of this species; the woodland immediately adjacent is wet in nature, however, which does reduce the suitability somewhat given that this species typically requires dry woodland with dense leaf litter within which to hibernate over the winter months. The ancient woodland located to the north-east of the site may provide more suitable habitat, however. An EPSML for this species is located approximately 5.5km to the west of the application site, pertaining to a 2018 licence for the destruction of a resting place.

Herpetofauna

- 5.23 An online search of MAGiC maps revealed that no EPSMLs have been granted for GCN within a 2.0km radius of the site. A single Great Crested Newt Pond Surveys 2017 – 2019 data point is present at a distance of 550m to the north-east, though this pertains to an Absent record from 2018. One Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns point, noting a Present GCN record from 2015, is located within the search buffer, at a distance of 1.6km to the south-west, well outside of the reasonable commuting distance and beyond significant barriers to dispersal such as the River Blackwater and the rural development of Lower Common.
- 5.24 A detailed desktop assessment revealed the presence of two standing waterbodies within 250m of the application site (see **Figure 5.3** overleaf). Also present are a number of drainage ditches leading to and from the River Blackwater to the south of the site.

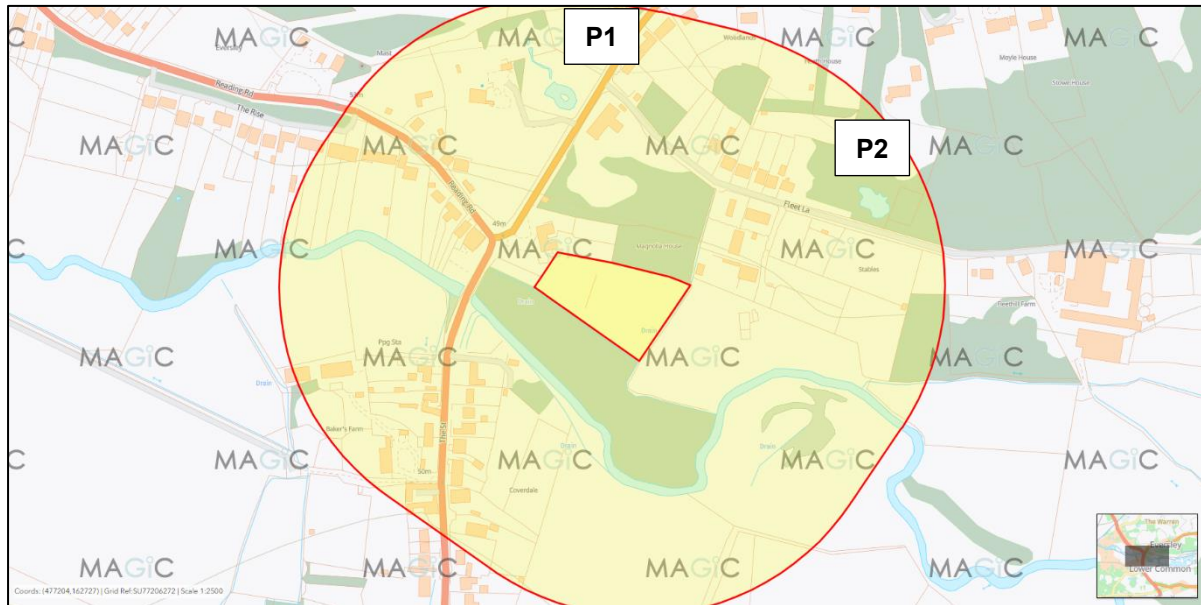


Figure 5.3 – Location of standing waterbodies within 250m of the site © MAGiC Maps 2025

- 5.25 The EIA undertook a number of GCN surveys at a large number of waterbodies; during these, no evidence of GCN was noted and they were reasonably determined to be absent.
- 5.26 Given the presence of the standing waterbodies alongside areas of suitable terrestrial habitat in the form of woodland blocks, hedgerows and mature garden space, more robust amphibians such as common frog and common toad are likely present and could feasibly access the application site.
- 5.27 Whilst there is some level of rural development in proximity to the site, the River Blackwater is flanked on either side by a mosaic of semi-natural habitats including priority woodland, grassland, wetland and heathland parcels as discussed previously. Given the habitats described, there is considered to be a relatively high likelihood of reptile presence in the site-surrounding ecosystem.

Invertebrates

- 5.28 The immediate surrounding environment features priority woodland parcels which are likely suitable to host locally notable invertebrate assemblages, with good connectivity to the application site. As discussed above, the mosaic of woodland, grassland, wetland and heathland habitats in proximity to the site provides abundant suitable habitat which would support locally and potentially nationally significant invertebrate assemblages.

6.0 Field Survey Results

6.1 Habitat Survey

6.1.1 See **Table 6.1.1** (below) for baseline information and habitat descriptions; refer to **Appendix I** for any supporting imagery; additional scientific names are given in **Appendix II**. Refer to **Appendix IV** – UK Habitats Maps for the location of described habitats & Target Notes (TN).

Table 6.1.1 – UK Habitat habitats within the survey area

Area habitat	Sec. Codes	Description
f2a Lowland fens	14 Scattered rushes	This parcel of land is clearly absent of management techniques, except for a small pathway which appears to have been mown into the south-western part of the habitat; the remainder consists of a tall sward dominated by forbs with a smaller constituent make-up of graminoids. Whilst relatively dry at the time of survey, it is acknowledged that this was following a period of drought, and thus is ordinarily likely to be much wetter, as evidenced by the species composition, which also includes species indicative of long continuity habitats.
	60 Long continuity habitat	
	413 Floodplain fen	
		The parcel is dominated by meadowsweet (<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>) and wild angelica (<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>), with the former dominating much of the sward especially at the centre of the parcel along with common sedge (<i>Carex nigra</i>) and sweet vernal-grass (<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>). To the fringes of the habitat, graminoids are more prevalent, and include species such as sheep's-fescue (<i>Festuca ovina</i>), cock's-foot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>), meadow foxtail (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>), creeping soft-grass (<i>Holcus mollis</i>), rough meadow-grass (<i>Poa trivialis</i>), field wood-rush (<i>Luzula campestris</i>) and abundant greater tussock-sedge (<i>Carex paniculata</i>). Both pignut (<i>Conopodium majus</i>) and tormentil (<i>Potentilla erecta</i>) are present across the parcel, indicating long continuity, whilst soft-rush (<i>Juncus effusus</i>) and sharp-flowered rush (<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>) can be found throughout, indicative of the wetter nature of the habitat. Other forbs present within the habitat include common sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosa</i>), meadow vetchling (<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>), bugle (<i>Ajuga reptans</i>), common knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), tufted vetch (<i>Vicia cracca</i>), sheep's sorrel (<i>Rumex acetosella</i>), cuckooflower (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>) and marsh-bedstraw (<i>Galium palustre</i>). Whilst only a preliminary assessment was undertaken rather than a full NVC survey, this habitat shows affinity for the NVC community M27 <i>Filipendula ulmaria</i> – <i>Angelica sylvestris</i> mire, which is typically found where moist, reasonably rich, circumneutral soils occur in situations protected from grazing, and often along slow-moving streams, therefore being commonly present on the floodplains of lowland Britain. The combination of the species composition and the location of the site both matching the above indicates that this parcel would likely fall within this NVC community.

Area habitat	Sec. Codes	Description
g3c Other neutral grassland	14 Scattered rushes 32 Scattered trees 106 Mown	A distinct parcel is present directly adjacent to the west of the above habitat, which appears to be subject to regular disturbance and management via mowing. Based on the species composition, it is evident that higher levels of enrichment are present within this parcel compared to the above, though there are pockets of species less tolerant of such enrichment and thus it is unlikely that the grassland has been subject to severe grazing pressure. The habitat has a species density of around 10 species per m², and whilst the ground was generally dry at the time of survey, as above it is acknowledged that this was during a time of drought and thus the parcel may feature some wet depressions within the winter months and may also be inundated during times of flood. Graminoids are more common within this parcel than the fen above, with sweet vernal-grass, cock's-foot, meadow foxtail, rough meadow-grass and field wood-rush all present alongside creeping bent (<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>), Yorkshire-fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>) and annual meadow-grass (<i>Poa annua</i>), along with scattered hard rush (<i>Juncus inflexus</i>) and hairy sedge (<i>Carex hirta</i>). A variety of forbs are also present, including pignut, meadowsweet and common sorrel, alongside creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), creeping thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>), common chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>), white clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), cat's-ear (<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>), meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>), yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>), dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>), daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>) and germander speedwell (<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>). Also present within the parcel are a number of scattered individual trees, these have been discussed within their respective row below.
g4 Modified grassland	16 Tall forbs	Two parcels of highly enriched, modified grassland are present at areas along the southern part of the site; these typically have a taller sward than the neutral grassland and fen, appearing to be formed via a combination of increased enrichment and a lack of management, likely arising from the dumping of garden waste. Species present include dominant Yorkshire-fog, annual meadow-grass, cock's-foot and creeping bent, as well as cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>), common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), greater plantain (<i>Plantago major</i>), garlic mustard (<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>), white dead-nettle (<i>Lamium album</i>), greater celandine (<i>Chelidonium majus</i>), Lords-and-Ladies (<i>Arum maculatum</i>) and herb-Robert (<i>Geranium robertianum</i>); species density is approximately 4 / 5 species per m².

Area habitat	Sec. Codes	Description
w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland	30 Semi-natural woodland	Woodland is located around much of the boundary with the canopy overlapping from the site adjacent habitats and the ground flora being indicative of woodland; this surrounding woodland parcel is identified on the Arboricultural Statement (© LandArb Solutions) as G9 & T8. Species present within this parcel include ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), oak (<i>Quercus sp.</i>) and willow (<i>Salix sp.</i>) in the upper canopy, with a woody shrub layer formed of hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), birch (<i>Betula sp.</i>), holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>), hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>). The ground flora is dominated by a combination of graminoids listed previously, though notably including a high density of greater tussock-sedge, which carpets the ground cover alongside bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>) which is clearly present throughout the majority of the adjacent woodland parcel. Other forbs identified include abundant pignut, as well as greater stitchwort (<i>Stellaria holostea</i>), dog's mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>), ground-ivy (<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>), wood avens (<i>Geum urbanum</i>) and lesser celandine (<i>Ficaria verna</i>). Given the location of the woodland, within the floodplain of the neighbouring river and in close proximity to the fen habitat, the ground surface appeared to be inundated for at least part of the year.
Individual trees Rural Tree	203 Mature tree	A number of scattered individual trees are present within the g3c parcel on site; these are typically mature individuals though they are isolated from any other trees on site and thus have been included as individual specimens. These are identified within the Arboricultural Statement (© LandArb Solutions) as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T8. Each has been broken down below for further information. T1: A mature ash at the southern end of the ditch on site with significant decay damage along the main trunk, with fungus growth evident and a reduced, thinning crown canopy (DBH = 77cm, Size = Large). T2: A semi-mature oak on the eastern bank of ditch with minor deadwood present (DBH = 25cm, Size = Small). T3: A mature ash on the eastern bank of the ditch with evidence of previous limb loss, exposed heartwood and a thinning canopy (DBH = 52cm, Size = Medium). T4: A mature oak positioned centrally within the g3c parcel with minor deadwood (DBH = 49cm, Size = Medium). T5: A semi-mature oak positioned centrally within the g3c parcel with deadwood, a leaning stem, evidence of previous pruning within the lower canopy and abscised branches (DBH = 45cm, Size = Medium). T6: A mature ash located to the north of the site, with minor deadwood, ivy present on stem and a thinning canopy (DBH = 60cm, Size = Medium). T7: A semi-mature oak positioned to the north of the site, with minor deadwood present and crossing branches (DBH = 50cm, Size = Medium).

Riverine habitat	Sec. Codes	Description
r1g Other standing water	50 Ditch	A ditch is present along part of the northern and western boundaries of the site; at the time of survey no standing water was observed and rather only stagnant areas of wet mud were noted by the surveyor. As discussed previously, this is likely a result of the drought conditions immediately prior to the survey date. Plant species located include brooklime (<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>), indicative of a wetter ground surface, alongside lesser celandine, herb-Robert, wavy bitter-cress (<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>), common ragwort (<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>), male-fern (<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>) and broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>).
Target Notes		
1	Location of tormentil	
2	Location of bluebell	

6.1.2 Lowland fen is listed as a priority habitat under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act; additionally, this habitat is classed as an Irreplaceable Habitat under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements.

6.1.3 The lowland mixed deciduous woodland present on site is also listed as a priority habitat under national policy.

6.1.4 In addition, the woodland and fen habitats on site are identified as a priority habitat on the Wokingham BAP, covered by the Woodland HAP and the Wetland HAP respectively.

6.2 Vegetation

Notable species

6.2.1 A large number of individual native bluebells were identified around the southern and eastern site borders where the on-site habitats meet the neighbouring priority woodland parcel; see Target Notes in **Appendix IV** for location. This species is listed under Schedule 8 of the WCA (1981).

Invasive non-native species (INNS)

6.2.2 No INNS listed under either Sch.9 of the WCA (1981) or Sch.2 of the IASO (2018) were located on site during the diurnal appraisal.

6.3 Bats

Buildings

6.3.1 No built structures are present within the red line boundary of the application site; thus, none were assessed relative to their potential to offer roosting suitability for bats.

Trees

6.3.2 There are a number of mature, deciduous trees present within the red line boundary of the site, as discussed within **Table 6.1.1**. All of these were subject to a GLTA, which found the

majority to be absent of any cracks, cavities, callus rolls, rot holes, splits or other features typically favoured by bats for roosting purposes. Whilst deadwood features are noted at T2, T3, T4, T6 & T7 and ivy is present on T5, all areas were able to be investigated in full and were found to be non-extensive and / or angled in a such a way which would negate the likelihood of usage by bats. All of these trees have therefore been collectively categorised as pertaining to a potential roost suitability of '**None**' in line with BCT guidance.

- 6.3.3 T1 was noted to host a PRF, with decay damage down the main trunk providing a large, open crevice with some areas which led to small cavities within the exposed heartwood. The majority of these were able to be investigated in full from ground level and were subsequently noted as being non-extensive and unsuitable for roosting bats, however a single PRF is present which could offer a roosting space for an individual, or low number of bats, on the western facing bough of the main trunk. This has been formally identified as a '**PRF-I**', in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th ed. (2023).

Activity

- 6.3.4 The application site hosts a variety of taller vegetation, including the lowland mixed deciduous woodland fringe to the edges of the red line boundary, as well as the individual trees along the western and northern site boundaries. The location of the site, in close proximity to large, occupied dwellings which could facilitate roosting behaviour by both small numbers of bats as well as maternity colonies, further increases its value, especially as it lies on the border of Eversley directly adjacent to large blocks of riverine deciduous woodland.
- 6.3.5 The above, in combination with the lack of illumination and the fen habitat within the boundary of the site, which likely support a diverse range of invertebrate prey items, indicates that the site pertains to '**High**' value in relation to foraging and commuting bats.

Birds

- 6.4.1 In relation to WCA Schedule 1 specially protected bird species such as woodlark, it is considered that the site is generally absent of suitable nesting locations. This species typically favours open heathland on which to form in nests within shallow scrapes in the ground, ordinarily within grass tussocks which provide adequate cover. The grassland parcels to the western part of the site are close cropped in nature and are entirely absent of suitable nesting habitat for this species; whilst the fen to the east is more tussocky in nature and is subject to minimal disturbance, the wet nature of the ground surface reduces the suitability for ground nesting species such as woodlark.
- 6.4.2 Other Sch.1 listed species such as barn owl (*Tyto alba*) would find potential prey items within the fen habitat; a deceased shrew (*Sorex sp.*) was located within the parcel. The site is, however, absent of any platforms which could facilitate nesting or roosting by this, or any other Sch.1 raptor species, being absent of any typical roosting or nesting habitat, such as open and undisturbed barns/attics or large tree cavities.
- 6.4.3 Based on the combination of the above, the site is considered to be of generally low value for specially protected bird species, and the presence of any specially protected bird within the site boundary is therefore unlikely except on an occasional, opportunistic basis by passage species.
- 6.4.4 No current evidence of nesting was observed at the application site, though the woodland and individual trees were in full foliage and thus could easily have obscured active nests. These features offer a plethora of potential nesting platforms which could be utilised by woodland and garden bird species during the nesting bird season.

- 6.4.5 The application site is therefore considered suitable for the breeding purposes of a wider variety of common bird species associated with woodland and garden habitat.

6.5 Other Terrestrial Mammals

Badger

Hedgehog

- 6.5.4 Mammal runs are present within the site, and the mosaic of open, close-cropped grassland, tussocky features and the woodland within and surrounding the site indicates that the site-surrounding ecosystem provides high value habitat for hedgehog. Though no evidence of hedgehogs was encountered, it is highly likely that they are present in the immediate area and use the site at least on an occasional basis.

Water vole

- 6.5.5 The ditch located along the western and northern boundary of the site was assessed relative to its potential to offer suitability for water vole, using the aforementioned habitat suitability assessment, designed by Harris et al. (2009). Results are provided below (see **Table 6.5.1**).

Table 6.5.1 – Habitat Suitability scoring for water vole

Water Vole Habitat Suitability Assessment (1 if feature is present)	
< 3 = Unsuitable Habitat / 3 – 5 = Sub-optimal Habitat / > 5 = Optimal Habitat	Ditch
Well developed (>60%) bankside and aquatic vegetation providing cover	0
Year-round availability of food sources	0
Suitable refuge areas above extremes in water levels	0
Steep banks suitable for burrowing	1
Permanent open water	0
Ledge or berm present at water level	0
Lack of disturbance through poaching, grazing and/or recent management	0
Nest building opportunities in vegetation above water level	0
Habitat Suitability Assessment Score Total	1

- 6.5.6 The water within the ditch was non-existent at the time of survey, with the majority of areas having dried entirely with only small areas of stagnant mud present. Whilst the banks are steep, there is a complete absence of suitable vegetation which would provide cover and food sources for this species, and the land on either side is heavily managed and disturbed. The

southern end of the ditch is culverted beneath a crossing point, and the feature is disconnected from other pathways which could provide commuting suitability.

- 6.5.7 Based on the suitability assessment, the brook achieves a score of 1, indicating that it provides unsuitable habitat for water vole. This habitat suitability assessment was carried out alongside a general search for water vole evidence, which includes latrines, feeding remains and burrows. No such evidence was recorded by the surveyors, and thus the presence of water vole, even on an occasional commuting basis is considered reasonably unlikely.

Hazel dormouse

- 6.5.8 No evidence of hazel dormouse, such as gnawed hazel nuts or nests in hedgerows / scrub, was identified on site by the surveyor. Hazel is present within the lowland mixed deciduous woodland which forms the near entirety of the site surrounding habitat, along with other fruiting species which provide food sources for this species throughout the year, though the scrub layer is somewhat underdeveloped with the majority of trees being fully mature or saplings, with regrowth likely suppressed by deer; high-density deer population can suppress scrub and woodland regeneration and reduce heterogeneity, thus decreasing the likelihood of hazel dormouse presence.
- 6.5.9 The fen and grassland habitats present are considered wholly unsuitable for hazel dormouse, given the arboreal nature of the species, and the scattered individual mature trees are not sufficiently connected to provide a viable commuting route for this species. The absence of any connecting vertical diversity or structure indicates that the site is likely of lower value for hazel dormouse.
- 6.5.10 In addition, the location of the site on the immediate floodplain of the River Blackwater decreases the suitability of the habitat of this species; the likely seasonal inundation (as a minimum) of the surrounding woodland would prevent individual hazel dormouse from utilising the woodland for hibernation purposes, given that they typically hibernate at ground level beneath a layer of leaf litter and thus typically avoid areas which could be submerged.
- 6.5.11 See **Table 6.5.2** overleaf for an analysis of the site in relation to likely hazel dormouse presence (as adapted from The Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition, English Nature, 2006), with encountered habitat features identified.

Table 6.5.2 – Features of the site relative to potential to support hazel dormouse

Table 4 Factors affecting the probability of dormice being present on a woodland site within their known range. This includes ancient woodland sites, Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and modern broadleaved or conifer plantations

Increased probability	- Large woods: area over 50 ha – very likely; at least 20 ha – likely; between 2 and 20 ha – possible. - Adjacent to ancient woodland or PAWS (including conifer), scrub or early successional stage woodland, including conifer. - Wide range of broadleaved species present, including some fruiting, either in patches, scattered or at the edge. - Wide range of ages of trees. - Species-rich shrub layer, especially with hazel, honeysuckle or bramble. - Species-rich edge strip or ride sides. - Thick, wide hedgerow connections to nearby suitable woodland. - Contains hazel or sweet chestnut coppice – ideally managed in small coupes. - No thinning history (for conifers).
Decreased probability	- Small wood, especially if mostly conifer. - Old conifer plantation subject to multiple thinning. - Isolated from other woodland or adjacent only to older conifer plantation already subjected to multiple thinning. - Little or no shrub understorey. - No fruiting broadleaved trees. - High local deer population suppressing most regeneration. - Presence of cattle, sheep or pigs. - Seasonally waterlogged ground. - Derelict coppice or clear-felled in very large coupes (that is, blocks of woodland) relative to the woodland area. - Site more than 300m above sea level.

6.6 Herpetofauna

Great crested newt (GCN)

6.6.1 Important elements to consider when assessing likely impacts against GCN includes:

- The scale, nature and magnitude of proposals,
- Site proximity to a potential breeding pond and to any additional ponds,
- Habitat linkage / barriers between potential breeding ponds and the site,
- Nature and extent of available terrestrial habitat around the pond,
- Area of site habitat loss,
- Nature of habitat to be lost and potential value to GCN,
- Most up to date Government guidance considering EPS.

- 6.6.2 As derived from the desktop assessment, no granted EPSMLs or 'Present' 'Great Crested Newt Pond Surveys 2017 – 2019 data points' are present within 2.0km. A single Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns present point is located within the search buffer, though this is positioned beyond the River Blackwater and the rural development of Lower Common which are considered to act as a significant barrier to dispersal which would prevent GCN from moving between the present record and the application site.
- 6.6.3 Two standing waterbodies occur within 250m of the application site; these are separated from the site by a distance of 140m and 175m respectively, and thus the red line boundary lies within the intermediate zone of both ponds' associated terrestrial habitat.
- 6.6.4 Both of these ponds were located on private land but could be partially seen from public footpaths; thus, they were partially assessed using the HSI tool. See **Table 6.6.1** for the pond description and **Tables 6.6.2 – 6.6.3** for detailed HSI results in line with current guidance. **Figure 6.6.1** showcases relative pond occupancy proportions. Where HSI indices could not be assessed, they have been left blank.

Table 6.6.1 – Pond descriptions within 250m radial buffer, with included HSI score

Pond 1 (P1)	
P1 is located approximately 140m to the north-west of the site beyond Fleet Hill and within a private garden. The pond is clearly lined with an artificial liner and includes an area of decking which likely facilitates fishing behaviour. The pond has an area of approximately 500m², and likely never dries, is 20% shaded 1m from shore, appears to have major waterfowl impacts, could possibly have fish, has a surrounding pond density of around 1.2 ponds per km², and is surrounded by poor quality terrestrial habitat. No assessment was able to be made on the following indices: SI4 – Water quality, SI10 – Macrophytes. Based on the above, the HSI value of P1 has been calculated as 0.44 – Poor.	
Pond 2 (P2)	
P2 is located approximately 175m to the north-east of the site beyond expanses of pastoral grazing land. The pond is present within a private garden but is bordered to the east by dense woodland. Decking is again present which likely facilitates fishing behaviour. The pond has an area of approximately 700m², likely never dries, is 70% shaded 1m from shore, appears to have major waterfowl impacts, could possibly have fish, has a surrounding pond density of around 1.9 ponds per km², and is surrounding by a combination of good and poor habitat which has been considered as moderate quality surrounding habitat. No assessment was able to be made on the following indices: SI4 – Water quality, SI10 – Macrophytes. Based on the above, the HSI value of P1 has been calculated as 0.46 – Poor.	

Table 6.6.2 – HSI quantitative assessment of the ponds

Pond Reference	P1	P2
SI1 – Location	1	1
SI2 – Pond area	1	1
SI3 – Pond drying	0.9	0.9
SI4 – Water quality	-	-
SI4 – Shade	1	0.8
SI6 – Fowl	0.01	0.01
SI7 – Fish	0.67	0.67
SI8 – Ponds	0.65	0.65
SI9 – Terr'l habitat	0.33	0.67
SI10 – Macrophytes	-	-
HSI	0.44	0.46

Table 6.6.3 – HSI scoring chart (a suitability scoring method for GCN developed by Mr. L. Brady)

Great Crested Newt (GCN) HSI Scoring					
HSI Score	<0.50	0.50 - 0.59	0.60 - 0.69	0.70 - 0.79	>0.80
Pond Suitability	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

NB: The HSI for great crested newts is a measure of habitat suitability. It is not a substitute for newt surveys. In general, ponds with high HSI scores are more likely to support great crested newts than those with low scores. However, the system is not sufficiently precise to allow the conclusion that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not do so. There is a positive correlation between HSI scores and the numbers of great crested newts observed in ponds. So, in general, high HSI scores are likely to be associated with greater numbers of great crested newts. However, the relationship is not sufficiently strong to allow predictions to be made about the numbers of newts in any particular pond.

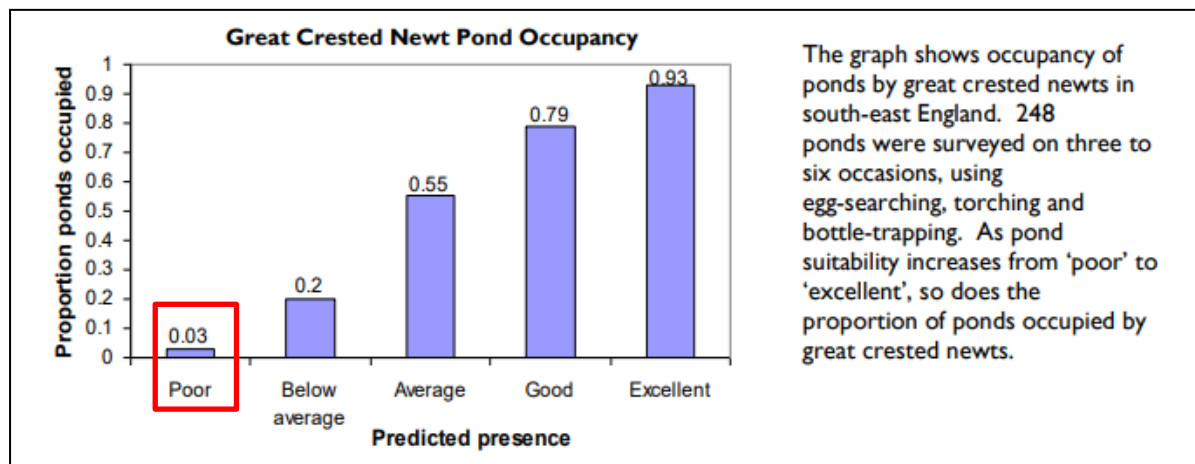


Figure 6.6.1 – GCN pond occupancy © ARC UK

6.6.5 As discussed previously, irrespective of the HSI scores the site lies within the Intermediate zone of the surrounding ponds associated core habitat.

NB: *Research presented by Natural England provides evidence that GCN are most likely to use terrestrial habitat within 100 metres of their breeding ponds, whilst the Great Crested Newt Method Statement for EPSML (Natural England) describes terrestrial habitat zones - the 50metres range of any GCN pond is the 'Core' habitat zone and the area most likely to support newts in a lifetime; the area between 51-250m is the 'Intermediate' zone and 250m+ is the 'Distant' zone; impacts to these zones, from individual ponds, are considered by the ecologist; both permanent and temporary impacts are taken into account.*

- 6.6.6 The application site does host some terrestrial habitat of value to GCN, subject to their presence in the area, though this is predominantly limited to areas of refuge that might be utilised during the winter terrestrial phase of their seasonal cycle and includes the roots of mature trees, both individual and within the woodland parcels, and the tussocks within the lowland fen to the east. The fen and ditch may provide some level of inundation during periods of flood.
- 6.6.7 Taking into account the absence of a functional pond network of value to GCN within or around the site that would be suitable to host a breeding metapopulation of this species, alongside the absence of any records within reasonable connectivity to the site, it is considered unlikely that GCN would be present at the application site even during their terrestrial phase.

Other amphibians

- 6.6.8 Based on the surrounding habitat information as described, the presence of more widespread amphibians such as common frog and common toad is considered likely, given these species' ability to cross significant barriers to dispersal which would prevent less robust amphibians such as GCN. The terrestrial features described previously are also considered suitable for these generalist species.

Reptiles

- 6.6.9 The site does provide some habitat suitability for reptile species; the tussocky fen habitat and the mosaic it forms with the surrounding woodland and other floodplain habitats could support species such as common lizard and grass snake, though the regularly disturbed nature of the western part of the site and both grassland types indicates that they are unlikely to support reptiles.

6.7 Invertebrates

- 6.7.1 Lowland fen habitats are noted as being hugely important habitats for a variety of invertebrate species, including those which are specially protected. Research at fenland sites in the UK has determined that these habitats are known to host more than 50% of all UK dragonfly species, and large numbers of Coleopterans, particularly aquatic beetles. Other notable species include arachnids and Orthopterans.
- 6.7.2 At this preliminary stage, the presence of specially protected invertebrate species within this habitat cannot be ruled out.
- 6.7.3 Other on site habitats are locally common; though they may provide suitable habitat for a diverse assemblage of common invertebrate species, they are not considered locally notable.

7.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

Designated Sites

- 7.1 The site is positioned within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for several SSSIs, with the nearest being Bramshill SSSI as discussed previously.
- 7.2 Based on the IRZ – Threshold Checker on MAGiC Maps 2025 for the location of the site, the site does not meet any of the listed development descriptions and thus the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial SSSIs or the SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites which they underpin.
- 7.3 No further consultation with Natural England in relation to designated sites is therefore deemed necessary.
- 7.4 An LWS is present within close proximity of the site, though at this stage it is unclear whether this LWS boundary overlaps with part of the site boundary.
- 7.5 Given the presence of woodland within the site boundary and the proximity of this to the site-adjacent LWS, any impact to the woodland on site could have deleterious impacts upon the LWS woodland and the species it hosts.
- 7.6 It is therefore recommended that measures are implemented at the site, during and following works, to avoid impacting upon the LWS and its citation features, which would therefore negate the requirement for an LWS Impact Assessment to be carried out. See section 7.13 & 7.17 below.

Habitats

- 7.7 The lowland fen habitat which makes up the eastern portion of the site is classed as an Irreplaceable Habitat under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements and is additionally listed as a priority habitat under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act.
- 7.8 Whilst proposals have not yet been finalised, initial drawings indicate that the applicant plans to use all of the red line boundary area in which to create additionally outdoor seating for the adjacent public house.
- 7.9 It is recommended that the scope of works is amended to remove any direct impacts to the lowland fen habitat, with the removal of any outdoor seating, tree planting or any other measures within the defined boundaries of this habitat. It would additionally be beneficial to implement a locked gate over the access point to the fen to prevent increased disturbance by members of the public or by staff members / groundskeepers at the public house.
- 7.10 Lowland fens are inherently dependent on the hydrological process in surrounding habitats, given that they are waterlogged systems which rely on the natural and uninterrupted movement of water from whichever source they rely on. In this case, the feature is a floodplain fen, and as such the water source will not be impacted upon by the proposed development, though it is recommended that no drainage ditches are dug as this will have deleterious impacts on the habitat by way of impacting the natural hydrological process. Should any future management of the water table be proposed, the applicant should consult guidance in relation to the potential impacts of groundwater extraction¹¹.

¹¹ See: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/mfzpnjwb/guidance-on-assessing-the-impacts-of-developments-on-groundwater-abstractions.docx#:~:text=Qualitative%20assessment%20of%20the%20potential,reversibility%20of%20any%20potential%20impacts>.

- 7.11 Wetland features such as fens are also highly reliant on the surrounding hydrological zone, and can be degraded by water extraction, the addition of drainage ditches and /or increased levels of agricultural pollution within the catchment area. With this in mind, it is recommended that a 20m buffer from the border of the habitat is created, within which no additional tree planting should occur. This will aim to prevent additional water extraction by the orchard tree species which are proposed to be planted within the space; see **Figure 7.1** below.



Figure 7.1 – Location of the recommended buffer within which no trees should be planted in relation to the on-site habitat

- 7.12 The lowland mixed deciduous woodland to the fringes of the site is a priority habitat under national policy and likely forms an important part of the citation features of the adjacent LWS.
- 7.13 As such, it is recommended that no impacts occur to this habitat; no tree removal appears to be recommended within the site associated arboricultural statement, and the addition of orchard trees and a wildflower mix is unlikely to have any deleterious impact upon the woodland, and therefore on the LWS.
- 7.14 The arboricultural statement confirms that the nature of the proposals is not damaging to trees and provides further information in relation to Root Protection Areas (RPAs) and general site rules. No further recommendations in an ecological sense are deemed appropriate.

Vegetation

- 7.15 One specially protected species was identified at the site in the form of native bluebell, which is located within the fringes of the site in the priority woodland parcel; this species is protected from intentional damage or destruction under Schedule 8 of the WCA and is likely to form a component of the site adjacent LWS citation.

- 7.16 As per the above recommendations, no impacts will occur to the woodland or within any tree RPAs. No further recommendations are therefore deemed necessary to prevent impacts to this Sch.8 species.
- 7.17 If proposals are altered at any point to involve impacting upon areas where bluebell is present, then prior to commencement of the works the full extent of the bluebells should be mapped. Any areas of bluebell falling within the works area will require a detailed mitigation strategy, likely to include translocation of individuals in danger of damage or destruction.
- 7.18 No INNS were identified within the site boundary; thus no further recommendations are deemed necessary.
- 7.19 Any landscaping or planting carried out during the works should consider local soil types and habitats, and as such should prioritise native species which will better tolerate the soil type present on site and provision for faunal species present in the immediacy; a list of possible suitable species is listed in **Appendix III**.

Bats

Trees

- 7.20 A single individual tree within the site, T1, was identified as pertaining to a bat roost suitability of **PRF-I**, in accordance with BCT guidance (see **Figure 7.2**):

Table 7.2. Recommended minimum number of survey visits for presence/absence surveys to give confidence in a negative result for structures (also recommended for trees but unlikely to give confidence in a negative result).		
Low roost suitability or PRF-I	Moderate roost suitability	High roost suitability or PRF-M
One survey visit. One dusk emergence survey ^a (structures). No further surveys required (trees).	Two separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .	Three separate dusk emergence survey visits ^b .

Figure 7.2 – BCT extract on tree roost categorisation criteria

- 7.21 A categorisation of PRF-I would not incur a further survey, either an endoscopic investigation or dusk emergence survey, however, would entail a recommendation for the tree to be felled under a method statement to include section felling measures. In this case, however no further works are proposed to T1 and thus no further recommendations apply.
- 7.22 However, should proposals be altered to involve felling or management of trees, the applicant will be required to reconsult with an ecologist to assess which trees will require further assessment and to undertake the further surveys.
- 7.23 No further recommendations apply in relation to the trees categorised as holding a roosting potential of **None**.

Activity

- 7.24 The site does provide High value commuting and foraging habitat for bats, though given the low impact nature of the proposals, a nighttime bat walkover (NBW) is not deemed necessary. The woodland is to be retained in its entirety, along with the individual trees and fen habitat, and with the addition of fruiting species and a suitable grass seed mix it is considered that further provision will be provided, and that the site will therefore continue to provide for commuting and foraging bats.

- 7.25 Nonetheless, installation of overly harsh artificial lighting as part of any development that exceeds current levels may have a negative impact upon foraging / commuting bats in the landscape, subject to their presence, particularly if increased light spillage occurs in areas that are currently free from illumination, including woodland and boundary features. A bat-sensitive lighting plan is therefore recommended in order to avoid potential impacts to bats. Several options to consider have been listed below, though the reader is referred to the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' guidelines (August 2023) for further information.

Appropriate luminaire specifications: Light sources, lamps, LEDs and their fittings come in a myriad of different specifications which a lighting professional can help to select. However, the following should be considered when choosing luminaires and their potential impact on Key Habitats and features:

- All luminaires should lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used.
- LED luminaires should be used where possible due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability.
- A warm white light source (2700Kelvin or lower) should be adopted to reduce blue light component.
- Light sources should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone, 2012).
- Internal luminaires can be recessed (as opposed to using a pendant fitting) where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill.
- Waymarking inground markers (low output with cowls or similar to minimise upward light spill) to delineate path edges.
- Column heights should be carefully considered to minimise light spill and glare visibility. This should be balanced with the potential for increased numbers of columns and upward light reflectance as with bollards.
- Only luminaires with a negligible or zero Upward Light Ratio, and with good optical control, should be considered – See ILP GN01.
- Luminaires should always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
- Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow. For most general residential purposes, a 1 or 2 minute timer is likely to be appropriate.
- Use of a Central Management System (CMS) with additional web-enabled devices to light on demand.
- Use of motion sensors for local authority street lighting may not be feasible unless the authority has the potential for smart metering through a CMS.
- The use of bollard or low-level downward-directional luminaires is strongly discouraged. This is due to a considerable range of issues, such as unacceptable glare, poor illumination efficiency, unacceptable upward light output, increased upward light scatter from surfaces and poor facial recognition which makes them unsuitable for most sites. Therefore, they should only be considered in specific cases where the lighting professional and project manager are able to resolve these issues.
- Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely.

Birds

- 7.26 No evidence to suggest the presence of specially protected bird species was found on site, and the habitats present are generally unsuitable for such species. No specific recommendations therefore apply in relation to specially protected birds.

- 7.27 In relation to breeding birds, the site provides abundant viable nesting platforms for breeding birds during the nesting season of March – August inclusive, including the woodland and individual trees. No current evidence of nesting was observed at the application site, though the woodland and individual trees were in full foliage and thus could easily have obscured active nests.

NB: *All wild birds (with only minor exceptions) and their nests whilst being built or containing eggs or dependant young are protected from destruction, damage and disturbance under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is a punishable offence to interfere in any way with an active nest.*

- 7.28 It is acknowledged that no vegetation clearance is proposed, however as a precautionary measure it is recommended that any works to areas of nesting potential are undertaken outside of the nesting bird season of March – August inclusive. If works are proposed during this period, then a pre-commencement check should be carried out by a competent and professional Ecologist for signs of nesting behaviour within 48 hours or less prior to works commencing.

Point 3.24 of the British Standards Publication 42020:2013 defines a professional ecologist as: *“a person who has, through relevant education, training or experience, gained recognised qualifications and expertise in the field of ecology and environmental management.”*

- 7.29 Where / if active nests are / have been located by the Ecologist, then any works which may affect them would have to be delayed until the young have fledged and the nest has been abandoned naturally, this can be aided, for example, via implementation of appropriate buffer zone(s) around the nest site (typically 5 – 10 metres) in which no disturbance is permitted until the nest is no longer in use. This would have to be coordinated through the expert judgement of the professional ecologist and species pending.
- 7.30 The scheme could consider enhancement by way of erecting suitable nest boxes for the species present within the surrounding landscape, again secured via a suitably worded planning condition. Relevant, indicative biodiversity enhancement measures can be found in **Appendix III**.

Other Terrestrial Mammals

Badger & hedgehog

- No bulky equipment / general construction aggregates should be left around the development area, instead leave them on bare ground away from the risk zone.
- Stock piling of spoil material **MUST** be left un-compacted and not allowed to grass over, as if grassed over and compacted, terrestrial mammals may be encouraged to excavate new areas for refuge.
- Fires must not be used as a means of the disposing of waste materials.
- Any trenches or excavations must either be covered at the end of each working day, or a low angle (no more than 45°) sloping board of approximately 300mm width should be provisioned within any uncovered excavations to provide a means of escape for any terrestrial mammals.
- Any temporarily exposed open pipe system **MUST** be capped in such a way as to prevent badgers gaining access, as may happen when contractors are off site.
- In the event an underground void / potential sett entrance is exposed during the works, work must cease immediately; and an Ecologist must be contacted to determine if the opening forms part of a previously undiscovered tunnel network of a badger sett. If this cannot be ruled out, works will cease, and Natural England consulted for further advice.

Water vole

- 7.33 The ditch was assessed as offering unsuitable habitat for water vole, and is spatially isolated from any network of more suitable features; no further measures therefore apply.

Hazel dormouse

- 7.34 Based on the combination of the desktop and field study, the presence of hazel dormouse within or in close proximity to the site is considered to be highly unlikely; no further recommendations apply in relation to this species.

Herpetofauna

Great crested newt (GCN)

- 7.35 Regarding GCN, the combined results of the desktop and field study indicate that it is unlikely that this species is present within, or in close proximity to, the application boundary. No further recommendations are therefore made in relation to GCN.

Other amphibians

- 7.36 The presence of common amphibians is considered possible based on the habitats present at the site and in the surrounding area. Any works on site should therefore have due regard to local wildlife as discussed, and the RAMs detailed previous for terrestrial mammals should be extended to cover common amphibians.
- 7.37 Should any frogs or toads be encountered within the works area, they should be handled with wet gloves to prevent impact / injury and moved to an area of like for like habitat outside of the works area away from potential harm. The applicant and all contractors would be aware that if at any stage newts are encountered during works, or at any other stage of the programme of works, such works would be required to immediately cease and the Ecologist / ECoW would be made aware as to provide further guidance, if an Ecologist is not already present.

Reptiles

- 7.38 The combined desktop and field study results indicate that the presence of reptiles within the site is unlikely due to the historic disturbance within the site boundary and area proposed for works; no further recommendations are considered necessary.

Invertebrates

- 7.39 Based on the combination of the desktop and field-based study, the presence of specially protected invertebrates within the area proposed for works is unlikely, given the previous recommendations in relation to preventing any works to the irreplaceable fen habitat.
- 7.40 Given the scope of the works, which are likely to include some level of enhancement via the planting of orchard trees and a wildflower mix in the grassland, the impact of the proposals on invertebrates will likely be positive, when considered in tandem with the measures in relation to the fen habitat and negating the risk of hydrological impacts. No impacts are foreseen to populations of any priority invertebrates or invertebrate assemblages.
- 7.41 Nonetheless, the applicant might consider the inclusion of enhancement measures to maintain and improve the favourability of the site for invertebrates. Indicative enhancement measures which are deemed suitable for the scheme have been provided in **Appendix III**.

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Appendix I: Site Photographs



Plate 1 – *Character of g3c habitat at west of site, note mature individual trees*



Plate 2 – *Southern border of site, note mature deciduous woodland*



Plate 3 – *Dry ditch along northern and western site boundary*



Plate 4 – *Western border of lowland fen habitat*



Plate 5 – *Eastern area of lowland fen*

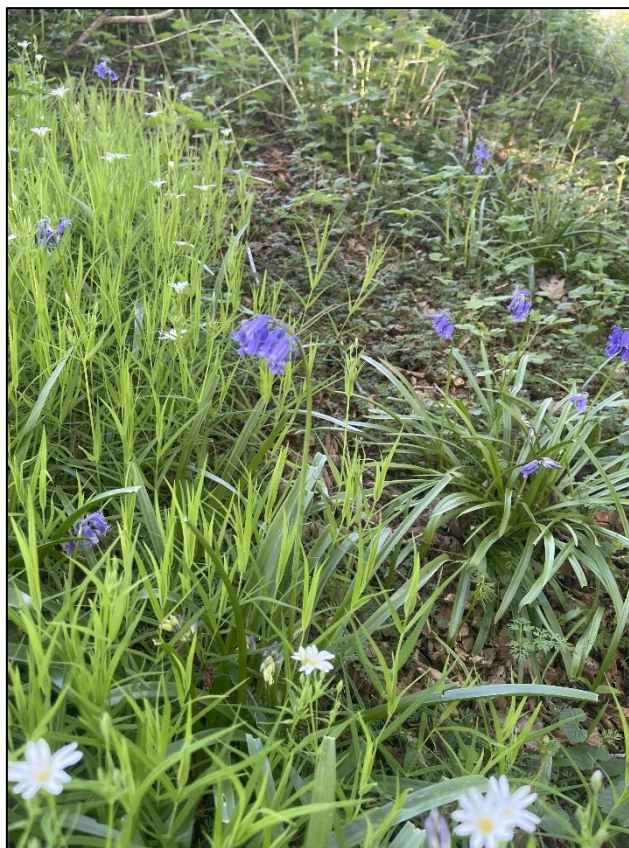


Plate 6 – *Bluebell present within fringes of site boundary*

Appendix II: Botanical Species List

Species nomenclature follows Stace, C (2019) – definitive English names; scientific names for given flora are presented below.

Any invasive non-native species are denoted by the acronym (INNS).

Division	Common Name	Scientific Name
Polypodiophyta	Male-fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>
Angiosperm	Annual Meadow-grass	<i>Poa annua</i>
	Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
	Birch	<i>Betula sp.</i>
	Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
	Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>
	Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
	Brooklime	<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>
	Bugle	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>
	Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>
	Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
	Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
	Common Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>
	Common Dog-violet	<i>Viola riviniana</i>
	Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>
	Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
	Common Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>
	Common Sedge	<i>Carex nigra</i>
	Common Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
	Creeping Bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>
	Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
	Creeping Soft-grass	<i>Holcus mollis</i>
	Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
	Cuckooflower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>
	Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
	Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>
	Dog's Mercury	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>
	Field Wood-rush	<i>Luzula campestris</i>
	Garlic Mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>
	Germander Speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>
	Greater Celandine	<i>Chelidonium majus</i>
	Greater Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>

Division	Common Name	Scientific Name
Angiosperm	Greater Stitchwort	<i>Stellaria holostea</i>
	Greater Tussock-sedge	<i>Carex paniculata</i>
	Ground-ivy	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
	Hairy Sedge	<i>Carex hirta</i>
	Hard Rush	<i>Juncus inflexus</i>
	Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
	Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>
	Herb-Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
	Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>
	Ivy-leaved Speedwell	<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>
	Lesser Celandine	<i>Ficaria verna</i>
	Lords-and-Ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>
	Marsh-bedstraw	<i>Galium palustre</i>
	Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
	Meadow Foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>
	Meadow Vetchling	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>
	Meadowsweet	<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>
	Oak	<i>Quercus sp.</i>
	Pignut	<i>Conopodium majus</i>
	Primrose	<i>Primula vulgaris</i>
	Rough Meadow-grass	<i>Poa trivialis</i>
	Sharp-flowered Rush	<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>
	Sheep's Fescues	<i>Festuca ovina</i>
	Sheep's Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>
	Soft-rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>
	Sweet Vernal-grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>
	Thyme-leaved Speedwell	<i>Veronica serpyllifolia</i>
	Tormentil	<i>Potentilla erecta</i>
	Tufted Vetch	<i>Vicia cracca</i>
	Wavy Bitter-cress	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>
	White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
	White Dead-nettle	<i>Lamium album</i>
	Wild Angelica	<i>Angelica sylvestris</i>
	Willow	<i>Salix sp.</i>
	Wood Avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
	Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
	Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>

Appendix III: Biodiversity Enhancement: General Recommendations

Bats

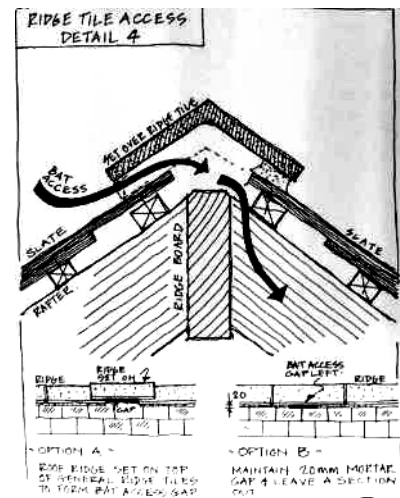
Integrated bat box

The Habibat Bat Box is a solid box made of insulating concrete with internal roosting space. The box blends seamlessly into brick-built properties and may be incorporated into the fabric of buildings, being best placed on gable elevations.



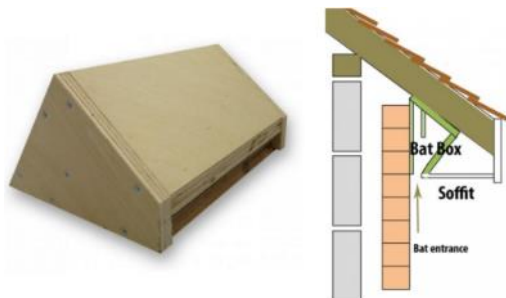
Ridge access

Where appropriated, ridge tile access should be made with the incorporation of traditional Bitumen 1F underfelt immediately beneath ridge tiles. Breathable BRM membrane can cause significant problems where bats are in contact with it, whereby their fine claws become entangled within the fibres of the membrane, entrapping and killing bats.



Soffit access

Where soffits are installed at gable elevations, roost provision may be installed in the form of a soffit bat box with internal roosting space.



Externally fitted boxes

A large number of externally fitted box models for bats exist for buildings and trees. Suitable models for both buildings and trees may include the Eco Kent Bat Box.



Breeding Birds – Other

This traditional design has proved to be highly effective in attracting robins, as well as other small species such as black redstart, spotted flycatcher and wren. It is designed to be installed on the walls of houses, barns, garden sheds or other buildings and should be hung so that the entrance is to one side (at an angle of 90° to the wall). The front panel can be easily removed for cleaning.

This type of box should not be made conspicuous on a tree or bush because small predators can enter through the unprotected opening. By hanging on a wall, predators won't be able to reach the box. Alternatively hide the box in Ivy, Honeysuckle or other climbing plants.



Hedgehog Home

Exterior quality 12mm resin bonded ply. The box remains untreated on the inside. Best situated in a quiet corner of the garden, and covered with leaves and other garden debris. Removable lid for cleaning purposes and reinforced corners, manufactured with surface sunk nails to resist rusting.

Nest box size: Height 22cm x Width 38cms x Length 47cm



Environmentally positive: Direct action to help hedgehog survival rates, encouraging biodiversity; FSC timber; Zero carbon footprint in use.

Amphibians – Hibernacula

Hibernacula are underground chambers that amphibians and reptiles use throughout the winter to protect themselves from the cold. Creating a hibernaculum will provide a safe space for amphibians and reptiles to hibernate over winter, as well as a spot for solitary bees to soak up the sun and for birds to relax. These habitats can be integrated into a wide variety newly created or enhanced habitats and attract herps to new areas.

You will need:

- A spade
- Logs and branches
- Rocks and bricks
- 2-3 drainpipe cut-offs or cement pipes (if using plastic drainpipes, roughen the insides with sandpaper, so that they are not too slippery for animals to climb)
- Turf or meadow flower seeds (optional)

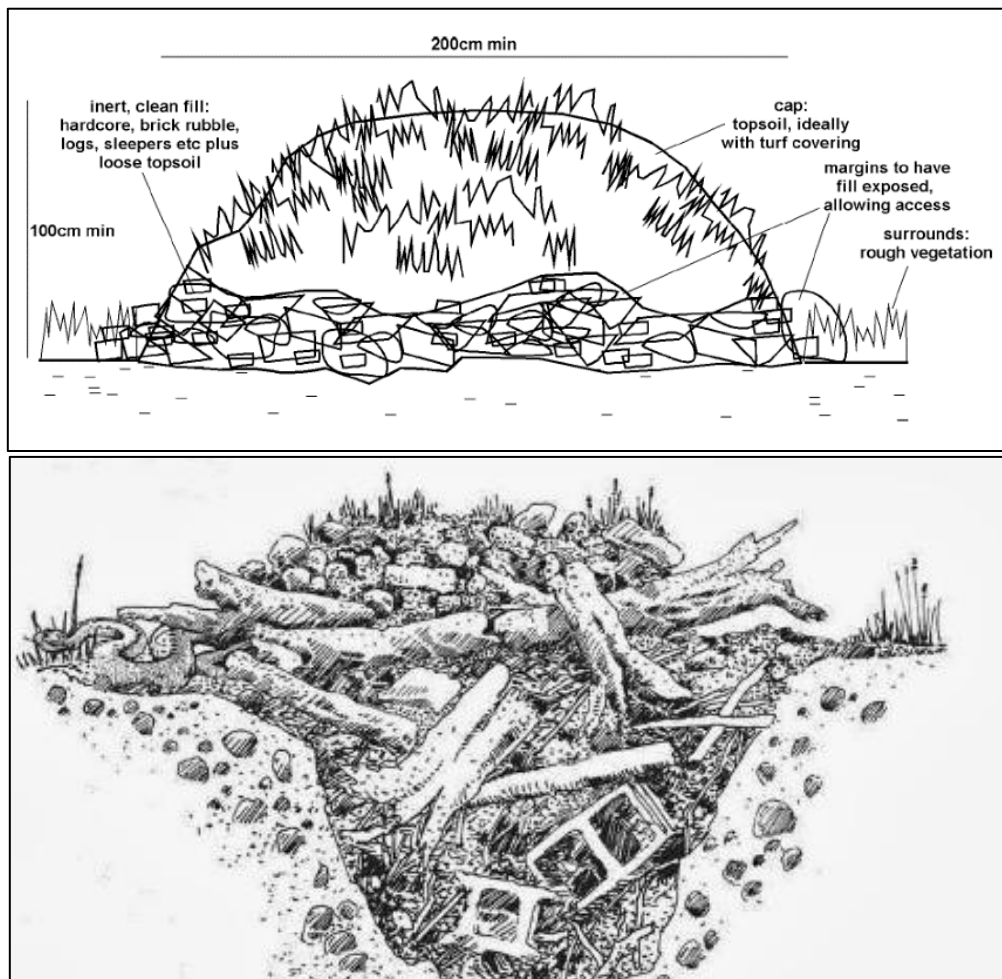
How to make your hibernaculum yourself:

- In a sunny spot, dig a hole about 50cm deep and 1.5 metres across.
- Fill with logs, branches, bricks and rocks, leaving plenty of gaps in between.
- Insert entrance tubes (drainpipes) at ground level into the hole.
- Cover the pile with soil (to about 50cm high).
- Plant meadow seeds or long grasses over the mound to create a feast for summer pollinators.

To construct a hibernaculum to Natural England standard:

- In desired areas, remove the turf from the footprint of the hibernaculum and set aside.
- On well-drained soil excavate to a depth of approximately 500 mm and set aside spoil (this is unnecessary on poorly drained soils).
- Fill the footprint or pit with core material. Materials likely to retain moisture are preferable, such as cut timber, brash and grubbed up tree roots. Other material such as inert hardcore, bricks, rocks, and building rubble may also be used. Materials that will decompose should not be placed beneath heavy components such as bricks or rocks, to reduce the risk of collapse.
- Pack the larger spaces within the core materials with wood chippings, loose topsoil or spoil.
- Cover the hibernaculum with the turves removed from the footprint.
- Take care not to create structures that might attract rodents, such as piles of rubble with many entrance holes. There has been no rigorous investigation of the optimum size of hibernacula, but larger hibernacula are probably more useful than small constructions because they contain a variety of different microhabitats and are more likely to maintain stable conditions.
- A suggested minimum size is 4.0 m long by 2.0 m wide by 1.0 m deep. 2.0 x 2.0 x 1.0 metres (length x width x height) as a minimum.

Illustrative aid for hibernaculum:



Invertebrates – Insect Hotels

Insect hotels provide a habitat for a variety of insects. Designs can be small or large enough to create a focal point in a wildlife garden and sturdy enough to last for years. Ensure hotels are made from untreated wood, which is important as insects need natural materials to thrive, and split into sections that each contain a different nesting material. There should be pine cones for ladybirds, wood slits for butterflies and moths, bamboo canes for solitary bees, and loose pieces of wood for beetles. Placement: Size against walls or fences and fix to prevent toppling. The feet keep the main body off the damp ground. You could push bricks against them to keep the bug hotel upright, which would also encourage woodlice and even frogs that enjoy cool stone conditions.



Invertebrates – Bee bricks

The Bee Brick can be used in place of a standard brick or block in construction to create habitat for solitary bees. Alternatively, it can be used as a standalone bee house in your garden or wild patch. It will provide much needed nesting space for solitary bee species such as red mason bees and leafcutter bees, both of which are non-aggressive.

Each Bee Brick contains cavities in which solitary bees can lay their eggs before sealing the entrance with mud and chewed-up vegetation. The offspring will emerge the following spring and the cycle will begin again. Each cavity goes part way into the brick, which is solid at the back. Bee Bricks should be placed in a warm sunny spot on a south-facing wall at a minimum height of 1m, with no vegetation obstructing the holes. It is highly recommended that bee-friendly plants should be located nearby so that the bees using the bricks have food, otherwise it is unlikely that the brick will be used. Available in a choice of four colours: white grey, dark grey, yellow and red.



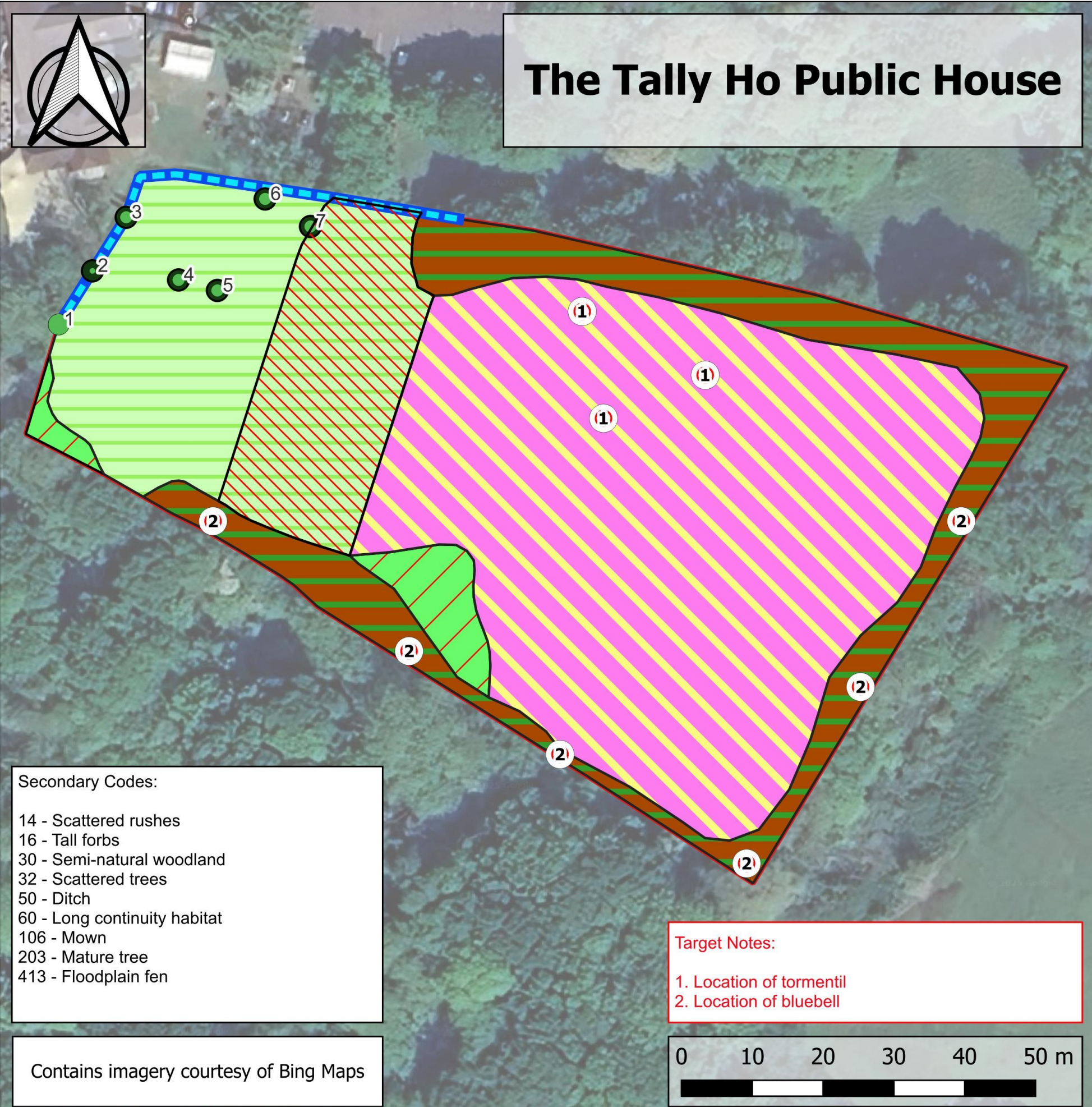
Specification

- * Material: Concrete
- * Dimensions: W 215mm x D 105mm x H 65mm
- * Weight: 2.9kg
- * Colours: White grey, yellow, dark grey and red

Native Planting and/or Landscaping

The below species have been assessed against the local soil and habitat types and are deemed suitable for the site. All plant material should comply with the minimum requirements in BS 3936-1: 1992 Specification for trees and shrubs and BS 3936-4: 2007 Specification for forest trees and BS 8545: 2014 Trees from Nursery to Independence in the Landscape. Any plant material, which in the opinion of the appointed Landscape Architect, does not meet the requirements of the Specification, or is unsuitable, or defective in any other way, will be rejected. The minimum specified sizes in the plant schedule will be strictly enforced. The contractor should replace all plants rejected at own cost. New hedgerows should be primarily comprised of blackthorn, hawthorn, hazel, and holly, whilst climbers/creepers such as hops and honeysuckle can be planted at the base of boundary features such as fences and walls, and new tree planting should include species such as pedunculate oak, wild cherry, and alder buckthorn.

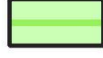
	Common Name	Scientific Name	Planting Preference
Ferns	Male Fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Semi-shade or shaded
	Soft Shield-fern	<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	Semi-shade or shaded
	Maidenhair Fern	<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	Suitable for rockeries / walled gardens
	Royal Fern	<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	Full sun in moist-damp areas
Herbaceous plants	Bloody Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium sanguineum</i>	Dry soils - suitable for rockeries
	Columbine	<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Semi-shade or open areas
	English Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Moist soils in semi-shade or open areas
	Giant Bellflower	<i>Campanula latifolia</i>	Semi-shade or open areas
	Greater Knapweed	<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>	Dry-moist soils. Suitable for borders
	Greater Woodrush	<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	Moist soils in semi-shade or open areas
	Meadow Crane's-bill	<i>Geranium pratense</i>	Humid-moist soils. Suitable for borders
	Musk Mallow	<i>Malva moschata</i>	Dry-moist soils. Suitable for borders and rockeries
	Sea Campion	<i>Silene uniflora</i>	Dry soils - suitable for rockeries
	Stinking Hellebore	<i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Semi-shade or open areas
Climbers	Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Dry-moist soils
	Hops	<i>Humulus lupulus</i>	Dry-moist soils
	Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Dry-moist soils
	Sweet-briar	<i>Rosa rubiginosa</i>	Dry-moist soils
Woody Shrubs	Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	-
	Guelder Rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	-
	Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	-
	Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	-
	Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	-
Trees	Alder Buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>	-
	Osier	<i>Salix viminalis</i>	-
	Pedunculate Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	-
	Purple Willow	<i>Salix purpurea</i>	-
	Rowan	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	-
	Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	-
	Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	-
	Wych Elm	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	-





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Specialists in Protected Species

UK Habitats Key

-  f2a - Lowland fens (14, 60, 413)
-  g3c - Other neutral grassland (14, 32, 106)
-  g4 - Modified grassland (16)
-  w1f7 - Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland (30)
-  Scattered tree - deciduous, small
-  Scattered tree - deciduous, medium
-  Scattered tree - deciduous, large (203)
-  r1g - Other standing water (50)
-  Target notes
-  Red line boundary

Survey Date: 28/04/2025
Drawn: Mr. B. Richards
Date Drawn: 01/04/2025
Checked & Approved: Mrs. K. Wilding
Size: A3
Scale: 1:750

Tyrer Ecological Consultants Ltd
Roselands, Suite 1,
3 Cross Green,
Formby,
L37 4BH
Tel: 01704 875781
Email: enquiries@tyrer-ecologicalconsultants.co.uk
www.tyrer-ecologicalconsultants.co.uk