



A collage of three images. The top right shows a close-up of a black and yellow salamander. The middle left is a 3D architectural rendering of a residential development with winding roads, green spaces, and a river. The bottom right is a photograph of a house under construction, showing the wooden frame and scaffolding.



A collage of three images. The top image shows a construction site with scaffolding and red storage containers. The middle image is a close-up of a mouse eating a bunch of red grapes. The bottom image is a close-up of a skunk's head, showing its characteristic black and white fur.

A collage of three images. The top-left image shows a high-voltage electrical substation with large metal structures and insulators. The top-right image shows a tree removal operation in a field, with a tracked mulcher and several workers in high-visibility vests. The bottom-left image is a close-up of a badger's head, showing its distinctive black and white stripes.

Client:
Eastleigh Borough Council

K4 Keppel
Daedalus Park
Daedalus Drive
Lee on the Solent
PO13 9FX

7th December 2023

Dear Eastleigh Borough Council,

RE: Priority Habitat at Brighstone, Botley Road, Horton Heath

Background & Aim

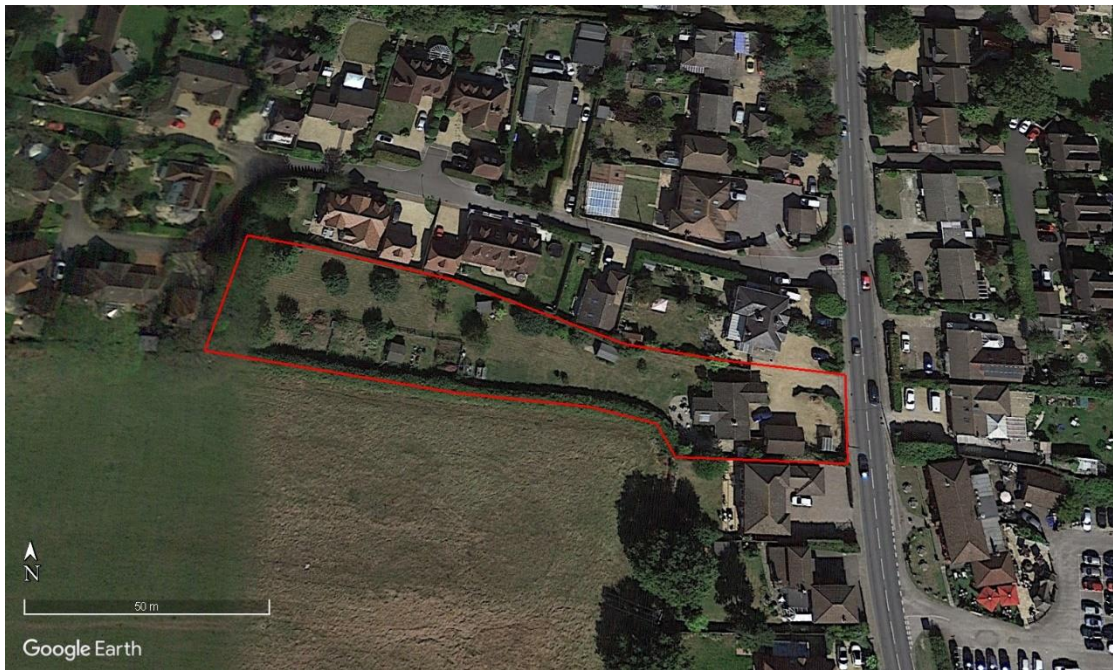
The purpose of this letter report is to assess the 'Traditional Orchard' Priority Habitat at Brighstone, Botley Road, Horton Heath. It is understood that the proposals involve the demolition of all buildings on site to make room for five residential dwellings with associated landscaping and access.

NB – This letter should be read in conjunction with the original report Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (June, 2023).

Site Description and Location

The site comprises of a bungalow (Brighstone), a large garage, three sheds, a greenhouse and associated garden and drive located off Botley Road, Horton Heath, Hampshire, SO50 7DQ (centered on OS grid reference SU 49551 16625) (**Fig 1**). The immediate wider environment is predominantly sub-urban with agricultural fields to the south and woodland parcels to the east. Additionally, the village of Horton Heath is located to the north of the site.

Figure 1. Google aerial image of the site with approximate redline boundary (Google Earth 2023).



Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat

A walkover of the site was undertaken by Darla Brown BSc (Hons) (Project Ecologist with Ecosupport Ltd) and Katalin Balazs BSc (Hons) BSc (Assistant Ecologist with Ecosupport Ltd) on the 20th February 2023. The walkover survey, identified the following habitats on site, using the UK Habs Habitat Definitions Version 1.1 (UKHab Ltd., 2020):

- Built-up Areas & Gardens (u1), with vegetated garden (230), scattered trees (secondary code: 11), introduced shrub (secondary code: 1160), and ruderal / ephemeral (secondary code: 17)
- Hedgerow (h2b)
- Developed land; sealed surface (u1b), with introduced shrub (secondary code: 1160)
- Buildings (u1b5)

Further information on species composition within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (Ecosupport, 2023).

According to the DEFRA Magic Map, the site is encompassed by Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat (**Fig 2**). Traditional Orchard Priority Habitats are defined (JNCC, n.d) as *'groups of fruit and nut trees planted on vigorous rootstocks at low densities in permanent grassland; and managed in a low intensity way. Cobnut plats are also included.'*

The grassland on site, however, consists of a residential garden, categorised as u1 Built-up Areas & Gardens, with a two small scattered Apple trees and introduced non-native shrub present. The grassland at Brighstone is also managed as a residential garden, and considered to be of **site value**, due to the low-sward regularly mown grassland, typical of amenity grassland (**Fig 2**). As such, the grassland habitat on site does not adhere to the Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat definition.

Figure 2. Screenshot of the Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat on site, with an annotated image of the site (Magic Map, 2023. Photo taken February, 2023).



Additionally, a data request was submitted to Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) in February 2023. The data request identified no Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat on-site (**Fig 3**), but instead classified the site as being ‘Built-up areas and gardens’ (**Fig 4**), as identified during the walkover survey by Ecosupport.

Figure 3. Priority Habitats within 1km of the site, provided by HBIC.

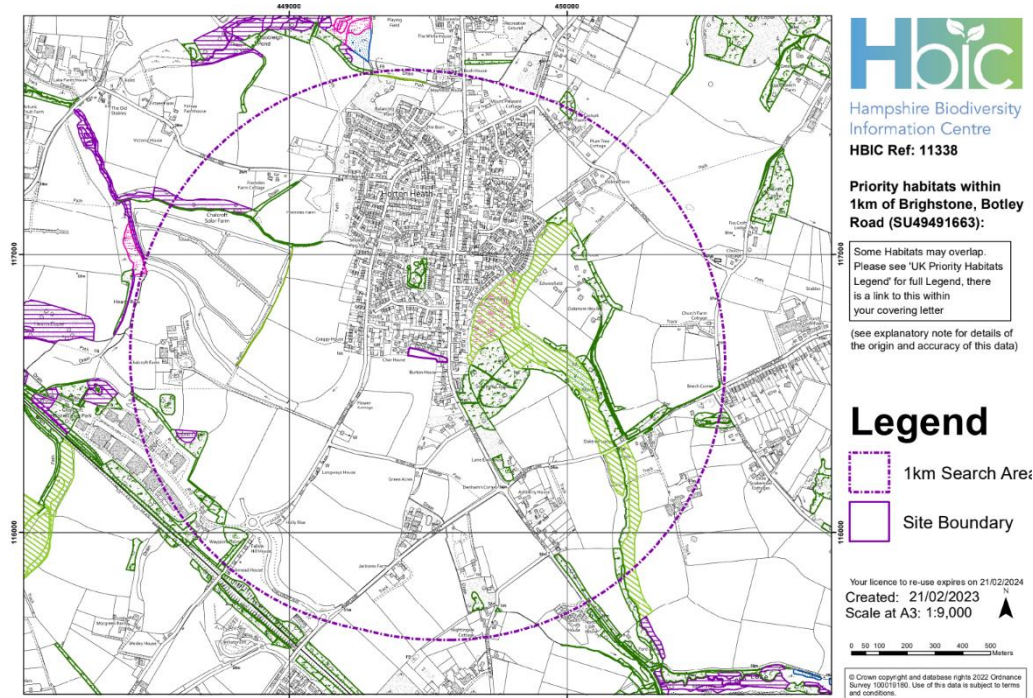
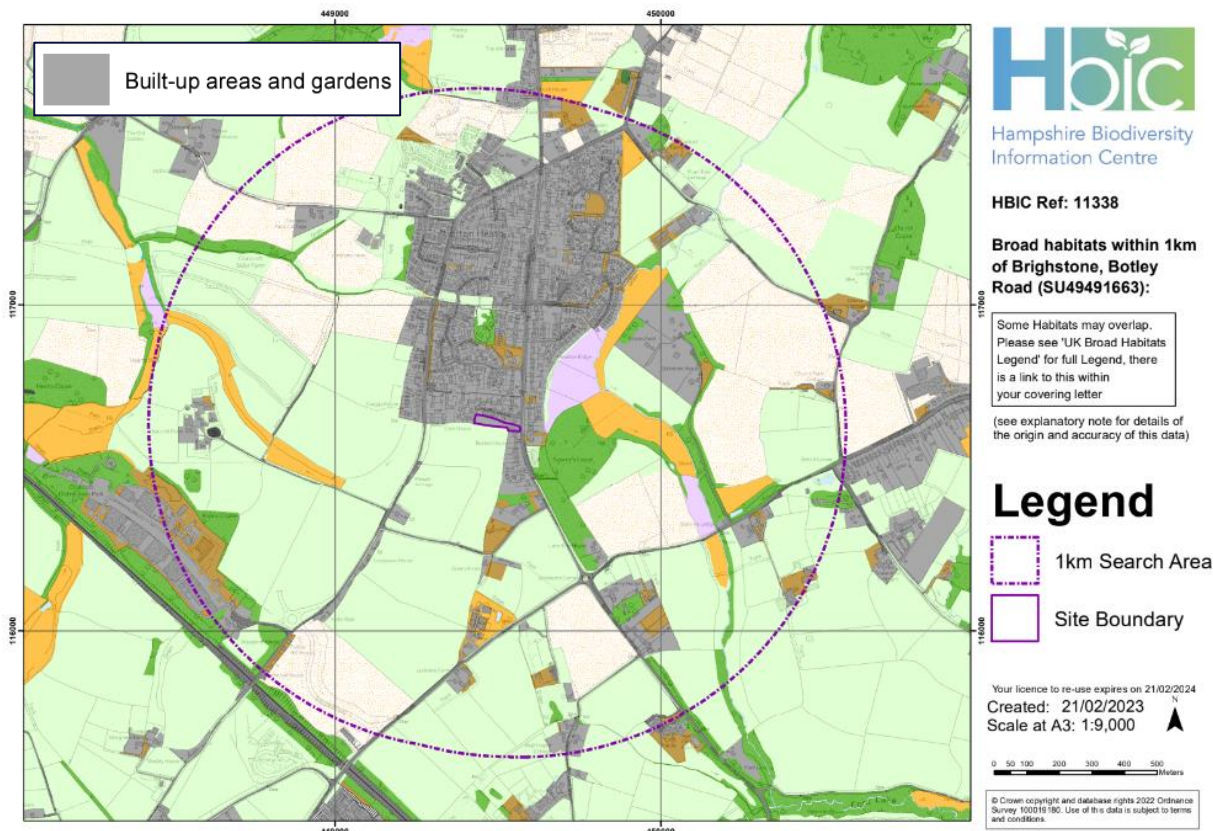


Figure 4. Broad Habitats within 1km of the site, provided by HBIC.



As such, it is considered that the DEFRA Magic Map designation of Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat on site is considered to be a likely mapping error. Furthermore, Biodiversity Net Gain calculations have been conducted to ensure the proposed development results in a net gain and ensure the loss of this existing habitat is compensated for (Ecosupport, 2023).

Conclusion

Ecosupport Ltd undertook a walkover at Brighstone, Botley Road, Horton Heath in February 2023 and categorised the residential garden grassland on site to be of u1 Built-up Areas & Gardens. Requested maps from HBIC also provided the same results. Despite this, DEFRA Magic Map has categorised the site as Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat. However, the residential garden on site does not conform to the Traditional Orchard Priority Habitat definition, and as such, the DEFRA Magic Map definition is considered to be a likely mapping error.

Finally, Biodiversity Net Gain calculations have been conducted to ensure the proposed development results in a net gain and ensure the loss of this existing habitat is compensated for.

Kind regards,

Darla Brown BSc (Hons)

Project Ecologist

References

Ecosupport (June, 2023). Brighstone, Botley Road, Horton Heath. Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

Ecosupport (June, 2023). Brighstone, Botley Road, Horton Heath. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

JNCC (n.d). UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Descriptions. *Traditional Orchards*. BRIG (ed. Ant Maddock) 2008. Available online at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5706>

Magic Map (accessed 7th December 2023). DEFRA. Available online at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

UKHab Ltd. (2020). *UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions Version 1.1* (September 2020).