



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Land East of Stroudwood Lane

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Report	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
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Executive Summary

Ecosupport Ltd was instructed by Mr & Mrs Wyre to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Land East of Stroudwood Lane, Southampton. This was required in order to identify any potentially important ecological features that may be affected by the proposed development. As part of this assessment, the following surveys were undertaken:

- Walkover survey with UK Habs habitat assessment
- Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

The following important ecological features were identified on site following the conclusion of the above survey work and may be subject to adverse impacts in the absence of suitable mitigation / compensation:

- Low potential for foraging and commuting Badgers and other terrestrial mammals
- Low potential for reptiles within the tall ruderal and bramble habitat areas
- Potential for Hazel Dormouse in retained habitats
- Low potential for nesting birds

In the absence of any mitigation measures, the proposed development is anticipated to result in, **possible adverse impacts**. In addition to this, measures are outlined within **Section 6.0** of this document includes mitigation where impacts have been identified as well as providing targeted ecological enhancements.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief

Ecosupport Ltd was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Wyre to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Land East of Stroudwood Lane, Southampton (here after referred to as 'the site'). The purpose of this survey was to assess any ecological impacts that may arise as a result of the proposed development. The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- Identify and classify any priority habitats;
- Assess the ecological value of the site;
- Identify any signs of protected species and potential features that may support them
- Make recommendations for further survey work as necessary;
- Make recommendations for any necessary ecological avoidance and mitigation where possible at PEA stage.

NB: If the works do not take place within 18 months of this report¹ then the findings of this survey will no longer be considered valid and may require updating.

1.2 Site Description & Location

The site comprises of an open barn on hardstanding ground, with sections of tall forbs upon a large manure pile located at Stroudwood Lane, Southampton, SO32 1HG (centred on OS grid reference SU 51444 19625) (**Fig 1**). The western boundary of the site is bound by Stroudwood Lane, the northern and eastern boundaries of the site are bound by grazed grassland. Finally, the southern boundary is bound by further grassland and a residential dwelling.

¹ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

Figure 1. Approximate redline boundary of the site (Google Satellite, 2024).



1.3 Proposed Development

It is understood that the proposals entail the demolition and replacement of the existing barn and re-surface the surroundings. (Fig 2)

Figure 2. Proposed site plan for Land East of Stroudwood Lane, Southampton (Drawing no. N444 PL01 A) (Nouveau Architecture, 2026)



2.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY

2.1 Legislation

2.1.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019)

This instrument makes changes to the three existing instruments which transpose the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives so that they continue to work (are operable) upon the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). These include The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This instrument also amends section 27 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ensure existing protections continue. The intention is to ensure habitat and species protection and standards as set out under the Nature Directives are implemented in the same way or an equivalent way when the UK exits the EU.

This transposes the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into UK domestic law. It provides protection for sites and species deemed to be of conservation importance across Europe. It is an offence to deliberately capture, kill or injure species listed in Schedule 2 or to damage or destroy their breeding sites or shelter. It is also illegal to deliberately disturb these species in such a way that is likely to significantly impact on the local distribution or abundance or affect their ability to survive, breed and rear or nurture their young.

In order for activities that would be likely to result in a breach of species protection under the regulations to legally take place, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence must first be obtained from Natural England.

2.1.2 *The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)*

This is the primary piece of legislation by which biodiversity is protected within the UK. Protected fauna and flora are listed under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. They include all species of bats, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost or to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost. Similarly, this Act makes it an offence to kill or injure any species of British reptiles and also makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy their eggs and nests (whilst in use or being built).

The Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) states that it is an offence to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9 part II of the Act. This list over 30 plants including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Parrot's Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*).

2.1.3 *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)*

This Act strengthens the Wildlife & Countryside Act by the addition of "reckless" offences in certain circumstances, such as where there is the likelihood of protected species being present. The Act places a duty on Government Ministers and Departments to conserve biological diversity and provides police with stronger powers relating to wildlife crimes.

2.1.4 *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)*

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires that public bodies have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. This means that Planning authorities must consider biodiversity when planning or undertaking activities. Section 41 of the Act lists species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the *UK Post – 2010 Biodiversity Framework*.

2.1.5 *Protection of Badgers Act*

The Protection of Badgers Act (1992) relates to the welfare of Badgers (*Meles meles*) as opposed to nature conservation considerations. The Act prevents:

- The wilful killing, injury, ill treatment or taking of Badgers and / or
- Interference with a Badger sett
- Damaging or destroying all or part of a sett
- Causing a dog to enter a set and
- Disturbing a Badger while it is occupying a sett

Provisions are included within the Act to allow for the lawful licensing of certain activities that would otherwise constitute an offence under the Act.

2.1.6 The Environment Act (2021)

The Environment Act 2021 is the UK's new legislation for environmental protection in the UK, which includes protection of water quality, clean air, and biodiversity among other key protections. This Act provides the government power to set targets to reach long-term aims relating to the environment, which will be periodically reviewed and updated. This legislation also establishes a new environmental watchdog organisation, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), which will hold the government accountable on environmental issues.

Part 6 of The Environment Act relates to nature and biodiversity. This section makes provision for biodiversity net gain to be a condition of planning permission in England and a requirement for nationally significant infrastructure projects. Biodiversity net gain will require maintenance for a period of at least 30 years after the completion of enhancement works to be achieved.

The legislation also includes updates to existing environmental legislation, such as the NERC Act 2006, to strengthen biodiversity enhancement rather than just conservation and includes a requirement for local, or relevant, authorities to publish biodiversity reports. Further, The Environment Act places a requirement on responsible authorities to prepare local nature recovery strategies, which will outline nature conservation sites and priorities and opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity within the local area. Within England, the legislation also provides Natural England with the power to publish 'species conservation strategies' and 'protected site strategies' to identify activities that may affect a species or site's status and outline their opinions on measures that would be appropriate to avoid, mitigate or compensate any adverse impacts.

2.2 Policy

2.2.1 National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity, the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, minimising impacts on and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity including by incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

The NPPF states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and land should be allocated with the least environmental or amenity value and take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale.

To protect and enhance biodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The NPPF states 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 SSSI, 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 SSSIs;

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 reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;

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.

Potential SPAs and possible SACs, listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites required as compensatory measures for the previous should be given the same protection as habitats sites.

2.2.2 Local – Eastleigh Borough Council

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 has a number of policies relating to ecology with the relevant ones listed below;

'General Approach

The Council will work with statutory and voluntary agencies and developers, and will determine planning applications, to:

a. protect, conserve and enhance all:

i. international, national and local nature conservation designations;

and

ii. networks of natural habitats and features, including the Local Ecological Network, Priority Biodiversity Areas and Priority Biodiversity Links, watercourses, wetland complexes, woodland trees, and trees and hedgerows important to biodiversity and local character; and facilitate their adaptation to climate change wherever possible;

b. assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);

c. seek a net gain of biodiversity on all development sites (including sites for redevelopment) through the protection, enhancement and connection of existing and provision of new habitats and features of nature conservation interest compatible with the native biodiversity characteristics of the Borough, having regard to local geodiversity and soils; and

d. contribute to major elements of the PFSH Green Infrastructure Strategy and other strategies for the provision and enhancement of multifunctional green infrastructure including green routes, ecological networks and biodiversity enhancements (see strategic policy S9).

International Designations

Development which is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to adversely affect the integrity of an international or European nature conservation site will not be permitted subject only to imperative reasons of overriding public interest and securing any necessary compensatory measures in the absence of alternative solutions. A 'project level'

Habitat Regulations Assessment will be required where there are likely significant effects or uncertainty. Any mitigation measures required to ensure no adverse impact must be implemented at the appropriate time.

The Council will work with PfsH, Natural England, the Environment Agency and other wildlife organisations to develop and implement with developers a strategic approach to the protection and enhancement of international and European sites from the direct and indirect effects of development. Within Eastleigh Borough this will include:

a. implementing:

i. the Solent Recreation Mitigation Strategy (requiring contributions from residential developments within 5.6 kilometres of the Solent Special Protection Area to the Strategy); and

ii. the interim and any future New Forest Recreation Mitigation Strategy if required; or alternative agreed site specific measures to address recreational disturbance;

b. preserving the water quality and flows within the Itchen and Hamble, Southampton Water and Solent;

c. protecting the River Itchen SAC, in particular the maintenance and where appropriate restoration of habitats and qualifying species to favourable conservation status (as defined by article 1 of the Habitats Directive); and

d. seek contributions towards measures set out in the Southern Damselfly Conservation Strategy (or other strategy) specifically to deliver biodiversity net gain.

National and Local Designations

Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as shown on the policies map (or on a more recent plan provided by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre) unless it can be demonstrated that:

a. there are no alternative solutions;

b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;

c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;

d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and

e. if there are any residual adverse effects which cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated, the benefits of the development must clearly outweigh the adverse effects on the nature conservation value of the site and any broader impacts on national and local designations.

Priority habitats, protected and priority species and the local ecological network

Development will not be permitted if it is likely (either individually or in combination with other developments) to have a direct or indirect adverse effect on priority habitats, protected or priority species, or on the local ecological network unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there are no alternative solutions;*
- b. the adverse effects are unavoidable;*
- c. measures are taken to mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects;*
- d. there is an overall biodiversity net gain; and*
- e. if there are any residual adverse effects, the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the adverse effects on priority habitats, priority and protected species, and the local ecological network.*

Irreplaceable habitats

Development will not be permitted if it results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees), unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

Buffers

Buffers free from development will be provided to designated sites to avoid/mitigate impacts, including recreational impact and impacts on edge habitats, and to maintain dark skies.

Surveys

Development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- a. there have been thorough habitat and species surveys;*
- b. the great crested newt strategic survey and strategy have been considered in all developments within 500m of a great crested newt pond; and*
- c. the strategic bat trapping survey has been considered in all developments within the locality of a woodland or connected habitat networks.'*

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Waterbodies

Any ponds located within 250m of the proposed development were searched for using Ordnance Survey maps and available aerial images.

3.1.2 Designated Sites

A search for designated sites within 2km of the site was undertaken using freely available online resources.

3.2 Field Survey

3.2.1 Habitats

The field survey work which forms the basis of the findings of this report was carried out by Project Ecologist with Ecosupport Ltd Darla Brown BSc (Hons) and Assistant Ecologists with Ecosupport Ltd Grace Roberts MSci and Laura Chidlow MSci on the 12th of December 2024, during suitable weather conditions.

Habitats on-site pre-development were identified in accordance with the categories specified for a UK Habitats survey, using Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). This was chosen as an appropriate habitat categorisation system as it fits within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation. Where appropriate, primary habitat codes were used, although for some habitat types, secondary habitat codes were necessary as well.

3.2.2 Badger

The site was thoroughly searched for evidence of use by Badgers (*Meles meles*), with the specific aim of identifying the presence and location of any setts. In accordance with the *Badgers and Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing* (Natural England, 2011) guidance, the survey accounted for a 30m from the site's boundary (observed where possible i.e. does not conflict with private dwellings). Evidence of Badgers could include latrines, dung pits, feeding remains and foraging evidence, trails and setts.

3.2.3 Bats

3.2.3.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A preliminary roost assessment of the building on site was undertaken by Darla Brown of Ecosupport in December 2024 (working under Dean Swensson NE class level 2 bat licence number 2015-13211-CLS-CLS). This followed BCT (Collins (ed) 2023) best practice survey guidelines searching for any PRFs / evidence of bat occupation and assigning a roost potential assessment as outlined in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of a built structure for roosting bats (reproduced from BCT (Collins (ed) 2023).

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ² 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 ³ .
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ² and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ² and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g., maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
² For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance. ³ 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.	

3.3 Assessment Methodology

3.3.1 Introduction

The methodology for the assessment of the likely ecological effects of the proposed development is based on CIEEM's *Guidelines for Ecological Assessment in the UK* (CIEEM 2018). Although this assessment does not constitute a formal Ecological/ Environmental Impact Assessment, the CIEEM guidelines provide a useful framework for assessing ecological impacts at any level.

3.3.2 Valuation

Features of ecological interest are valued on a geographic scale. Value is assigned on the basis of legal protection, national and local biodiversity policy and cultural and/or social significance.

3.4 Limitations

3.4.1 Habitats

Although the survey was taken outside the optimum timing for the identification of botanical interest species, it was considered that the majority of species present could be suitably identified; this was therefore not considered to represent a significant limitation to the overall assessment. This survey does not constitute a full site assessment for invasive species, such as Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).

4.0 ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 Waterbodies

Using freely available online resources, no waterbodies were identified within 250m of the site.

4.1.2 Designated Sites

Using freely available resources, no statutory designated sites were identified within 2km of the site. Notwithstanding this, two SINCs were identified within 500m of the site. One is Stroud Wood, Fair Oak and Horton Heath (code EA0126), approximately 293m south-west of the site, with the second being Park Hills Wood (code WC0116) approximately 428m west of the site.

No priority habitat or ancient woodland was identified on or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest parcel of priority habitat is an area of Deciduous woodland, located approximately 405m west of the site.

4.2 Vegetation Survey Results

The vegetation within the site has been described below using the UK Habs Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). The below species noted should not be considered an exhaustive list and instead refer to dominant, characteristic and other noteworthy species associated with each community within the survey area. The habitat types on site comprise:

- Modified grassland (g4) with secondary habitat code 16
- Bramble scrub (h3d)
- Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)
- Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface (u1c)
- Native hedgerow (h2a)
- Other woodland broadleaved (w1g) with secondary habitat code 33
- Building (u1b5)

4.2.1 Modified Grassland (g4 – with secondary code 16)

An area of modified grassland (g4) forms a slim stretch of land behind the stable block to the east and south of the site. Species noted included Perennial Rye Grass (*Lolium perenne*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*), Cut-leaved Crane's-bill (*Geranium dissectum*), Broadleaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).

Notwithstanding this, the majority of the vegetation on site comprises of unmanaged tall forbs (secondary habitat code 16) (**Fig 3**), with this habitat grown atop of rubble mounds and horse waste. This overgrowth primarily consists of Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

Figure 3. View of the Tall Forbs (secondary code 16, under g4) habitat on-site with a closer image showing the horse waste (taken December 2024).



4.2.2 Bramble Scrub (h3d)

A section of unmanaged bramble scrub (h3d) was located along the site's northern boundary (Fig 4).

Figure 4. View of the bramble scrub (h3d) habitat on the northern site boundary (taken December 2024).



4.2.3 Developed Land; Sealed Surface (u1b)

A section of uneven, hardstanding developed land (u1b) made up the site access and parcel of land in front of the barn on site (**Fig 5**).

Figure 5. View of the hardstanding in front of the barn at the south of the site, looking east (taken December 2024).



4.2.4 Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface (u1c)

A small parcel of land situated north of the barn was primarily made up of uneven loose gravel with no vegetation (u1c) (**Fig 6**). Therefore, it was considered to fall under the category of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.

Figure 6. View of the section of unvegetated, unsealed surface habitat to the north of the stable block, looking south-east (taken December, 2024).



4.2.5 Native Hedgerow (h2a)

Two linear features were identified on site, one of which was a section of managed hedgerow (h2a), situated along the western boundary of the site adjacent to Stroudwood Lane (**Fig 7**). The habitat is composed entirely of Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with Ivy (*Hedera helix*).

Figure 7. Hedgerow along the western boundary of the site, looking north (taken December 2024).



4.2.6 Other Woodland Broadleaved – Line of Trees (w1g – with secondary code 33)

The final habitat, and second linear feature, identified on site was a line of trees (secondary habitat code 33 under w1g) in the northwestern corner bound by Stroudwood Lane and the wider environment to the north (**Fig 9**). The identified species included Willow (*Salix sp.*) covered in Ivy (*Hedera helix*), and a low quantity of Dogrose (*Rosa canina*). As line of trees falls under a secondary habitat code, this habitat has been listed under primary code w1g for other broadleaved woodland, although it does not meet the criteria for woodland.

Figure 8. View of the line of trees in the northwestern corner of the site, facing northeast (secondary code 33, under w1g) (taken December 2024).



4.2.7 Buildings (u1b5)

One building was present on site, comprising a single large barn, used for hay storage and horses (u1b5). Further descriptions of this habitat are set out within **Section 4.3.2** below.

4.3 Bat Survey Results

4.3.1 Pre-existing Information

Using freely available resources, one bat European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) for Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was identified within 2km of the site, approximately 1km to the south-east.

4.3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

One building is present on site, comprising a large, open-ended barn which is primarily used for hay storage and shelter for horses. The building contained a pitched corrugated metal roof and no structural walls, supported internally by a steel frame and metal beams (**Fig 9**). The entirety of the barn was considered to offer an absence of potential roosting features due to its open nature which causes fluctuating changes in light and lacks the thermostability required for roosting bats internally. No potentially roosting features were identified internally or externally, and no evidence of bats was identified.

Due to the lack of any evidence of bats and the absence of any potential roosting features, the stable block is considered to be of **negligible potential** to support roosting bats.

Figure 9. Internal view of the barn (taken December 2024).



4.4 Badgers & Other Terrestrial Mammals

During the walkover, no evidence of badgers or other terrestrial mammals was noted on site. The site contains limited habitat suitable for foraging mammals, comprising predominantly of developed land and tall forbs habitat that is deemed unsuitable due to its growth on top of rubble piles and horse waste. Notwithstanding this, there is an area of scrub along the northern boundary and grassland to the east and south, connecting to potential foraging and commuting habitat within the wider environment. As such, the site is considered to provide **low potential** for foraging and commuting badgers and other terrestrial mammals,

4.5 Reptiles

The areas of tall forbs habitat present on site provide some suitability for common reptile species, yet the majority of the site is comprised of unvegetated surface in the form of developed land. Furthermore, the bramble scrub along the northern boundary provides some connectivity to the wider environment. However, the large area of grassland situated within the adjacent fields to the east was considered to provide limited suitability at the time of the walkover survey as the parcels of land are regularly horse grazed. As such, due to the suitability of tall forbs and bramble present, and the potential connection to the wider environment the site is considered to be of **low potential** for reptiles.

4.6 Great Crested Newts (GCN)

4.6.1 Pre-existing Information

Using freely available resources, one GCN EPSL was identified within 2km of the site, approximately 1km south-east.

4.6.2 Site Assessment

Similar to reptiles, the site does offer some sub-optimal habitat structures for commuting preferred by Great Crested Newts, however, no ponds were identified within 250m of the site. Furthermore, the GCN record is separated from the site by Mortimers Lane (B3037). Furthermore, the site lies within the green impact risk zone for GCN using the freely available District Level Licencing maps. Considering this, the site is considered to offer **negligible potential** for GCN.

4.7 Hazel Dormouse

4.7.1 Pre-existing Information

Using freely available resources, two records of Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) were identified approximately 100m south-east of the site, in 2022 and 2023, by the National Dormouse Database.

4.7.2 Site Assessment

The hedgerow present on site is a regularly managed, single-species Hawthorn hedgerow which offers little value to Hazel Dormice. It does provide some connectivity to the wider environment to the north, in turn connecting to a network of hedgerows and suitable habitat within the wider environment. The hedgerow is not immediately connected to where records show the presence of Hazel Dormice to the south-east of the site, but notwithstanding this the records are within 100m of the site boundary. However, no works are proposed to the hedgerow (or line of trees) which will both be retained as part of the proposals. As such, although the site is considered to offer **potential** for Hazel Dormice, there will be **no impact** to Hazel Dormice.

4.8 Breeding and Nesting Birds

At the time of the survey, no nesting birds were observed on-site. The hedgerow, line of trees, and barn all have the potential to act as suitable nesting habitat, however, the hedgerow and trees are not to be impacted by the proposed development. The site is situated within a rural environment, with a mosaic of arable land, grassland, linear features and woodland within the surrounding environment offering good commuting and foraging habitat nearby. As such, the site was deemed to have **low potential** for breeding and nesting birds.

5.0 LIKELY ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS IN ABSENCE OF MITIGATION

5.1 Introduction

The CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM, 2018) require that the potential impacts of the proposals should be considered in absence of mitigation. In order for a significant adverse effect to occur, the feature being affected must be at least of local value. However, in some cases, features of less than local value may be protected by legislation and/or policy and these are also considered within the assessment. Although significant effects may be identified at this stage of the assessment, it is often possible to provide appropriate mitigation.

5.2 Site Preparation and Construction

5.2.1 Impacts to Habitats

The proposed development will predominantly involve the loss of tall forbs habitat with works to the building, developed land; sealed surface, and artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface, which are considered to be of value at the **site level** of significance. Where the hedgerow and line of trees are being retained, construction could also cause indirect impacts from damage by machinery and particularly by root zone compaction, with these habitats considered to be of value at the **local level**. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, the loss of habitat could have **an adverse impact** to this habitat of **site - local** value.

5.2.2 Impacts to Wildlife

The site has potential habitat for reptiles. Should they be present, construction works could result in death or injury to reptiles. Therefore, an **adverse impact is possible** at the **local level**.

The proposed works may involve groundworks and the creation of some excavations. This may lead to the potential of Badgers, Hedgehogs and other terrestrial mammals becoming trapped or injured during the works. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation **an adverse impact is possible** at the **local level**.

Although all linear features and suitable Dormouse habitat (hedgerow, scrub) are to be retained as part of the proposals, the absence of mitigation could result in disturbance, death or injury to Hazel Dormouse if the habitat is not protected during works. As such, in the absence of mitigation **an adverse impact is possible** at the **local level**.

Any works near the hedgerow, line of trees or stable block on-site could result in the disturbance of nesting birds and damage to their nests if conducted during the nesting season. As such, removal of suitable habitat without adequate mitigation could potentially constitute an offence under the W&CA, 1981 Therefore, in the absence of mitigation **an adverse impact is possible** at the **site level**.

5.3 Site Operation

5.3.1 Impacts to Wildlife

The development may result in a minor increase in lighting within the general area from external lights accompanied with the proposed development. This can affect the behaviour, particularly foraging, of nocturnal wildlife. However, only two lights are proposed, with

downward lighting and located away from retained vegetation that would be suitable for wildlife. Therefore, it is considered these will have a likely ***negligible impact*** on wildlife.

6.0 MITIGATION, COMPENSATION & ENHANCEMENTS

6.1 Introduction

The below sections outline several recommendations for the development which ensure that the proposed mitigation and compensation is appropriate and proportionate. In addition to this, measures are outlined to provide enhancements post-development.

6.2 Protection of Retained Habitats

The existing hedgerow, line of trees, and bramble scrub along the Western and Northern boundaries will be retained and protected from damage during the works. They will be fenced off using Heras fencing or similar, to prevent damage from machinery. Where mature trees are present, they will be protected using standard arboricultural tree protection measures which include protection of the canopy and prevents root compaction. This will also protect any species that may inhabit the hedge or trees such as Dormice, reptiles, or nesting birds.

6.3 Bats

6.3.1 Sensitive Lighting for Nocturnal Species

6.3.1.1 During Construction

In order to avoid any disturbance to bats (and other potential nocturnal wildlife) construction works should be limited to daylight hours and should not be undertaken 30 minutes prior to dusk through to dawn. All lighting should be sensitive to the use of the site by nocturnal wildlife, for example by including low-level downward-facing / hooded lights that are sensor-operated where possible.

6.3.1.2 During Operation

Two external lights will be implemented onto the external structure of the building. Both of these lights are proposed to be downward facing LED of 2700Kelvin, which complies with the newly published *Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at night* (ILP / BCT, 2023) produced via a collaboration between the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) and the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), which outlines the latest recommendations to minimise the impacts of increased artificial lighting on bats. If any further lighting is included this will follow the same guidelines.

6.4 Badgers & Other Terrestrial Mammals

During the construction phase, any open excavations left overnight will either be covered to prevent commuting Badgers and other terrestrial mammals falling in or escape ladders will be used to prevent them from becoming trapped. Any open pipework will be checked and then capped nightly.

6.5 Reptiles

6.5.1 Passive dispersal

Given the small scale of the sub-optimal habitat to be impacted upon, it is considered a passive dispersal is the most appropriate method of relocating reptiles, should they be present. Initially the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm, using hand tools only. Following a period of 24-48 hours, vegetation will be taken down to ground level. All works will be

directional (i.e. towards retained habitat and the adjacent fields under same landownership). These works will be done immediately before any ground works if possible, to prevent the habitats regrowing and will be undertaken during the active reptile period (April – September) when temperatures are above 12°C with sunshine. If there is a delay in commencement of works, vegetation will be retained at ground level to prevent the site potentially becoming suitable.

6.6 Hazel Dormice

The boundary treeline, Bramble scrub, and hedgerow to be retained around the northern and western boundaries of the site must be protected from damage during the works. This will ensure that both Dormice and reptiles are not impacted upon by the proposed works. These areas will be protected using the same measures as outlined within **Section 6.2**. Additionally, if lighting is required on site, directional lighting must be used directed away from retained vegetation, to ensure that nocturnal animals are not impacted upon by the proposed works. This will ensure protection of Hazel Dormouse and their habitat, should they be present.

If the proposed plans change and any of the areas of hedgerow, line of trees, or bramble scrub are to be directly impacted upon by the proposed works, a suitably qualified ecologist must be contacted, and further survey work may be required.

6.7 Breeding & Nesting Birds

In order to avoid disturbance of breeding and nesting birds or damage to their nests, an updated walkover to ensure no nesting birds are present prior to works must be undertaken throughout any time of the year (as Pigeons and Doves can nest all year round). Proposed works to the building should avoid bird nesting season (typically March – August, dependent on weather). If this is not possible, these habitats should be thoroughly checked by an ecologist immediately prior to works. If any active nests are found, they should be left undisturbed with a suitable buffer within which works cannot take place (ca. 5m) until nestlings have fledged.

6.8 Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain using the most up to date metric and guidance will be provided within a separate report to ensure the net gain of habitats on-site, along with a Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan.

6.9 Enhancements

6.9.1 Bats

To act as an enhancement measure, 1 No Vivara Pro Large Multi Chamber WoodStone bat box will be erected onto one of the existing trees or onto the external structure of the new building. The bat box should ideally be placed on an elevation that will benefit from some degree of sunlight exposure and be located away from windows. The woodstone bat box will be erected by or under the supervision of an ecologist to ensure it is placed in the most appropriate / effective location.

6.9.2 Birds

To further enhance the site for nesting birds, 1 No nest box will be erected onto a suitable elevation onto the external structure of the new building or one of the existing mature trees. Where possible, this nest box should be tailored to provide opportunities for red-listed/BAP species known from the local area. Vivara Pro Seville 32mm, Seville 28mm or Barcelona Bird Box should be used. These will provide suitable nesting opportunities for a variety of bird species and will increase the nesting opportunities for birds on site.

6.9.3 Native Planting

To enhance the biodiversity net gain on-site, native trees and hedgerow species are to be planted along the eastern boundary of the site to create additional suitable habitat for a variety of species. The full management plan for these created habitats will be detailed within the associated BNG & HMMP report.

7.0 REFERENCES

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Legend

- Site Boundary
- g4 - modified grassland
- w1g - other woodland-broadleaved
- h2a - hedgerow (priority habitat)
- h3 - dense scrub
- u1b - developed land. sealed surface
- u1b5 - buildings
- u1c - artificial unvegetated unsealed surface
- Secondary Codes:
 - 33 - Line of Trees
 - 81 - Tall Ruderal



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Map	UK Habs Map
Site	Land East of Stroudwood Lane
Client	Mr & Mrs Wyre
Date	16/04/2026

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