



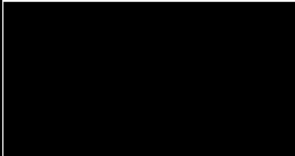
St Martins Close, Bishopstoke, Hampshire

Ecological Appraisal

October 2023

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Executive Summary

- This Ecological Appraisal Report provides an ecological assessment of the proposed development of the site at St Martins Close, Bishopstoke. The report provides the results of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and the results of the Phase 2 surveys undertaken in 2023.
- The proposed works would entail the demolition of an existing bungalow and associated outbuildings and sheds, followed by the construction of two new dwellings and associated landscaping. A new access road will be constructed in the east of the site, providing access off Spring Lane.
- An Extended Phase 1 Habitat/UK Habs survey was undertaken on 12th June 2023. Habitats present on the site included large areas of managed lawn (modified grassland) together with smaller areas of dense scrub and ruderal habitats and an area of broadleaved woodland along the eastern boundary.
- The existing bungalow was found to have a moderate potential for supporting roosting bats. Other structures to be demolished as part of the proposals were assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats. Phase 2 surveys confirmed the likely absence of roosting bats from the bungalow.
- Suitable reptile habitat was identified on site, including areas of less managed grassland, ruderals and scrub. Phase 2 reptile surveys were undertaken and confirmed the presence of a low population of Slow Worm on site.
- A single hole Badger outlier sett was found on site, which trail camera monitoring confirmed to be active. Two other single hole outlier setts were identified just off site, one of which was active and the other disused.
- The site was also found to support suitable breeding bird habitat, as well as habitat with potential to support an assemblage of common and widespread invertebrate species.
- Mitigation is proposed to minimise any impacts on protected species including the requirements for a Badger Development Licence and a reptile mitigation strategy.
- The landscape plan for the site includes areas of native wildflower meadow and wildflower sown green roofs which will increase the diversity of flora on site.
- Additional enhancement for biodiversity include the installation of bat and bird boxes within the new development.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Broadleaf Ecology has been contracted by David Bowen to complete a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and subsequent Phase 2 surveys at the site of a proposed development at St Martins Close, Bishopstoke, Hampshire. The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 46677 19524.

This report presents the findings of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat, undertaken by Broadleaf Ecology in June 2023 and subsequent Phase 2 surveys undertaken between July and September 2023.

1.2. Aims and Scope of Report

The Ecological Appraisal comprises an Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey and desktop study (including a Preliminary Roost Assessment), and a subsequent Phase 2 ecology surveys. Survey details are provided in the methodology section. The aim of this study is to assess the suitability of the site and its immediate surrounds to support notable habitats and protected species. This information allows an assessment of the biodiversity value of the site to be made, potential constraints to be identified, and mitigation and compensation measures to be developed. The objectives of the assessment are:

- To provide baseline information on the current habitats and ecological features both on site and in the immediate vicinity of the site, where relevant;
- To identify the proximity of any statutory and non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation importance and provide an assessment of potential effects the proposed development may have on these;
- To identify the presence/potential presence of diverse habitats and protected species and to provide an appraisal of potential effects the proposed development may have on these; and
- To provide recommendations for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures to support the planning application.

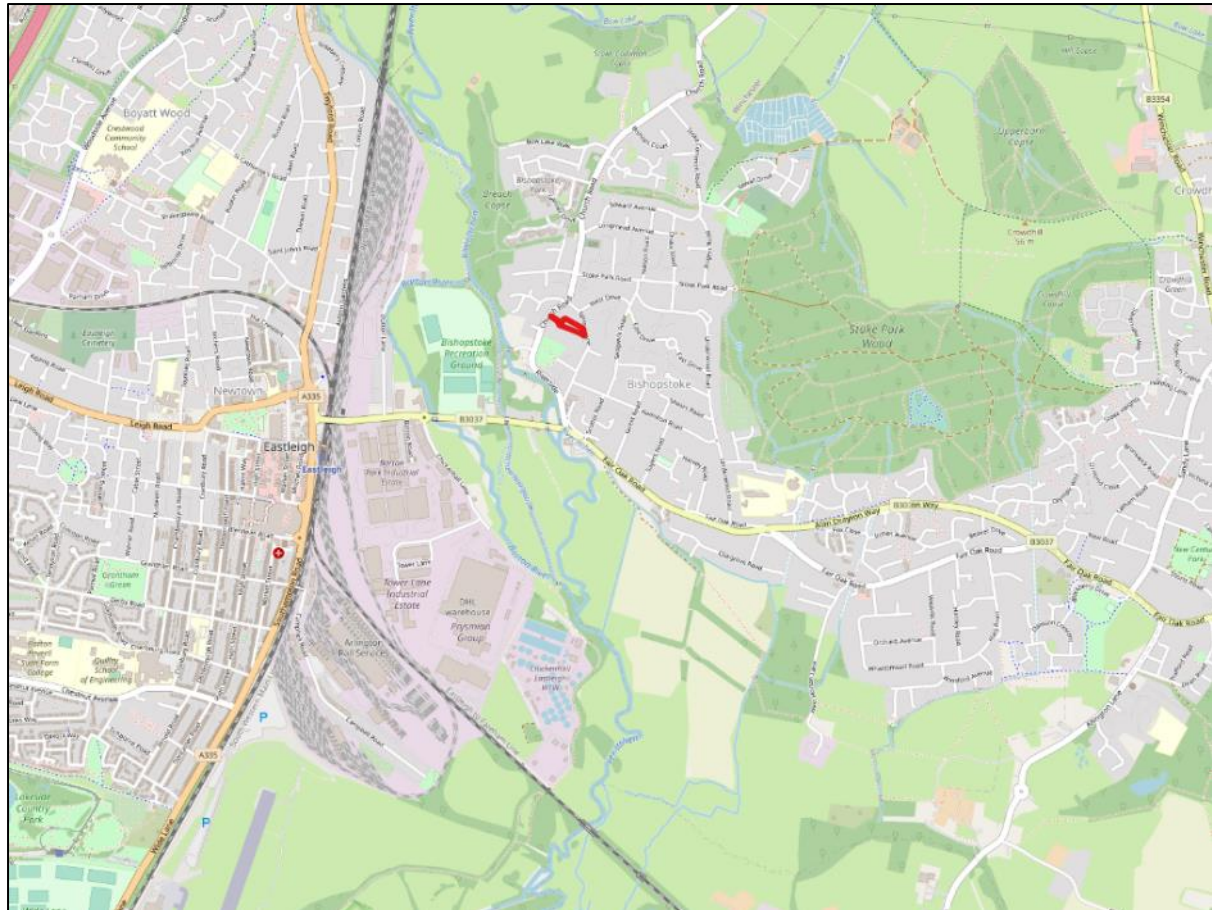
1.3. Site Setting and Description

The proposed development site is situated within the village of Bishopstoke, approximately 1km east of the town of Eastleigh (figure 1). The site is 0.276 hectares and comprises a single storey dwelling and a number of outbuildings including derelict sheds and greenhouse and a detached garage, with large areas of lawn. A steep bank covered with trees and shrubs forms eastern boundary of the site,

next to Spring Lane. Large brick walls border the site to the north and south. A single track lane forms the access to the site in the west where it adjoins Church Road.

The surrounding landscape is comprised of residential developments and associated mature gardens within Bishopstoke. Further to the west lies the riparian corridor of the River Itchen.

Figure 1 Location Map



Source – © OpenStreetMap contributors - openstreetmap.org

1.4. Site Proposals

The site proposals include the demolition of the existing single storey dwelling and derelict outbuildings, refurbishment of the historic greenhouse and retention of the detached garage, and the construction of two new dwellings. A new access will also be created to the east of the site, off Spring Lane. The proposal drawings are included in Appendix A.

2. Planning Policy

2.1. Introduction

This section provides a brief summary of current National and Local Planning Policy that is relevant to this development. The original policy documents should be referred to for the full text and most up to date policy.

2.2. National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 sets out the government's requirements for the planning system in England. Section 15 of the NPPF sets out the policy for conserving and enhancing the natural environment with paragraph 174 stating that '*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by¹:*

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

(b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

(c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

(d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

Paragraph 180 of NPPF states that '*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;

¹ only relevant biodiversity sections included in list. For full text see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

(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 reasons 63 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.

In addition to the NPPF, Circular 06/05 provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. Paragraph 98 states “*the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat*” whilst paragraph 99 states “*it is essential that the presence or otherwise of a protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted*”.

The Environment Act 2021 seeks to halt the decline of nature by 2030 and will mandate Biodiversity Net Gain for developments. Mandatory biodiversity net gain as set out in the Environment Act applies in England only by amending the Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) and is likely to become law in Autumn 2023. Small sites (such as this) will be required to deliver 10% net gains from April 2024.

2.3. Local Policy

Local planning policy is set out in the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036). Relevant biodiversity policies within this plan include:

Policy DM11 – Nature Conservation

1) 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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. Methods

This section details the methods used during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

3.1. Desk Study

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database was accessed on 30th September 2023 in order to establish the presence of statutory designated sites located within the vicinity of the site. This included a search for all internationally designated sites such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites within 1km of the site, extending up to 5.6km for Solent SPA sites, and a search for nationally designated sites including SSSIs, Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) within 1km of the site. The MAGIC data base was also used to identify any granted mitigation licences within 2km of the site and any Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* licence return or previous survey data within 2km of the site.

Local Plan Policies Maps

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Policies Maps² were reviewed for any other relevant nature conservation designations, including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

3.2. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

The extended phase 1 habitat survey included a search for evidence of the presence of, and an assessment of the site's suitability to support, protected and notable species as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)³. The field survey covered all areas of the site, including boundary features. A list of characteristic plant species for each vegetation type was compiled and any invasive species⁴ encountered as an incidental result of the survey recorded. Habitats were classified using the UKHabs Method.

² <https://emaps.eastleigh.gov.uk/webmaps/Map.aspx?MapName=WebMaps>

³ CIEEM (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

⁴ Plant species included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The survey included a Preliminary Roost Assessment of the onsite buildings and trees. The Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust Guidance⁵. The surveyor undertook a systematic inspection of the exterior and interior of structures within the site, and a ground level assessment of trees, to look for features that bats could use for entry/exit and roosting and to search for signs of bats, including but not limited to bat specimens (live or dead), droppings, staining and feeding remains.

The survey was carried out by Simon Mason (NE Bat Class Licence Level 2 2015-16600-CLS-CLS) on 12th June 2023. The weather conditions were hot and sunny with approximately 10% cloud cover, an ambient temperature of 26°C and light winds.

During the survey the surveyor was equipped with a ladder, 10x40 binoculars, a high-powered torch and a digital camera.

3.2.1. Assessment of Bat Roosting Potential

Following the internal and external inspections, an assessment was made of the potential of structures and trees on site to support roosting bats. The assessment is based on the potential for the site to support bats, based on the on-site habitat features and their suitability for the species considered.

The potential for the site to support bats is based on the results of the field survey assessment and following criteria based on Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines:

- **Species Present:** Evidence of bat presence confirmed during survey, which may include presence of live or dead bats, droppings, feeding remains or urine stains etc. Where possible, a provisional assessment of roost status is made. If species are likely to be affected by the proposals, further Phase 2 surveys will be required to establish the status of the species present.
- **High Potential:** A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. If species are likely to be affected by the proposals, further Phase 2 surveys will be required to establish the presence/likely absence of the species.

⁵ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

- **Medium Potential:** A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only). If species are likely to be affected by the proposals, further Phase 2 surveys will be required to establish the presence/likely absence of the species.
- **Low Potential:** A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). If species are likely to be affected by the proposals, further Phase 2 surveys will be required to establish the presence/likely absence of the species.
- **Negligible Potential:** Structures that are extremely unlikely to support roosting bats due to the absence of suitable features. Further Phase 2 surveys are unlikely to be required as species is unlikely to be present.

3.2.2. Badger

The survey involved an assessment of the suitability of the site to support Badger. Evidence of the species was recorded during the Phase 1 habitat survey and included locating Badger setts, paths, and signs of territorial activity such as latrine sites. The survey extended up to 30m from the site boundary where access was possible, including along Spring Lane.

3.2.3. Hazel Dormouse

The appraisal for the suitability of the site to support Hazel Dormouse was based on an assessment of habitat features that may indicate that the species is present. This includes the presence of key food sources such as hazel and bramble, or plants used as nesting material such as honeysuckle and clematis. Additionally, the species requires a continuum of food supply so that habitat structure, diversity and connectivity to adjacent areas of woodland/scrub are important features in determining the suitability of the site for Hazel Dormouse.

3.2.4. Birds

The appraisal of breeding birds on the site was based on the suitability of habitat present to support nesting bird communities, the presence of bird species that may potentially nest within the available habitat and evidence of nesting such as old or currently active nests.

3.2.5. Reptiles

The reptile appraisal was based on an assessment of the suitability of the habitat present within the site to support a population of reptiles. Reptiles particularly favour scrub and rough grassland interfaces and the presence of these is a good indication that reptiles may be present on-site. In addition, reptiles may use features such as bare ground for basking, tussocky grassland for shelter and compost heaps and rubble piles for breeding and/or hibernating.

3.2.6. Great Crested Newt

The appraisal of the site to support Great Crested Newt (GCN) included establishing the presence of suitable aquatic habitats such as ponds, lakes or other waterbodies within or adjacent to the site and the presence of suitable terrestrial habitat.

In addition, online mapping resources at a minimum scale of 1:10,000 were used to identify the presence of ponds or other waterbodies within a 250 meter radius of the site. Natural England's GCN Method Statement rapid risk assessment indicates that for developments affecting under 5ha of habitat over 250m from a breeding pond that an offence is highly unlikely. The site is less than 0.3ha so is well below this threshold where impacts over 250m from breeding ponds are likely.

3.2.7. Invertebrates

An assessment was made of the suitability of the site to support diverse communities of invertebrates. The assessment was based on the presence of habitat features which may support important invertebrate communities. These features include, for example, an abundance of dead wood, the presence of diverse plant communities, varied woodland structure, sunny woodland edges with a diverse flora, waterbodies and water courses and areas of free draining soil exposures.

3.2.8. Other Relevant Species

An assessment was made of site suitability for other notable species such as more rarely encountered protected species, Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of diversity in England notified under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and as listed in the England Biodiversity List, and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) species, specific to the study region.

3.2.9. Invasive Species

During the field survey, any incidental records of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were recorded.

3.2.10. Extended Phase 1 Habitat and Preliminary Roost Assessment Limitations

There were no significant limitations during the site survey. However, not all potential bat roosting features are accessible to the surveyor and therefore assessments are based upon the potential for these features to provide suitable roosting opportunities.

It is not always possible to provide a definitive assessment of the presence or likely absence of a species on a particular site. In the absence of direct evidence, assessments are based on the presence of suitable habitat within and adjacent to a site and desk study data.

3.3. Phase 2 Survey Methods

3.3.1. Phase 2 Bat Roost Surveys

The Phase 2 bat surveys were carried out in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines. Surveys were undertaken by two experienced surveyors and two infra-red cameras, with survey positions located at previously identified vantage points around all aspects of the house with potential roost features which could be impacted by the proposals, to observe bats as they emerge from and return to their roosting locations.

The level of bat foraging and commuting activity was also recorded during the Phase 2 surveys to establish any key on-site foraging areas and commuting routes. The dusk emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and was undertaken until 1.5 hours after sunset.

Surveyors recorded the time, species, location and direction of flight for each bat encountered. Particular attention was paid to establishing bat access/entry locations.

3.3.1.1. Phase 2 Bat Roost Survey Timing, Details and Personnel

The Phase 2 bat roost surveys were undertaken on 17th July 2023 and 2nd August 2023. The survey consisted of two dusk emergence surveys (Moderate Potential building). Surveys were led by Simon Mason and assisted by Samantha Munslow and Sophie Lancaster (all hold NE Bat Class Licence Level 2). Table 1 provides details of the emergence survey.

Table 1. Phase 2 Bat Survey Details

Survey Date	Survey Type	Duration	Weather Conditions	Sunset/ Sunrise
17/07/2023	Dusk	20:55 – 22:42	17° start 15°C end, dry, 60% cloud, light wind (F1)	21:12

02/08/2023	Dusk	20:35 – 22:20	17° start 16°C end, dry, 20% cloud, light wind (F1)	20:50
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3.3.1.2. Phase 2 Bat Survey Equipment

The surveyors were equipped with either a Wildlife Acoustics Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro full spectrum bat detector, Elekon Batlogger M2 or a Petterson D240x time expansion detector. Recordings of bat echolocations were manually analysed using Kaleidoscope software to confirm the identity of any species encountered.

The infra-red camera set up included a professional quality cameras including Cannon XF105 and Cannon XA30 HD camera with additional infra-red (IR) illumination provided by 2 x 96 LED IR Illuminator Array Infrared Lamps and 3 x Nightfox IR torches. Nightfox IR binoculars were also used by surveyors. A Wildlife Acoustics Echo Meter Touch 2 Pro was used to record bat activity from the unmanned infra-red location. Camera footage was reviewed using VLC Media Player. Figure 2 shows a still images of the infrared cameras from the darkest point at the end of the surveys.

Figure 2 – Infra red at end of survey – South, West and North Elevations





3.3.2. Phase 2 Badger Surveys

Following the identification of a potential single hole outlier badger sett on the eastern boundary of the site, the sett entrance was monitored using a Browning Recon Force HD Trail Camera. The camera was set up to observe the sett entrance on the 16 August 2023 and left in place until 14 September 2023. In addition, to monitor activity at the sett, three sticks were lightly placed over the entrance of the sett when the sett was identified on the 12 June, and checked and replaced during visits on 16

August and 1 September. During these surveys, checks for signs of badger were also undertaken in and around the sett and the wider site, including looking for badger hairs, footprints, feeding signs and dung pits.

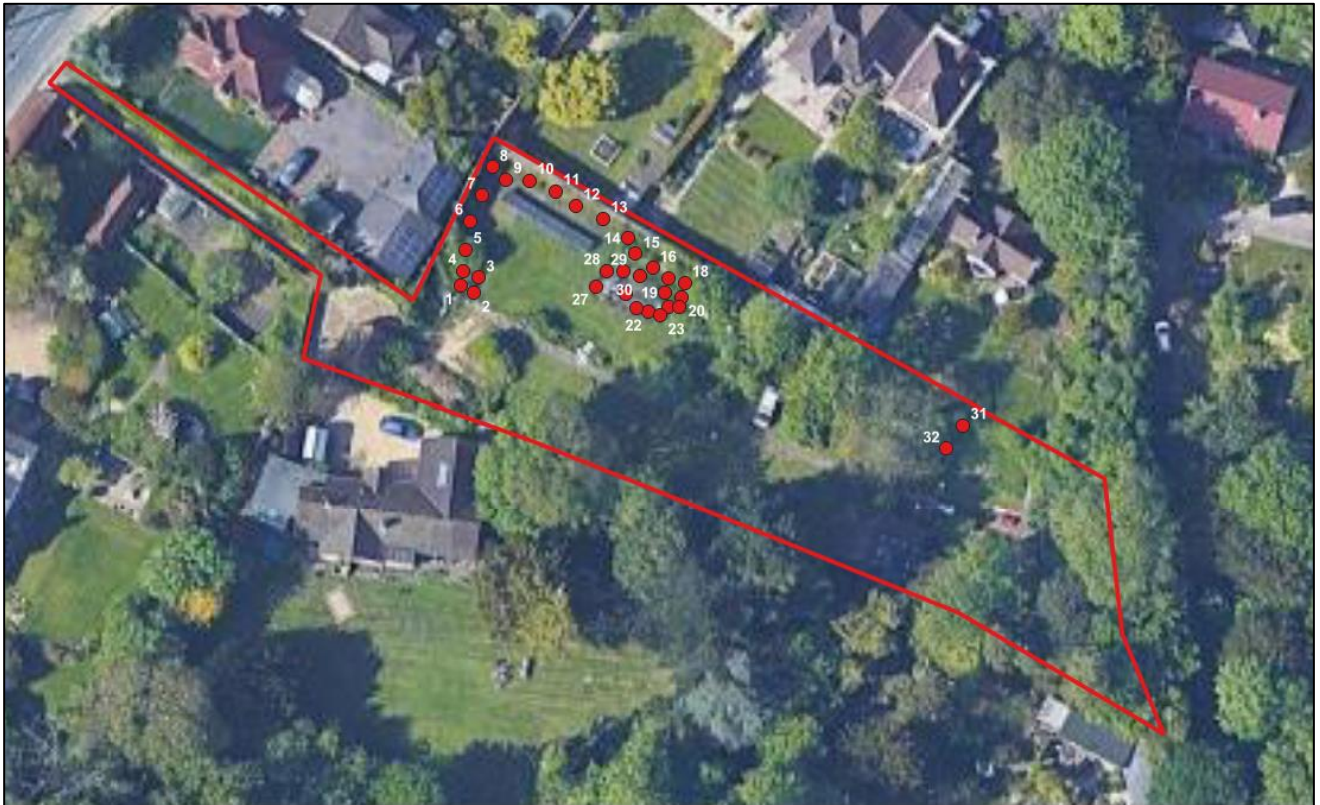
3.3.3. Phase 2 Reptile Surveys

Suitable reptile habitat was identified on site during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey. Habitat within the site was assessed to determine whether areas had the appropriate habitat structure to support reptile populations. This was based on the following characteristics:

- Location in relation to species range
- Vegetation structure
- Insolation (exposure to sun)
- Aspect
- Connectivity to other good quality habitat
- Prey abundance
- Refuge opportunities
- Hibernation habitat potential
- Disturbance

Within areas of the site identified as providing potential reptile habitat, roofing felt tiles measuring 0.5m by 0.5m, and corrugated tin sheets measuring 0.5m x 0.5m, were deployed. The tiles act as artificial refugia which are attractive to reptiles as basking locations as they heat up quicker than the surrounding environment, as well as providing cover. A total of 32 refugia were set up within all areas of suitable habitat on site. The locations of the survey areas are shown in Figure 3 below. Due to the relatively small size of the site and limited areas of suitable habitat, survey refugia were deployed at a high density.

Figure 3 Reptile Refugia Locations



Reptile survey tiles were set up on the 2nd August 2023. After a settling-in period of 29 days, reptile surveys were commenced on site on 1st September 2023. During each survey, each reptile refugia was carefully checked for reptiles, checking for any basking animals on the top of the refugia before carefully lifting and checking for reptiles sheltering underneath the refugia. As well as checking the artificial refugia, surveyors checked any suitable existing refugia (e.g., sheets of metal, wood, stones) and conducted a visual search between refugia. Details including refugia number, species, life stage (adult, sub-adult, juvenile) and sex (when possible) were recorded on a survey proforma, along with weather, time and date. Each visit was conducted during the following conditions:

- Time: conducted between 09:00 and 18:00
- Air temperature: 10°C - 20°C
- Wind: still to moderate
- Rain: None during surveys.

The site was subject to seven survey visits to determine presence or likely absence of reptiles. Population size and importance of reptile population was assessed according to categories described under Froglife Advice Sheet 10: Reptile Survey. These identify site importance for reptiles according

to the maximum number of adult animals recorded by a single surveyor on a single day during observation and refuge checks. Each population category present is awarded a score, these are totalled to estimate site importance. Categories summarised in Table 6.

Table 2 Reptile Population Score Categories

Species	Low population (Score 1)	Good population (Score 2)	Exceptional population (Score 3)
Slow worm	< 5	5-20	>20
Common lizard	< 5	5-20	>20
Adder	< 5	5-10	>10
Grass snake	< 5	5-10	>10

Source: Froglife Advice Sheet 10⁶

Sites are classed as key reptile sites if they:

- support 3 or more reptile species
- support 2 snake species
- support an exceptional population of 1 species
- support an assemblage of species scoring at least 4 (according to a total of score obtained from Table 1 above)
- are of significant regional importance due to local rarity

An assessment of population density was also undertaken in accordance with guidance from the Herpetofauna Groups of Great Britain and Ireland (HGBI) as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 3: Reptile Population Density Categories

Species	Low	Medium	High
Slow Worm	<50 / hectare	50 – 100 / hectare	>100 / hectare
Common Lizard	<20 / hectare	20 – 80 / hectare	>80 / hectare
Adder	<2 / hectare	2 – 4 / hectare	>4 / hectare

⁶ Froglife 1999, Reptile Survey: An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizards conservation
https://www.wildcare.co.uk/media/wysiwyg/pdfs/froglife_advice_sheet_10_-_reptile_surveys.pdf

Grass Snake	<2 / hectare	2 – 4 / hectare	>4 / hectare
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Source: Adapted from Herpetofauna Groups of Great Britain and Ireland⁷.

3.4. Phase 2 Reptile Survey Timing, Details and Personnel

Table 8 provides details of the dates and weather conditions of the Phase 2 reptile surveys. All surveys were undertaken by Simon Mason (MCIEEM CEnv) and experienced reptile surveyor.

Table 4. Phase 2 Reptile Survey Details

Survey Date	Weather Conditions
01/09/2023	19°C, 40% cloud, dry, light winds.
12/09/2023	19°C, 90% cloud, dry, light winds.
14/09/2023	18°C, 10% cloud, dry, light winds.
19/09/2023	18°C, 30% cloud, dry, light winds.
21/09/2023	18°C, 40% cloud, dry (recent showers), light winds.
22/09/2023	18°C, 10% cloud, dry, light winds.
26/09/2023	19°C, 80% cloud, dry, moderate winds.
28/09/2023	19°C, 80% cloud, dry, light winds.

3.4.1. Phase 2 Reptile Survey limitations

Where reptiles have not been identified as occupying an area, this does not guarantee their absence. There is always the risk of reptiles being over-looked due to use of the artificial refugia and abundance of natural habitat. Along with potentially low populations, some may go undetected.

⁷ Herpetofauna Groups of Great Britain and Ireland (1998) Evaluating local mitigation/translocation programmes: Maintaining best practice and lawful standards. <https://www.arguk.org/downloads-in-pages/resources/scientific-and-technical-reports/4-evaluating-local-mitigation-translocation-best-practice-and-lawful-standards/file>

4. Results

4.1. Introduction

This section details the results of the desk study and Extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment, including the Preliminary Roost Assessment and the results of the Phase 2 bat, badger and reptile surveys.

4.2. Desktop Study

4.2.1. Statutory Designated Sites

The site is located within 1km of two statutory designated sites which include the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which are both 185m south west of the site at their closest point. The River Itchen is a Chalk Stream of European importance. The site is notified for classic chalk stream and river, fen meadow, flood pasture and swamp habitats, particularly formations of in-channel vegetation dominated by water crowfoot *Ranunculus* spp, riparian vegetation communities (including wet woodlands) and side channels, runnels and ditches associated with the main river and former water meadows. The site is also notified for significant populations of the nationally-rare Southern Damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale* and assemblages of nationally-rare and scarce freshwater and riparian invertebrates, including the White-Clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. This site is notified for Otter *Lutra lutra*, Water Vole *Arvicola terrestris*, freshwater fishes and the assemblage of breeding birds including Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, Pochard *A. ferina* and Shoveler *Anas clypeata*, the waders Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Redshank *Tringa totanus* and Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*, and wetland passerines including Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*, Reed Warbler *A. scirpaceus* and Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cettia*.

The site is located 6.9km from the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site.

4.2.2. Non-Statutory Designated Sites

A total of 5 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) were identified within 1km of the site, details of which are summarised in the table below.

Table 5. Non-statutory designated sites within 1km of site

Designation	Name	Reason for designation	Distance from site
SINC	Gulley Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland.	215m NW

Designation	Name	Reason for designation	Distance from site
		Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving or supporting some characteristics of ancient woodland. Wet Woodlands such as Alder or Willow Woods and Birch Bog Woods which Support a Good Diversity of Woodland and/or Marsh/Swamp/Mire Species.	
SINC	Swamp West of Recreation Grounds	Areas of open freshwater. Fens, flushes, seepages, springs and inundation grasslands of floodplains that support a flora and fauna of less-improved wet conditions (seasonal or permanent). Supports one or more Hampshire Notable Species	515m W
SINC	Stoke Park Wood	Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving or supporting some characteristics of ancient woodland. Wet Woodlands such as Alder or Willow Woods and Birch Bog Woods which Support a Good Diversity of Woodland and/or Marsh/Swamp/Mire Species.	530m E
SINC	Ashtrim Nurseries	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	490m SSW
SINC	Marshy Grassland, Bishopstoke	Semi-improved grasslands which retain a significant element of unimproved grassland. Fens, flushes, seepages, springs and inundation grasslands of floodplains that support a flora and fauna of less-improved wet conditions (seasonal or permanent).	630m S

4.2.3. European Protected Species Licence Records

Consultation with the MAGIC website revealed that there were three European Protected Species licences within 1km of the site, all granted for bats. Details are provided in the table below.

Reference	Date	Species and roost status	Distance from site
2019-43153-EPS-MIT	2019	Brown Long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i> and Common Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> – Non breeding.	245m N
EPSM2012-4025	2012	Brown Long-eared, Common Pipistrelle, and Soprano Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> – Non breeding.	470m N
2015-13185-EPS-MIT	2015	Brown Long-eared, Common Pipistrelle, and Soprano Pipistrelle – Non breeding.	550m N

4.3. Site Survey

4.3.1. Habitats

The site is a residential garden with large areas laid to lawn which is regularly managed, together with a number of mature trees and shrubs. Areas of less managed grassland, ruderals and scrub were present along part of the northern boundary around a derelict greenhouse structure. The eastern boundary of the site was comprised of mature trees and shrubs. The site contained a number of buildings including the bungalow, detached garage, derelict greenhouse and derelict sheds. Details of the habitats within the site are described below. A UK Habs Habitat Map showing the distribution of habitats on site is provided in Appendix B.

Modified Grassland

The majority of the site was comprised of close mown lawn which was species-poor with abundant grasses including Perennial Rye-Grass *Lolium perenne*, Annual Meadow Grass *Poa annua* and Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* together with occasional to locally frequent herbs including Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Daisy *Bellis perennis*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and Catsear *Hypochaeris radicata*. Locally, the grass is less managed and rank where it grades into ruderal and scrub vegetation near the derelict greenhouse.

Figure 4 Modified grassland



Tall Ruderal (UK Habs code 17 Ruderal/Ephemeral)

In the vicinity of the derelict greenhouse on the northern boundary of the site there were areas of species poor tall ruderal vegetation with Common Nettle, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, Fals Oat-Grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Barren brome *Bromus sterilis*, Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Dandelion and Hedge Bindweed *Calystegia sepium*.

A second area of ruderal vegetation was present to the east of the bungalow, with vegetation growing amongst brick rubble. This area was largely shaded by overhanging trees. Species included Common Nettle, Cleavers, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.*, Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*, Purple Toadflax *Linaria purpurea*, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* and Common Ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*

Figure 5 Ruderal vegetation near derelict greenhouse and to east of bungalow.



Bramble Scrub

A small area of Dense scrub was present growing amongst the derelict greenhouse dominated by Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. with rare Hazel *Corylus avellana*.

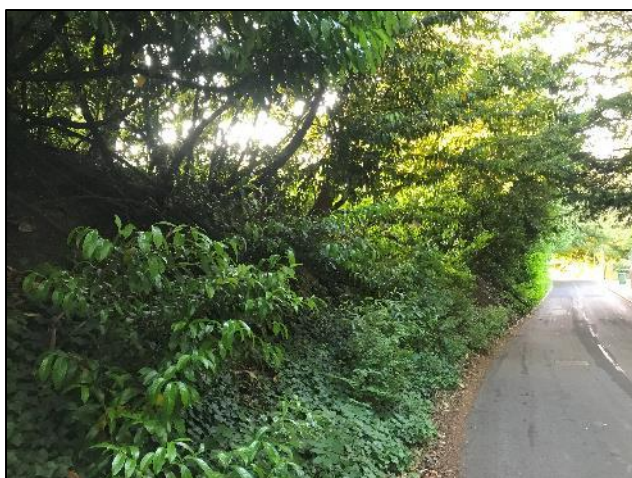
Figure 6 Dense Bramble scrub around derelict greenhouse with ruderal vegetation to right.



Other woodland, Broadleaved

A small area of woodland was present along a steep bank which forms the eastern boundary of the site. The vegetation included a mix of trees and shrubs including locally frequent Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* together with occasional Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Elm *Ulmus* sp. and Holly *Ilex aquifolium*. Ground flora included locally abundant Ivy *Hedera helix*, with occasional Purple Toadflax and cleavers *Gallium aparine*, together with frequent patches of bare ground.

Figure 7 Broadleaved Woodland along eastern boundary



Scattered trees

Within the garden were a number of scattered trees. These included a mature Yew *Taxus baccata* which has a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and Ash. A number of other mature trees overhang the site from adjacent properties.

Suburban/ mosaic of developed/natural surface

Around the bungalow and margins of the mown lawn were areas of paved pathways and overgrown flowerbeds including locally frequent pendulous sedge. A tiny garden pond around 0.5m² was present near the bungalow. This pond was shallow and full of Duckweed *Lemna spp.*

Figure 8 Overgrown flowerbeds and tiny pond



4.4. Protected and Notable Species

A description of the sites suitability to support protected and notable species is outlined below.

4.4.1. Bats

Roosting Habitat

Building 1 – Bungalow

The bungalow was a single storey structure with brick walls and a mixture of hipped and flat roof sections. There were two hipped roofed sections, one of which was constructed from plyboard covered with bitumen roofing felt. The second hipped roof section was clad in concrete roof tiles with ridge and hip tiles. Approximately half the structure had a flat roof covered with bitumen felt. There were wooden soffits and metal framed windows. On the southern aspect, the structure had been part demolished, resulting in areas of exposed cavity wall. The visible wall cavities had frequent old heavy

cobwebs. A gap was present at the top of one of the cavity walls leading into the ply-board covered loft. There were a number of gaps under tiles on the tiled hipped roof section, providing potential bat access into the loft and between roofing materials.

Internally there were two loft spaces. The first loft space had a plyboard roof supported on timber rafters. There was no insulation in the loft space and no boarding, but the small space was fully accessible. A single potential bat access point into the loft was noted at the southern eaves – corresponding to the gap at the top of the cavity wall noted in the paragraph above in the external description. There was no evidence of bats within the loft but rat droppings were recorded. The second loft space had bitumen felt under the concrete tiles. The felt was in poor condition with a number of gaps present and light visible where there were gaps under tiles. The whole loft space was covered with dense cobwebs indicating that bats are highly unlikely to be currently using the loft. The loft was insulated with fiberglass insulation and was largely un-boarded, but the small loft space was fully accessible. No evidence of roosting bats was found within the loft space but rat droppings were recorded.

Overall, the bungalow is assessed as having a moderate potential to support roosting bats, primarily between roofing materials where there are gaps under tiles, as well as in the exposed cavity wall. There was no evidence of bats within the loft spaces, but suitable access points were identified in both lofts.

Building 2 – Timber shed

Building 2 was a modern timber shed. The shed was a small single skinned timber clad structure with windows and a shallow pitched bitumen felt roof. There were no suitable roosting features on this structure.

Building 3 – Lean-to outbuilding

Building 3 was a derelict lean-to outbuilding built onto the eastern aspect of the brick wall which surrounds the garden. The structure was in poor condition with a part fallen in roof. The structure was single skinned with timber cladding over a timber frame. The roof was formed of timber boarding covered with bitumen felt. The large area of collapsed roof creates an exposed space and the single skinned structure offers little opportunity for roosting bats. Overall the structure was assessed as having a negligible potential to support roosting bats.

Building 4 – Garden Shed

Building 4 was a partially collapsed garden shed. The structure is open on one side and is partially collapsed with a timber frame clad in single skinned timber cladding and a shallow pitched roof covered with bitumen felt. Overall the structure was assessed as having a negligible potential to support roosting bats.

Building 5 – Greenhouse

Building 5 was a derelict greenhouse with a timber frame supporting largely broken or missing glass panels. The structure offered no suitable roosting opportunities for bats.

Building 6 – Garage

The detached garage had brick walls and a slate roof supported on modern timbers over a breathable membrane. The roof was well sealed with no visible gaps and the brickwork also in good condition. Timber boarding along the eaves was locally separated from the brickwork, providing a small crevice for roosting bats. There was no evidence of bats recorded internally or externally. Overall, the structure was assessed as having a low potential to support roosting bats. It is understood that there are no works to the garage.

Trees

No potential roost features were recorded on trees within the site. A dead Elm tree was recorded on the eastern boundary which had a number of small sections of flaking bark, however these were small and exposed and of negligible potential.

The table below provides a series of photographs of the structures discussed above.

Table 6 Photographs of buildings and description of features

Photograph	Description
	Western aspect of bungalow. Gap under ridge tile and hip tile.
	Northern aspect of bungalow. Gaps under hip tiles.
	Eastern aspect of bungalow. Flat bitumen roof with timber soffit box with no suitable cavities.

Photograph	Description
 A photograph of the exterior of a bungalow. Three red arrows point to specific areas: one points to a gap in the roofline, another points to a gap in the wall, and a third points to a gap under the tiles on the hipped roof section. The building has a mix of brick and plaster walls, and there is a large pile of logs or debris in front.	Southern aspect of bungalow showing gap into eaves and exposed cavity wall from part demolition, plus gaps under tiles on hipped roof section.
 A photograph showing the interior of a loft. The walls are covered in plywood. A red arrow points to a gap in the eaves at the southern end of the loft.	Internal view of ply-boarded loft showing eaves gap at southern end.
 A photograph showing the interior of the main loft. The structure is made of wooden beams. A red arrow points to a gap at the ridge where a tile is broken.	Internal view of main loft in bungalow showing gap at ridge where tile is broken.

Photograph	Description
	Internal view of main loft in bungalow showing heavy cobwebs.
	Building 2 – garden shed to right, and doorway through garden wall into Building 3 Outbuilding.
	Building 3 – Showing area of collapsed roof.

Photograph	Description
	Southern aspect of Building 3 showing single skinned timber cladding and collapsed section of roof.
	Southern aspect of Building 4 showing partially collapsed single skinned structure with open front.
	Building 5 derelict greenhouse showing exposed and open structure encroached by scrub.

Photograph	Description
	Building 6 garage with well-sealed slate roof and brickwork in good condition.
	Timber boarding along eaves with small gap providing bat access between single timber board and brickwork.

Foraging and commuting habitat

The semi-mature and mature trees and shrubs and areas of scrub and ruderals within the garden and adjacent gardens provides moderate quality foraging habitat for bats. There is good connectivity to linear tree and shrub vegetation along Spring Lane to the south and connectivity to mature trees within the offsite garden to the south. High quality foraging habitat is present further to the west of the site along the River Itchen riparian corridor and adjacent areas of broadleaved woodland. Overall, the site is assessed to support moderate quality bat foraging habitat.

4.4.1.1. Bat Roost Survey

No bats were recorded emerging or entering the bungalow during either of the emergence surveys. A total of six species were recorded during the surveys including: Common Pipistrelle; Soprano Pipistrelle; Noctule; Serotine; Myotis sp., and Long-eared sp. Bats were recorded foraging within and over the site and using boundary features and tree lines to commute along.

A summary of activity recorded during each survey is provided in the table below.

Table 7 Bat emergence survey results

Survey Date	Recorded Bat Roosts	General Bat Activity at the Site
17/07/2023	None	The first bat recorded was a Soprano Pipistrelle by the surveyor on the southern aspect at 21:15, three minutes after sunset. This bat was heard but not seen. The early time that this bat was recorded indicates that a roost may be near-by. The next bat recorded was a Common Pipistrelle at 21:29 by the surveyor on the southern aspect, and at 21:30 by the surveyor on the northern aspect. At 21:32 a Noctule was then recorded. At 21:44 the surveyor on the northern aspect recorded a Long-Eared bat - at 32 minutes after sunset, this indicates that a roost may be near-by for this later emerging species. Common and Soprano Pipistrelle passes were recorded regularly throughout the survey, with up to two bats seen together foraging and commuting through the garden. Long-Eared passes were rare with a total of four passes and Noctule passes were also rare with two passes.
02/08/2023	None	The first bat recorded was a Common Pipistrelle at 20:57 by the surveyor on the southern aspect, seven minutes after sunset. This bat was heard but not seen. The early time that this bat was recorded indicates that a roost may be near-by. The next bat was a Common Pipistrelle at 20:59 which was seen commuting from northeast to southwest over the top of the bungalow. The first Soprano Pipistrelle was recorded at 21:00, ten minutes after sunset. This was seen by the surveyor on the southern aspect commuting along the tree line/fence line along the southern boundary. A Noctule was then recorded at 21:02 with a single bat seen foraging high over the top of the site flying from south to north. At 21:28 a Serotine was seen but not heard. At 21:35 a single Myotis pass was recorded, 45 minutes after sunset. Due to the late emerging times of Myotis spp. there is a potential that a roost may be near-by. A Long-Eared bat was heard but not seen at 22:07. Common and Soprano Pipistrelle were recorded throughout the survey, with bats observed foraging and passing through the site, with frequent activity along the treeline along the southern border of the site. Moderate levels of Noctule activity were also recorded with 14 passes and foraging observed over

Survey Date	Recorded Bat Roosts	General Bat Activity at the Site
		the top of the site. Activity from the other recorded species was low with four Myotis passes, one Serotine pass and two Long-eared passes.

4.4.2. Badger

During the extended phase 1 survey on 12 June 2023, a single hole Badger outlier sett (Sett A) was identified within the site near the top of the wooded slope which forms the eastern boundary along Spring Lane (Figure 9). At the time of the survey the sett appeared to be inactive with no signs of current use. An active single hole badger outlier sett (Sett B) was recorded off site further south along the same steep covered slope (Figure 9). This entrance was around 5m south of the site boundary and approximately 18m south of Sett A. This sett entrance had a large spoil heap with fresh spoil. Further north along Spring Lane there was a third entrance (Sett C), located just outside the site boundary and approximately 20m north of Sett A. This sett was disused, covered with ivy and part blocked with soil. The location of the setts is shown in **Appendix C – Note this appendix should be treated as confidential and not made publicly available.**

Figure 9 Sett A (left) and Sett B (right)



Sticks were placed over the entrance of Sett A during the extended phase 1 survey to monitor activity at the sett. Sett A was then re-surveyed on 16 August. The sticks had moved indicating activity around

the sett entrance and there was evidence of fresh digging, with fresh earth on the spoil heap outside the sett entrance. A single badger hair was found in the sett entrance confirming use by Badger.

A trail camera was set up to monitor activity at the sett entrance on the 16 August 2023 and left in place until 14 September 2023. The camera recorded badgers on 12 separate nights. The majority of footage was for Badgers passing by the sett entrance, including scent marking around the entrance. On one occasion, 5 September 2023, a Badger was recorded entering the sett. A summary of activity recorded is presented in the table below.

Table 8 Sett A Trail Camera Monitoring

Date	Time	Species	Activity
16/08/2023	22:54	Badger	Outside sett entrance
	22:56	Badger	Outside sett entrance
17/08/2023	00:14	Badger	Outside sett entrance
	00:17	Badger	Outside sett entrance
19/08/2023	00:18	Badger	Outside sett entrance
20/08/2023	01:35	Badger	Outside sett entrance
21/08/2023	03:26	Badger	Outside sett entrance
	22:44	Badger	Outside sett entrance
23/08/2023	00:32	Badger	Outside sett entrance
24/08/2023	03:00	Badger	Outside sett entrance
25/08/2023	21:18	Badger	Outside sett entrance
27/08/2023	23:20	Badger	Outside sett entrance
	23:38	Badger	Outside sett entrance
30/08/2023	05:01	Badger	Outside sett entrance
31/08/2023	02:53	Badger	Outside sett entrance
	03:02	Badger	Outside sett entrance
05/09/2023	23:52	Badger	Enters sett

	23:53	Badger	Outside sett entrance
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Figure 10 Trail camera footage of badger



4.4.3. Hazel Dormouse

The small amount of woodland habitat on site is of low value to Hazel Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*. The woodland on the steep bank on the eastern boundary of the site has a range of trees

and shrubs, however Cherry Laurel is frequent. Occasional Ash, Elm, Field Maple and Holly provide some potential foraging resource but the open structure does not provide good opportunities for nesting. The on-site habitat is connected to a small amount of similar habitat along Spring Lane, but there is no connectivity to areas of woodland or extensive areas of scrub or hedgerow networks. The area of connected habitat is too small to support a viable Dormouse population.

Overall, due to the small area of sub-optimal habitat with no connectivity to suitably large areas of habitat, Hazel Dormice are assessed to be likely absent.

4.4.4. Otters and Water Vole

There is no aquatic habitat on-site or adjacent to the site. Otter *Lutra lutra* and Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* are present in the wider area, along the River Itchen, but there is no connectivity to site or suitable habitat on site. Overall, Otter and Water Vole are likely absent from the site.

4.4.5. Other Notable Mammals

The garden, including the less managed areas around the derelict greenhouse, provides suitable habitat for Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and there is a potential that this species may be present, although no evidence was identified during the site survey. The presence of Badger also reduces the likelihood of Hedgehogs being present as they prey on Hedgehogs.

4.4.6. Nesting Birds

The trees, shrubs and scrub in the garden and belt of trees and shrubs along the eastern boundary of the site provides nesting opportunities for a range of garden birds. Additionally, the bungalow, derelict sheds and outbuilding provide potential nesting opportunities. During the bat surveys Swift *Apus apus* were observed overhead. Species recorded on the trail camera set up to monitor the Badger Sett included Robin *Erithacus rubecula*, Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*, Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, Great Tit *Parus major* and Nuthatch *Sitta europaea*.

Overall, there is a high potential for nesting birds to be present on site both within the various buildings and within the areas of trees, shrubs and scrub.

4.4.7. Great Crested Newt

A review of the MAGIC database identified no Mitigation Licences and no results from eDNA surveys or licence return data within 1km of the site.

The only pond on site was very small and shallow (<0.5m²) and not suitable for supporting Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*. The areas of woodland, scrub and ruderal habitats on site provide

suitable terrestrial habitat. A review of Ordnance Survey mapping identified three ponds within 250m⁸ of the site. These ponds are all associated with a wet ditch which links to the River Itchen to the west of the site. The ponds are located 100m, 150m and 185m west of the site at their closest point, at the end of St Martins Close lane, with the main area of the site at the end of the existing access track being over 140m from the closest pond. It was not possible to view these ponds, however, their association with a wet ditch which looks to connect to the River Itchen makes it highly likely that fish would be present in these ponds, reducing their suitability for amphibians. The ponds are also partially fragmented from the site by Church Road. Even if a breeding population of Great Crested Newt was present in these ponds, and they could access the site over Church Road, the potential for impacts to Great Crested Newts is considered to be negligible, due to the distance of the nearest pond. Using the Natural England Great Crested Newt Method Statement risk assessment tool, even if the whole site was impacted, the risk assessment identifies that the risk of an offence is highly unlikely.

Overall, due to the distance of the ponds from the site, and the partial fragmentation by Church Road, it is assessed as highly unlikely that Great Crested Newts would be present on site or impacted by the proposals.

4.4.8. Reptiles

The large areas of managed lawn are of negligible value to widespread reptiles. However, along the northern edge of the site around the vicinity of the derelict greenhouse there are areas of less managed grassland, together with ruderals and scrub, which provide a relatively small area of suitable reptile habitat (see figure 5). Small piles of rubble associated with the derelict greenhouse and an earth mound provide potential refugia and areas which could support hibernating reptiles. Brick rubble with ruderal vegetation to the east of the bungalow provides suitable refuge areas but is heavily shaded and less suitable for foraging reptiles. There is connectivity to gardens to the north and the south which are likely to support less managed areas which may provide similar habitat to the less managed areas on site, however, there is poor connectivity to any large areas of semi-natural habitats in the wider area. Overall there is a moderate potential for widespread reptiles to be present on site.

4.4.8.1. Reptile Surveys

The reptile surveys recorded a maximum count of six adult Slow Worms *Anguis fragilis* and six juvenile Slow Worms on the 26 September 2023. No other reptile species were found during the surveys. Slow

⁸ Natural England GCN Method Statement rapid risk assessment indicates that for developments affecting under 5ha of habitat over 250m from a breeding pond that an offence is highly unlikely. The site is less than 0.5ha so is well below this threshold where impacts over 250m from breeding ponds are likely.

Worms were recorded on each of the seven survey visits. A summary of the survey results are shown in the table below.

Table 9 Reptile survey results

Date	Slow Worm Adult Female	Slow Worm Adult Male	Slow Worm Juvenile
01/09/2023	2		
12/09/2023	3		1
14/09/2023			3
19/09/2023			2
21/09/2023	4	1	2
22/09/2023	4		3
26/09/2023	5	1	6
28/09/2023	4		8

The maximum count of six adult Slow Worms is indicative of a low population of Slow Worm in accordance with Froglife Advice Sheet 10 (see section 3.3.3). In accordance with these guidelines, low populations are based on up to five adult Slow Worms, based on a density of refugia of up to 10 per hectare. The refugia on site were at a very high density, much greater than 10 per hectare, and therefore the maximum count of six adults is assessed as a low population. In accordance with the Herpetofauna Groups of Great Britain and Ireland guidance (see section 3.3.3) the reptile population is also assessed as being at a low population density, with less than 50 individuals per hectare. The site supports a low population of a single species of reptile and is therefore not a key reptile site.

4.4.9. Terrestrial Invertebrates

The areas of scrub, rough grassland and ruderal habitats on site provide a range of habitats which are likely to support a range of terrestrial invertebrates. Overall, the site is likely to support an assemblage of common and widespread invertebrate species.

5. Evaluation, Impacts and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

This section presents the conclusions of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Phase 2 Surveys. It provides an assessment of the potential impacts and likely ecological constraints to the proposed works and provides recommendations for mitigation measures considered necessary as well as recommendations for providing ecological enhancements. An outline of protected species legislation relevant to the findings of this report is provided in Appendix D.

5.2. Designated Sites

5.2.1. Statutory Designated Sites

Whilst the site is within relatively close proximity to the River Itchen SAC and SSSI, there are no links between the site and the designated sites and no habitats on site which could support qualifying species of these sites and therefore no direct impacts on statutory designates sites are likely.

The site is 6.9km from the Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site and therefore is outside of the 5.6km buffer identified within which there is a potential for increased dwellings to result in increased recreational pressure on the Solent designated sites.

There are therefore no adverse impacts likely on Statutory Designated sites.

5.2.2. Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Due to the distance of the nearest non-statutory designated site (215m) and the small scale of the proposed development, no adverse impacts on non-statutory designated sites are likely.

5.3. Habitats

The proposals will result in the loss of the existing managed species-poor modified grassland within the existing lawn. There will also be a loss of areas of scrub and ruderal habitats along the northern edge around the derelict greenhouse. The new access off Spring Lane will result in the removal of woodland vegetation along the steep slope. This woodland includes locally frequent non-native Cherry Laurel together with Elm affected by Dutch Elm Disease along with Ash, Field Maple and Holly. It is not representative of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Priority Habitat. The majority of existing mature trees on site outside of the cutting of the new access will be retained and incorporated into the landscape design of the proposed development.

The proposals incorporate a number of elements which will compensate for the losses of habitats summarised above. The embankment along Spring Lane will be sown with a native species-rich

wildflower grassland. The new dwellings will incorporate bio-solar roofs and green roofs which will comprise wildflower planting on green roofs together with solar panels on some of these. These areas of wildflower planting will increase the species diversity on site compared to the species poor grasslands currently on site. There will also be areas of managed lawn similar to the current lawns on site. Proposals include new kitchen gardens for growing fruit and vegetables as part of the aim to create self-sufficient dwellings. There is no certainty in terms of how intensively these areas will be managed, but these kitchen gardens are likely to provide some biodiversity value, especially if managed organically.

Whilst there will be some overall reduction in habitats on site due to the construction of new dwellings and access road, overall the elements included in the landscape design, including wildflower planting, will increase species diversity on site.

Mitigation

Temporary fencing will be used to protect retained habitats, including trees. This will include a root protection zone in accordance with 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction' (BS 5837).

Confirmation of soil type should be undertaken to select the most appropriate seed mixture for planting in the native wildflower meadow areas. The final selected species mixture must contain a diverse mix of native grasses and wildflowers.

5.4. Protected and Notable Species

5.4.1. Bats

Roosting Bats

There will be no loss of bat roosts as a result of the proposals. The bungalow has been surveyed and roosting bats are likely absent from this structure. Other structures on site have been assessed as having a negligible potential to support roosting bats, with the exception of the garage which has been assessed as having a low potential to support roosting bats but will be unaffected by the proposals. No trees with suitable roosting features will be affected by the proposals.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

The proposals will result in the loss of small areas of scrub and ruderal vegetation and the loss of a small section of woodland along the boundary of the site with Spring Lane. Whilst there will be some

tree and shrub removal along Spring Lane, this will not result in the fragmentation of bat commuting habitat as mature trees will be retained either side of the new access as shown in figure below.

Figure 11 New access showing retained trees either side



Bat Conservation Trust recommend avoiding opening gaps in hedgerows and linear vegetation of more than 10m as this can impact on bats habitat connectivity⁹. The gap will be well under 10m and the creation of the new access is not likely to have an adverse impact on commuting or foraging bats.

Retained trees will continue to provide foraging habitat and the new residential gardens and wider landscaping will also provide foraging habitat in the long term, with the areas of species rich grassland and wildflower sown green roofs increasing species diversity and providing invertebrate prey for foraging bats.

Any proposed artificial lighting could adversely affect foraging bats. However, any lighting proposals will be minor and will also not adversely affect Common and Soprano Pipistrelle, which make up the majority of bat activity at the site and are known to forage within artificially lit areas. The more light sensitive species recorded on site including Long-eared and Myotis would potentially be subject to greater levels of impact.

⁹ Gunnell, K., Grant, G. and Williams, C. (2012) Landscape and urban design for bats and biodiversity. Bat Conservation Trust

Mitigation

Any new external artificial lighting would be minimised to reduce impacts on foraging and commuting bats. Lighting will be directional and light spill onto retained trees, including either side of the new access road, will be avoided. Light sources will be no-UV emitting and will have a warm white light source (<2,700k).

With the implementation of the above mitigation, residual impacts on bats will be negligible and not significant.

5.4.2. Badger

Surveys have confirmed Badgers to be present on site. The active single hole outlier sett (Sett A) along the steep slope is located away from the proposed access track and earthworks, however, there is a high risk of damaging this sett and harming any Badgers which may be present during works. Sett C, a disused outlier sett is located in close proximity to the proposed new access road and could be damaged by the works. If this sett became active there would be a risk of harming Badgers during construction. The loss of the two outlier setts is however not likely to have a significant adverse effect on the local badger population, which are likely to use a number of other outlier setts. Sett B is located away from the new access track and is unlikely to be impacted.

The proposals will result in the removal of grassland, woodland, scrub and ruderal habitats. This has a potential to result in the loss of habitats used by foraging Badger. However, no evidence of foraging Badger was noted during the site survey and the garden is not considered to be an important foraging resource for the local Badger population. The new landscaping within the site will continue to provide suitable foraging habitats for Badger and no significant impacts on foraging Badger are likely.

As Badgers are known to be present, there is a risk that badgers could access the site and get trapped in excavations during construction.

Mitigation

To prevent harm to Badgers during construction of the new access road, Sett A will need to be closed under a Natural England Badger Development Licence. Sett C should also be monitored and if this sett becomes active, this will also need closing under a Natural England Badger Development Licence. Sett closure is normally only permitted between the 1 July and 30 November. Full details of mitigation will be included within the Development Licence, but will include the fitting of one way gates and the regular monitoring of these by the licenced ecologist or an accredited agent. Following a successful

continuous 21 days of exclusion, the sett should be then excavated under supervision of the licenced ecologist or an accredited agent. If at any point during the exclusion there is evidence that Badgers could have re-gained entry into the sett, the 21 day exclusion would need to be started again. As the works affect only outlier setts, no replacement setts will be provided.

To prevent Badgers becoming trapped in excavations during construction, any open excavations will either be covered up overnight or have temporary ramps provided to allow badgers and other animals to escape if they enter the excavations.

5.4.3. Dormouse

There will be no impact to Hazel Dormouse due to their likely absence from the site.

5.4.4. Otters and Water Vole

There will be no impact to either Otter or Water Vole due to their likely absence from the site.

5.4.5. Other Mammals

The loss of less managed grassland and scrub has potential to have a minor adverse impact on Hedgehog, if present. There is a risk that mammals could become trapped in excavations during construction. The new gardens and wider landscaping, including wildflower planting, will continue provide habitat for Hedgehogs (providing they can access under fences).

Mitigation

As per the badger mitigation, any open excavations will either be covered up overnight or have ramps provided to allow animals to escape if they enter the excavations.

Any permanent fencing around the site will be permeable to hedgehogs, avoiding close boarded fencing where possible, or where this type of fencing is used, incorporating hedgehog access points of at least 13cm x 13cm at the base of the fence panels or in the gravel boards.

5.4.6. Nesting Birds

Scrub clearance and the demolition of buildings has a risk of destroying birds nests if undertaken during the nesting bird season between March and September inclusive. Overall, there will be a reduction in the available nesting habitat on-site, although nesting opportunities will remain within retained trees around the site boundaries.

Mitigation

Vegetation clearance and demolition works shall be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season where possible. If any clearance or demolition works are undertaken during the nesting bird season they will be subject to a nesting bird check by an experienced ecologist no more than 24hrs prior to works. Any active nests will be marked out with a buffer appropriate to the species of nesting bird and no works undertaken within this buffer until the nest is no longer active.

Replacement nesting habitat will include provision of 2 x 25mm entrance hole nest boxes, 2 x 28mm entrance hole nest boxes and 2 x open fronted nest boxes to provide a range of nesting opportunities around the site. Tree and shrub planting within the landscape plans will also provide long-term nesting opportunities.

5.4.7. Great Crested Newt

The proposed development works will have no impact on any suitable aquatic habitat which could be used by Great Crested Newt. The works will remove areas of suitable terrestrial newt habitat, however, due to the likely absence of Great Crested Newt, there are no likely impacts on this species.

5.4.8. Reptiles

Reptile surveys have confirmed the presence of a low population of Slow Worm. The Slow Worms were found within areas of less managed grassland, ruderals and scrub, with the main area located near the derelict greenhouse. The location of reptile habitat which will be directly impacted by the proposals is shown in figure 12 below. The total area of reptile habitat lost would be approximately 145m². The area shown to the east in the figure below is an earth mound which provides potential hibernacula for reptiles. Areas of the derelict greenhouse which contain rubble also provide potential hibernacula features.

Unmitigated, there is a risk of killing and injuring of Slow Worms during site clearance, loss of potential hibernacula features and a reduction in the availability of suitable reptile habitat. It is likely that the reptile population on site also uses the gardens within the adjacent properties, and it is likely that the Slow Worm population would persist. However, unmitigated there is a risk of a significant adverse impact on the local Slow Worm population.

In the long-term, the site will continue to provide suitable habitat for Slow Worms within the areas of wildflower meadow planting and the gardens with lawns and vegetable plots will provide suitable habitat, the quality of which will vary depending on management levels. Unmitigated there would

however be a long term loss of hibernacula features which could adversely affect the local Slow Worm population.

Figure 12 Location of reptile habitat identified as supporting a low population of Slow Worm which will be lost as a result of the proposals.



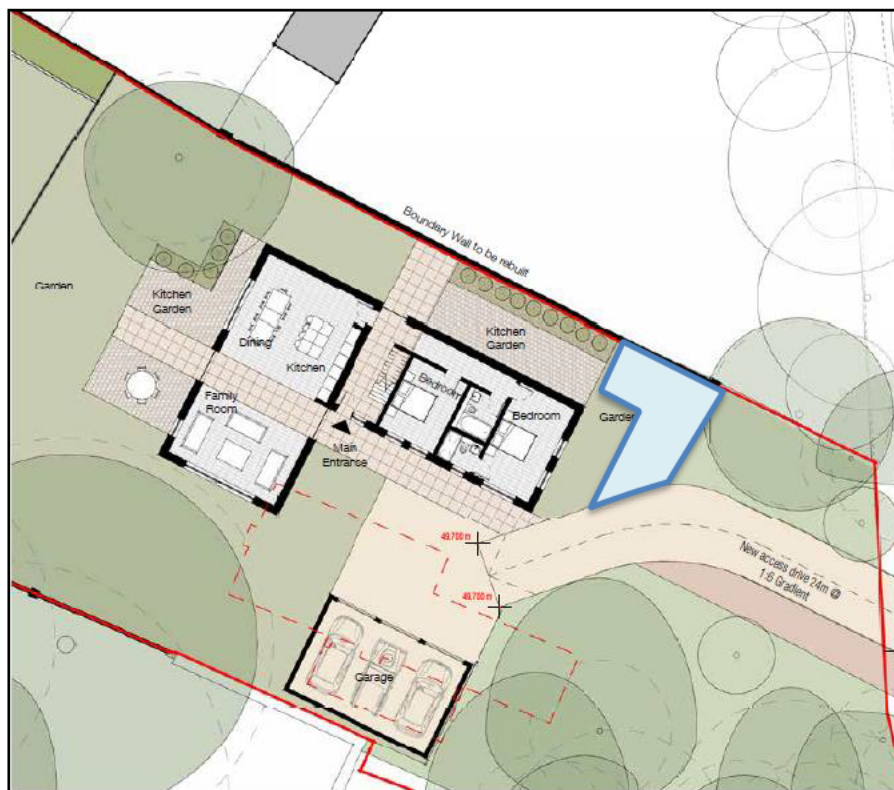
Mitigation

To prevent harm to Slow Worm and ensure there are no long-term adverse impacts on the local Slow Worm population, a mitigation strategy will need to be prepared and adhered to by the development. Given the relatively small area of suitable habitat affected, the low population, and the likelihood that the population also use adjacent residential gardens, installing reptile fencing and trapping and translocating Slow Worms from the site is not considered appropriate. The mitigation strategy should include the following:

- Avoidance of clearing areas of suitable reptile habitat, including rubble in the derelict greenhouse and the earth mound during reptile hibernation season (avoid November to end of March) and ensuring works are undertaken when temperatures are at least 10°C when reptiles will be active.
- Ecological supervision of all clearance of suitable reptile habitat including fingertip searches of suitable habitat during clearance activities.

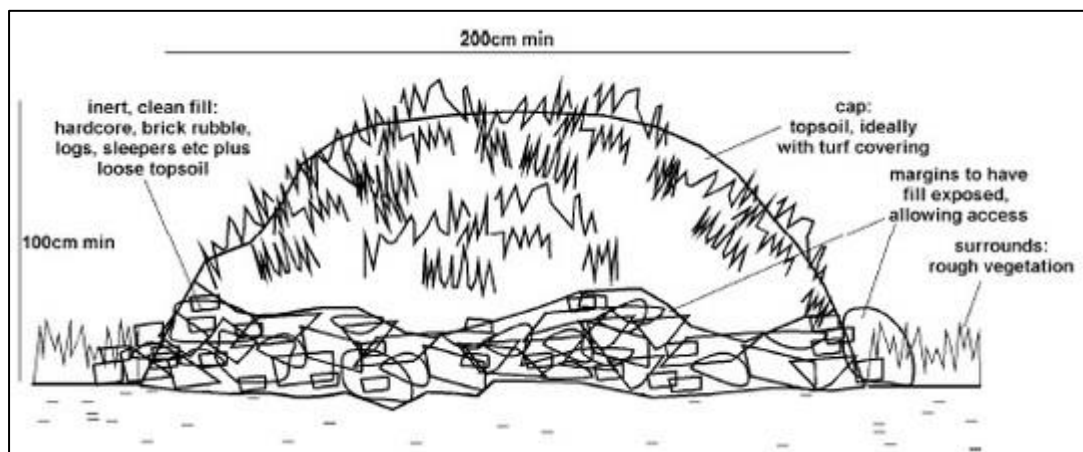
- Phased vegetation clearance under ecological supervision, working towards areas of onsite or offsite retained habitats.
- Destructive search (ecological supervision) during removal of rubble piles from the derelict greenhouse and the removal of the earth mound.
- Any reptiles found during site clearance works will be relocated by an ecologist to an area of retained habitat on site. As much of the existing reptile habitat will be lost, some prior management will be needed to ensure there is suitable habitat for reptiles to be moved to on site. Part of the proposed garden area to the east of Plot 2 (outside the footprint needed to construct the new dwelling) which is currently managed lawn could be left unmanaged to allow a taller sward to develop (see Figure 13). Prior to this, scarifying and sowing with native wildflowers would allow a more diverse habitat with greater foraging opportunities to develop. This area is adjacent to the proposed wildflower meadow creation along the new access road and would allow dispersal of reptiles into this habitat once established. This area should be protected during construction with temporary fencing to prevent machinery entering this area or materials being stored in this area.

Figure 13 Suggested reptile receptor area which will need to be managed to create suitable habitat prior to works affecting reptile habitat commencing.



- Creation of two new hibernacula, each of which are at least 2m wide by 1m high/deep. The 1m high may be partially buried where the soil is free draining. The hibernacula should be filled with rubble and logs – which can be obtained from the site clearance activities and should be capped with topsoil which can then be sown with a wildflower meadow mixture. An example of a hibernacula is shown in Figure 14. These should be positioned within the wildflower meadow planting either side of the new access road.

Figure 14 Hibernacula design



- Long-term management of areas of wildflower meadow either side of the access road to establish and maintain suitable reptile habitat. The areas of meadow should be cut once a year during the winter (November to March) when reptiles will be hibernating and less at risk from mowing. At least 30% of the area of wildflower meadow should be left un-cut in any one year, to allow a diverse sward to develop which will include areas of taller grassland.
- Provision of information to occupiers of new dwellings on the presence of Slow Worms and management recommendations – note this cannot be relied on as mitigation, but may encourage homeowners to create and manage habitats for Slow Worms within their gardens, including leaving areas of less managed lawn and creation of compost heaps.

5.4.9. Terrestrial Invertebrates

The loss of areas of ruderal and scrub habitats and tree and shrub removal will result in a minor local reduction in habitat for terrestrial invertebrates. This is not likely to have an adverse effect on any notable invertebrate populations and will have a slight adverse effect on widespread species that the site is likely to support.

Mitigation

The site landscaping will include the use of native wildflower meadow planting and wildflower planting on the green roofs. This will create diverse habitats which will be of value to a range of invertebrates. To retain deadwood habitat, where any of the tree removal results in removal of deadwood, these deadwood arisings will be used to create log piles on site.

5.5. Enhancements

In accordance with the NPPF (see section 2.2) developments should minimise impacts and provide net gains for biodiversity. Local policy within the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) includes a requirement to *'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...'* Therefore, enhancement measures are included in the development proposals. This will include the following:

- Installing at least 3 x bat boxes on either buildings and/or retained trees within the wider site to provide new roosting opportunities for bats. These will be 'self-cleaning' designs such as the Eco Kent Bat Box, to avoid the need for long-term maintenance.
- Installing 3 x House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* nesting boxes on the new buildings within the development.
- Installing 3 x Swift *Apus apus* nest boxes/bricks on the new buildings within the development.

These measures will provide enhancements to species in addition to the mitigation and landscaping proposals, including areas of wildflower meadow and green roofs, outlined in section 5.4

5.6. Updating Survey

CIEEM guidance¹⁰ on the lifespan of ecological reports is that updating surveys are likely to be required after 18 months. Therefore, if works have not commenced by March 2025, or the proposals for the site change significantly, it is recommended that the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is updated. This is because the ecology of the site is likely to change over this period. Changes to the proposals may alter the level of impact on species and may alter the requirements for mitigation.

¹⁰ CIEEM (2019) Advice Note on The Lifespan of Ecological Reports & Surveys

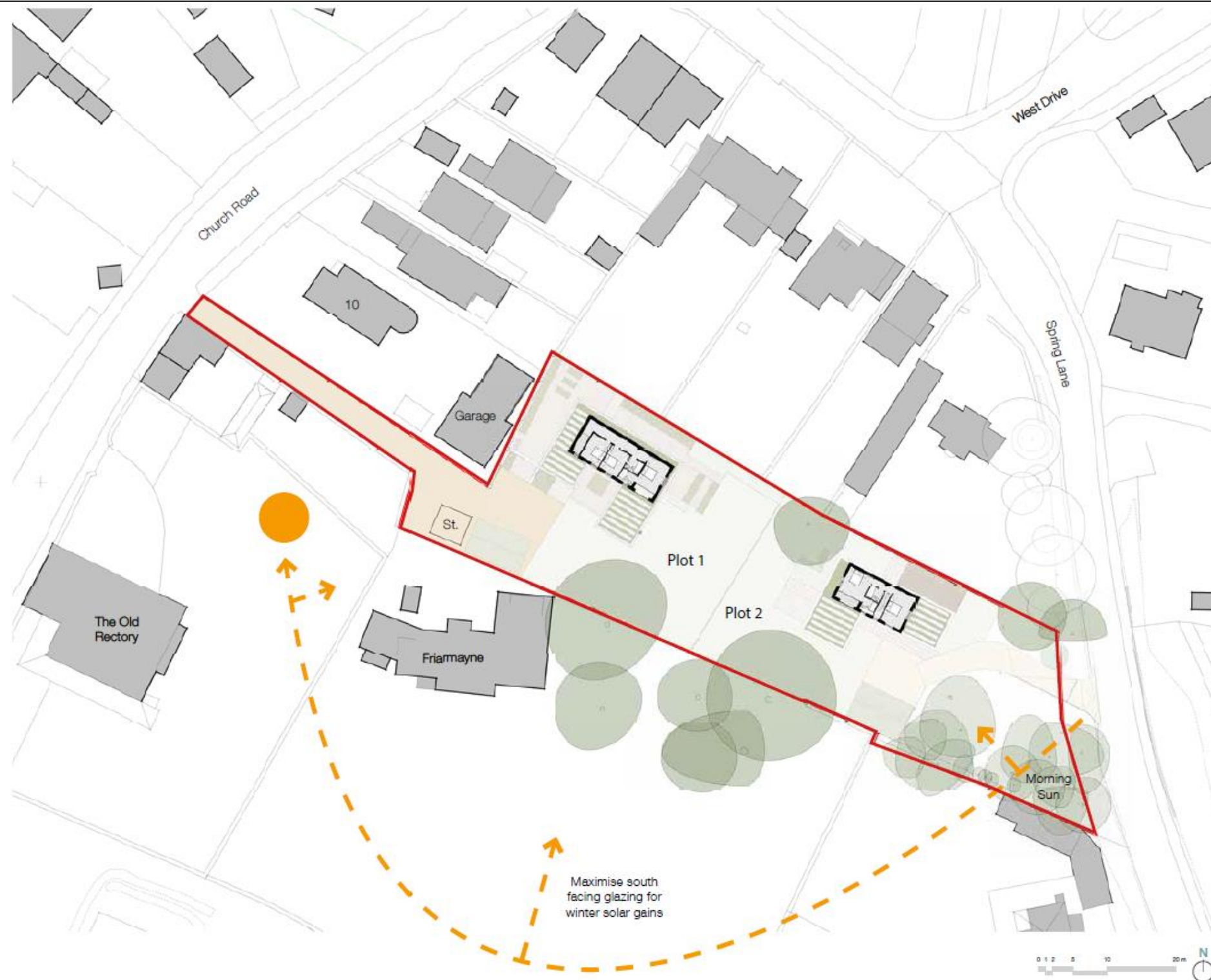
6. Conclusions

The proposed development will result in the loss of areas of managed lawn together with smaller areas of less managed ruderal and scrub habitat and the loss of a small area of woodland for a new access road. There will also be the loss of existing buildings on site with the exception of the detached garage which will be retained and unaffected by the proposals. Preliminary surveys identified suitable habitat on site for certain protected species including bats, reptiles and Badger, but the likely absence of other species including Dormouse, Great Crested Newt, Otter and Water Vole. Further surveys confirmed the likely absence of roosting bats but confirmed the presence of a low population of Slow Worm and the presence of an active Badger outlier sett. Unmitigated, the proposals have the potential to result in adverse effects on Slow Worm and Badger. Mitigation will minimise any adverse impacts and will include the requirement for a reptile mitigation strategy and a Badger development licence. The scheme landscaping proposals include areas of native wildflower meadow and wildflower sown green roofs which will provide an increased diversity of species compared to the current habitats on site. A number of ecological enhancements are also proposed, including boxes for bats and birds.

Appendix A: Proposal Drawings



Proposed First Floor Plan



St Martin's Close - Design Review Panel

GILES ARCHITECTS

Proposed Roof Plan



St Martin's Close - Design Review Panel

GILES ARCHITECTS

Appendix B: Habitat Map



Appendix C – CONFIDENTIAL Badger Setts Location Map



Appendix D: Protected Species Legislation

A summary of key protected species legislation is outlined below. The original legislation should be referred to for the full text.

Species	Legislation
Bats <i>Chiroptera</i>	All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended). This means it is illegal to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats; • Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time); • Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat; and • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
Badgers <i>Meles meles</i>	Badgers and their setts are afforded protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This Act is in regard to welfare legislation for badgers, due to history persecution, rather than their distribution which is widespread and abundant throughout the countryside. Under this act it is an offence to: • Capture, kill, injure and cruelly or ill-treat a badger; • Damage, obstruct or destroy a sett; and, • Disturb a badger when within a sett.
Dormice <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>	Dormice are protected under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it illegal to: • Intentionally or deliberately injure, kill, or take any wild dormouse; • Intentionally or deliberately damage, destroy or obstruct any access to any structure or place used for shelter, breeding, or protection by a dormouse; • Or to intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse whilst it is using such a structure or place; or • Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a dormouse (dead or alive) or any part of a dormouse.

Species	Legislation
Great crested newts (GCN) <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	GCN are fully protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and under the WCA 1981 (as amended). This makes it illegal to: • Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or take any GCN; • Possess or control any live or dead specimen, or anything derived from a GCN; • Intentionally or deliberately damage, destroy or obstruct any access to any structure or place used for shelter, breeding, or protection by a GCN; • Or to intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt whilst it is using such a structure or place.
Widespread reptile species (Slow worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i> , Grass snake <i>Natrix Helvetica</i> , Common lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i> , and Adder <i>Vipera berus</i>).	All UK reptile species are protected under the WCA 1981 (as amended) making it illegal to: • Intentionally or deliberately injure, kill, or take any wild reptile; • Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a reptile (dead or alive) or any part of a reptile.
Breeding Birds	All wild birds in the UK are protected under the WCA 1981 (as amended) making it illegal to: • Kill, injure or take any wild bird; • Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use; • Take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird; and • Possess or control (e.g. for exhibition or sale any wild bird or egg unless obtained legally). In addition to the above, Schedule 1 bird species are also protected from disturbance, both to their nesting areas and wintering habitats.