

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The Scout Hut, Elizabeth Close, West End, Southampton, Hampshire, SO30 3LT

December 2025



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Report Conditions

The methods and recommendations set out in this report are based on the following guidance:

- CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2017 (CIEEM, 2017)
- CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018)
- Surveys have been carried out following the guidance sources set out in CIEEM's Good Practice Guidance for Habitats and Species (CIEEM, 2021), which include:
 - JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit (Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), 2010)
 - UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2 (Butcher et al, 2023)
 - CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition (CIEEM, 2017)
 - Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2023)
 - Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature (now Natural England), 2001)

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Client	10 th Itchen (West End) Scout Group
Report	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
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Executive summary

Ecology Works Limited was commissioned by 10th Itchen (West End) Scout Group to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a small area of land at The Scout Hut, Elizabeth Close, West End. The PEA is required to support a planning application for the construction of a single-storey detached annexe.

This report is based on the findings of the survey and is supported by a desk study. It details the level of suitability for protected and notable species and sets out the ecological constraints to the proposed development.

The site comprises two buildings, concrete hardstanding and a lowland beech and yew woodland off Elizabeth Close in the parish of West End in Hampshire.

Taken together, the desk study and PEA made the following findings:

- There are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation sites within a 1km radius of the site.
- There are five types of Habitat of Principle Importance within 1km of the site.
- The proposed development is exempt from the mandatory BNG requirement as it falls beneath the *de minimis* threshold as less than 5 x 5m (i.e. 25m²) of vegetated habitat will be removed.
- Four EPS licences have been granted within the search area, all of which were for bats.
- UKHab habitats present include:
 - w1c6 30 Beech forests on neutral to rich soils (H9130)/Semi-natural woodland
 - u1b5 Developed land; sealed surface – Buildings
 - u1b6 Developed land; sealed surface – Other developed land
- The site is assessed as having:
 - Negligible suitability for roosting bats.
 - Suitability for foraging/commuting bats, badger, hazel dormice, breeding birds and hedgehog.
 - Likely absence of otter, water vole, reptiles, great crested newt and notable invertebrates or important assemblages. These species are not given further consideration.
 - Likely absence of Schedule 9 invasive non-native plant species.

The enhancement measures proposed in this report will ensure the proposed development will result in a net gain for biodiversity in line with the NPPF, though the project is exempt from mandatory net gain. Taking this into account, as no designated sites or protected species will be significantly impacted once these measures are in place, the local planning authority can be assured that the proposal will be compliant with relevant legislation, the NPPF and policy DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (adopted April 2022).



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Ecology Works Limited was commissioned by 10th Itchen (West End) Scout Group to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a small area of land at The Scout Hut, Elizabeth Close, West End. The PEA is required to support a planning application for the construction of a single-storey detached annexe.

This report is based on the findings of the PEA field survey carried out in January 2025 and is supported by a desk study. It details the level of suitability for protected and notable species at the site, such as bats, badger, hazel dormouse, breeding birds, reptiles and great crested newt, and sets out the potential ecological constraints to the proposed development. The report includes recommendations for measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate for impacts to protected or notable species, in line with the Mitigation Hierarchy. It also details specific enhancement measures required to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain, in line with policy.

1.2 Site description

The site comprises two buildings, concrete hardstanding and a lowland beech and yew woodland off Elizabeth Close, at National Grid Reference SU 46652 14168. The site is bound in all directions by residential properties.

The site is situated within the parish of West End in Hampshire, located on the eastern outskirts of the city of Southampton. Junction 7 of the M27 motorway is located 1.6km north-west of the site. The local landscape comprises large areas of suburban housing interspersed with towns, road and rail infrastructure, woodland, permanent pasture and arable land.

A site location plan is provided in Appendix 1.

1.3 Site proposals

The development proposal entails the construction of a single-storey detached annexe. There will be loss of a small area of woodland.

The proposed site plan is provided in Appendix 2.



2 Policy and legislation

2.1 Planning policy

2.1.1 National planning policy

Requirements of planning decisions in respect of biodiversity in England are laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024¹, which states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal. Other relevant excerpts are listed below:

Paragraph 11 states that *“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*. However, Paragraph 195 explains that *“The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site”*.

Paragraph 187 states that the planning system should both contribute to and enhance the natural environment by *“minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs”*.

Paragraph 193 details biodiversity principles for local planning authorities to apply, including:

- a) *if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- b) *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- c) *development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*

¹ HM Government (2024) *National Planning Policy Framework*. Department for Communities and Local Government. HMSO



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.

Paragraph 194 states that the following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and possible Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);*
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and*
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.*

Circular 06/05² offers guidance on interpretation of planning and nature conservation law 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”. 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 Project Development, is established before planning permission is granted”.

2.1.2 Local planning policy

Local planning policy within West End is provided by the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan³ (adopted April 2022) Policy DM11 relates to biodiversity, the relevant excerpt is provided below:

Policy DM11 (Nature conservation):

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.*

² HM Government (2005) ODPN Circular 06/05 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System. HMSO.

³ <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-and-implementation/local-plan/local-plan-adoption>



2.2 Legislation

2.2.1 European Protected Species (EPS)

British bats and hazel dormice are afforded full protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In addition, these species are protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Schedule 2 defines European Protected Species (EPS). These animals and their habitats receive additional protection via the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, and under the Bonn Convention, of which the UK is part. Taken together, these make it an offence to:

- kill, injure or take such an animal
- possess any part of such an animal (alive or dead)
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place or structure used by these species for shelter, rest, protection or breeding
- intentionally or recklessly disturb these species whilst using any place of shelter or protection
- deliberately disturb these species in such a way as to be likely to impair their ability to:
 - survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young
 - in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate
 - to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species in question (this is therefore interpreted to protect the foraging, commuting, breeding and terrestrial habitat of these species)
- keep (possess), transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead animal of these species, or any part of, or anything derived from them

A bat roost is considered any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection. Bats can be loyal to roosts, returning year on year; legal opinion is therefore that protection of roosts applies whether or not bats are present at the time of survey or construction work. There is no definition of the timescale for how long a disused bat roost remains a roost.

If an offence outlined in the list above may be committed as a result of planned works, such as re-roofing, extension or demolition for bats, or habitat removal for otter, dormouse and great crested newt, such work would need to be carried out under licence from Natural England. Works or mitigation activities involving interference with these species must be carried out by a suitably-licensed individual (with a current Natural England bat/dormouse/great crested newt licence).



2.2.2 Badger

In the UK, badgers are afforded protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, making it an offence to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so, or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett.

2.2.3 Birds

In the UK, all wild birds are afforded protection under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy a nest (while in use or during its construction) or eggs. Some species receive further protection via inclusion in Schedule 1 of the Act, which makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb these birds whilst building a nest or in, on or near a nest containing eggs/young; or to disturb dependent young. Schedule 1 species include barn owl *Tyto alba*, but not tawny owl *Strix aluco*.

2.2.4 Other species and habitats

The NERC Act 2006 requires due consideration be given to biodiversity as part of the planning process. Section 41 of the Act defines a number of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for consideration during planning, which include several bat species, dormouse and a number of species which are not strictly legally protected, such as hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, common toad *Bufo bufo* and stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*, along with Priority Habitats such as ponds that meet the relevant criteria.

All wild mammals, including hedgehog, fox *Vulpes vulpes* and rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, receive protection from harm with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering, including crushing and asphyxiation, under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. This is relevant where burrows need to be removed as a normal part of construction activity.

2.2.5 Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act 2021⁴ states that there is a duty on local authorities to publish biodiversity reports and secure mandatory biodiversity net gain. Part 6 (Nature and Biodiversity) sets out the following key elements relating to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

- The Act amends the Town & Country Planning Act
- A minimum 10% BNG is required, calculated with the Biodiversity Metric, supported by a BNG assessment
- BNG habitat must be secured for at least 30 years via planning obligations or conservation covenants
- This can be delivered on- or off-site, or via the statutory biodiversity credits scheme
- Off-site BNG land will be recorded on a national register

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>



The Act does not affect existing legal protection for habitats and species. It maintains the mitigation hierarchy of: avoid impacts first, then mitigate and only compensate as a last resort. The 10% BNG requirement became mandatory on 12th February 2024, and applies to non-householder planning applications exceeding the *de minimis* threshold of a loss of more than 5 x 5m (i.e. 25m²) of vegetated habitat.



3 Methods

3.1 Desk study

3.1.1 Zone of influence

The desk study was carried out within the zone of influence, which is an area around the site set by the assessor that may be affected by the proposals because of factors such as alterations to habitats, lighting, noise, the water table or human presence. For the purpose of the PEA, the zone of influence has been set at a 1 kilometre (km) radius around the site. This is increased to 2km for bats, which are highly mobile, and is increased further where the site falls within any impact zones of European sites, which can have zone of influence radii of several kilometres or more.

3.1.2 MAGIC data search

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside⁵ (MAGIC) online resource was accessed on 3rd February 2025 to search for the following features:

- Internationally and nationally designated sites: Special Protection Areas (SPAs), potential SPAs, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), possible SACs, Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) within 1km of the site
- European Protected Species (EPS) bat licences granted within 2km
- EPS hazel dormouse and great crested newt licences granted within 1km
- Natural England great crested newt class licence returns submitted within 1km

3.2 Field surveys

3.2.1 Survey area

The field survey encompassed the area affected by the development proposal.

3.2.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The habitat survey was undertaken following the user manual, habitat key and definitions for UK Habitat Classification (UKHab)⁶, and entailed a detailed survey of on-site vegetation to identify key plant species present and to categorise the primary habitats and define them further using the UKHab secondary codes, where appropriate. Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal were also followed⁷. Where relevant, dominance was noted based on the DAFOR

⁵ MAGIC Map Application. <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>.

⁶ UK Habitat Classification User Manual V2.01 (July 2023) UKHab; UKHab Field Key V2.1 (September 2020) UKHab; UK Habitat Category Definitions V1-1 (September 2020) UKHab

⁷ CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition (CIEEM, 2017)



scale⁸. Target notes were made to identify particular features/species within the site. The habitats are described in the Results section and examples of habitats present are shown in photographs. A UKHab habitat map is provided in Appendix 3.

The site visit also included an assessment of the suitability of habitats present to support protected or notable species. These methods are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Methods used for establishing site suitability for protected and notable species

Species/ species group	Details
Bats	Roosting opportunities for bats are referred to as Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) and can take the form of a wide range of features within a building or structure. Examples of such features are within roof voids (particularly along the ridge beams), eaves spaces, within mortice joints, and within gaps on the exterior of a building, such as under roof tiles, ridge tiles or hanging tiles (or slates), soffit or fascia gaps, gaps beneath lead flashing, cladding, weatherboarding and barge boards, and many other features. Trees also provide suitable features such as loose or peeling bark, splits, cracks, woodpecker holes, callous rolls, snags and hazard beams. The presence of dense ivy on trees can both conceal and create suitable roosting features. The PRA entailed a detailed visual inspection of on-site trees and of the exterior and interior of the building/s on-site to look for PRFs, wherever access was possible and safe. It included a search for bats and their evidence, such as droppings, urine stains, rub marks, feeding remains and bat corpses. All PRFs and bats/bat evidence was recorded (including taking photographs and droppings samples where necessary). Trees and buildings within the assessment are assigned a level of roosting suitability from the following categories, in line with the criteria set out in the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines: • Negligible • Low • Moderate • High These guidelines were also used to assess the suitability of the surrounding habitats and landscape for foraging and commuting bats. The survey was conducted using a 1,400 lumen P7R Core LED Lenser torch, 8x42 binoculars and a ladder. All PRFs were recorded in one of the following three categories: • NONE: PRFs absent or highly unlikely • FAR: Further Assessment Required to establish whether any PRFs are present • PRF: At least one PRF recorded. PRFs recorded were categorised either as: • PRF-I: only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats; or • PRF-M: suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony. The Bat Tree Habitat Key⁹ database was consulted to check the likelihood of roosting bats in any PRFs recorded.
Badger	A badger <i>Meles meles</i> survey was undertaken of all areas within the site boundary. The site was searched for signs of badger activity including setts, tracks, caught guard hairs on fencing and brambles over mammal paths, snuffle holes and dung pits or latrines. Any mammal burrows recorded were closely examined to assess whether their shape and size was consistent with those of badger, and to check for diagnostic evidence such as paw prints, tracks, guard hairs and bedding material pulled from setts by badger. Any badger setts recorded were assigned a category of either 'main', 'annexe', 'subsidiary' or 'outlier' sett, and a status of 'active' or

⁸ The DAFOR scale was used to note levels of dominance within habitats present for each plant species, from Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional or Rare.

⁹ Bat Tree Habitat Key (2023). (<http://battreehabitatkey.co.uk/>)



Species/ species group	Details
	'disused', based on the presence or lack of recent evidence, cobwebs and accumulations of leaf litter in sett entrances.
Otter	The site was assessed for its suitability for otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> , predominantly based on the presence of ditches, streams, rivers or other waterbodies. Where present, areas in and around waterbodies were searched for holts, couches, lie-ups, feeding remains and spraints (otter droppings).
Water vole	Any waterbodies present were also searched for evidence of water vole <i>Arvicola amphibius</i> , such as burrows, latrines, tracks and feeding lawns.
Hazel dormouse	The habitat on and adjacent to the site was assessed for its suitability to support hazel dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> , indicated by the presence of woodland, scrub or hedgerows with food plants such as hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> aggregate (agg.) and honeysuckle <i>Lonicera periclymenum</i> , which would provide a food contingent throughout the active season.
Birds	Vegetation, buildings and other structures on the site were broadly assessed for their suitability for breeding birds. Any nests observed were noted.
Reptiles	Grassland, scrub, woodland edges and garden habitats within the site, if present, were appraised for their suitability for providing opportunities for basking, breeding, foraging and hibernating by widespread reptile species, such as grass snake and slow-worm. Materials resting on the ground, referred to as refuges, are routinely lifted to check for reptiles.
Great crested newt	Supported by the desk study for this species, waterbodies and terrestrial habitats on the site were assessed for their suitability for supporting great crested newt. Refuges, including logs, were routinely lifted to check for sheltering newts. In addition, publicly accessible ponds within 250m were visited and a great crested newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment ¹⁰ was undertaken, to enable rapid assessment of how suitable the ponds are for this species. Ponds with a score of 'below average' or lower are not routinely surveyed for great crested newt, as the species is unlikely to be present.
Invertebrates	The habitats on and adjacent to the site were broadly assessed for their suitability to support rare or notable invertebrates or important assemblages.
Invasive plant species	Where observed, the presence of invasive plants listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, such as Japanese knotweed <i>Fallopia japonica</i> , was noted during the survey. Please note, this does not represent an exhaustive search of the site.
Other species	As well as the species above, the PEA included an assessment of the site's suitability to support Species of Principal Importance defined under the NERC Act 2006, such as hedgehog and brown hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i> .

The PEA was carried out on 27th January 2025 by Frances King-Smith BSc (Hons) CEcol MCIEEM, a licensed bat ecologist (Natural England Level 2 Class Licence ref. 2020-48552-CLS-CLS) and Natural England Registered Consultant (RC152). Frances is a Chartered Ecologist and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, with 18 years' experience in protected species surveys, licensing and mitigation. Frances has held Natural England licences for bats, badger, water vole, dormouse and great crested newt across a wide range of projects and sectors.

The survey was conducted using a 1,000 lumen LED Lenser torch and 8x42 binocular. Weather conditions during the PEA were scattered showers, 9°C, overcast with 50% cloud cover and a northerly breeze.

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



3.3 Limitations

It is not always possible to access every PRF, e.g. soffits, gaps in layers of roof fabric, therefore the preliminary bat roost assessment is based on the suitability of such features to support roosting bats. This is a standard, unavoidable constraint of the survey work and is not considered a significant limitation.

The PEA was undertaken by an experienced and suitably qualified ecologist, who was able to access all necessary areas of the site using suitable equipment. Therefore there were no significant limitations to the survey.



4 Results

4.1 Designated sites

4.1.1 Designated sites

There are no statutory nature conservation sites located within a 1km radius of the site.

4.1.2 Priority habitats

A number of parcels of the following five Priority Habitats were recorded in the search area:

- Deciduous woodland
- Ancient and semi-natural woodland
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

The nearest parcel is an area of deciduous woodland located 125m west. This parcel is functionally linked to the site by lines of trees.

4.2 Habitats

The habitats on the site are mapped in Appendix 3 according to UKHab and are detailed below.

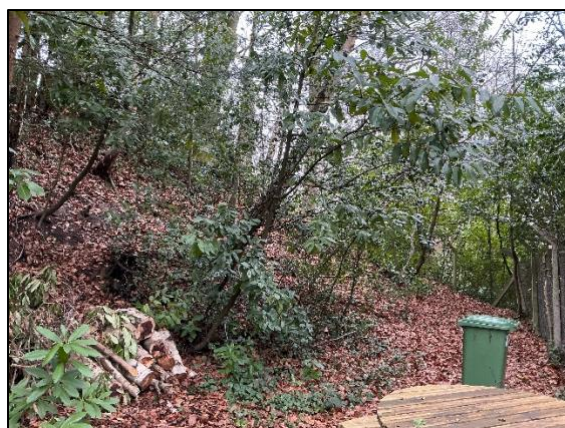
Beech forests on neutral to rich soils (H9130)/semi-natural woodland w1c6/30

Beech and yew woodland characterised as beech forests on neutral to rich soils (H9130) is the dominant habitat within the site. The woodland comprises mostly native species with a range of tree ages present. Species present within the woodland include dominant common beech *Fagus sylvatica*; abundant holly *Ilex aquifolium* and cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*; frequent silver birch *Betula pendula*; and occasional pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and yew *Taxus baccata*. Sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa*, common lime *Tilia x europaea* and hazel *Corylus avellana* are all present, but rare.

The woodland is shown in Photographs 1 to 4.



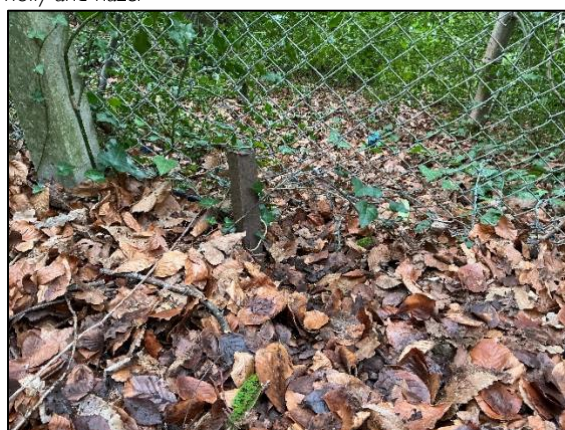
Photograph 1. Lowland beech and yew woodland dominates the wider site



Photograph 2. The understorey comprises yew, cherry laurel, holly and hazel



Photograph 3. View of the northern boundary of the site



Photograph 4. Leaf litter covering the woodland floor

Developed land; sealed surface – buildings u1b5

The site includes two buildings (Photographs 5 to 8). The buildings are described in detail, with photographs, in Section 4.3.2.



Photograph 5. Northern aspect of B1



Photograph 6. Southern aspect of B1



Photograph 7. Southern and western aspects of B2



Photograph 8. Northern and western aspects of B2

Developed land; sealed surface – other developed land u1b6

An area of concrete hardstanding (Photograph 9) is present within the site, to the south of the buildings.



Photograph 9. Concrete hardstanding on southern boundary

4.3 Bats

4.3.1 Desk Study

The desk study returned four records of EPS bat licences granted within 2km of the site. The nearest was granted in 2016 for damage to, and destruction of, a resting place for brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* and common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. This licence is located 920m north-east of the site. EPS licences granted within the search area are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Bat licences granted within 2km of site

Natural England ref.	Details
2019-42509-EPS-MIT	Granted in 2019 for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and serotine <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> .
2019-43199-EPS-MIT	Granted in 2019 for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle.
2016-22944-EPS-MIT	Granted in 2016 for damage to, and destruction of, a resting place for brown long-eared bat and common pipistrelle.
2016-22386-EPS-MIT	Granted in 2016 for the destruction of a resting place for brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> .

4.3.2 Preliminary Roost Assessment

Buildings

Two buildings (denoted B1 and B2) are present within the site.

B1 is a single-storey Scout Hut with cavity brick walls and a gable pitched roof with interlocking roman tiles and timber soffits. There are no PRFs present and B1 was consequently assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, in line with BCT guidelines. This building will not be affected by the proposals.

B2 is a metal storage shed with timber doors and a gable pitched roof of corrugated metal corrugated metal walls and a timber door. The roof is a gable pitched roof of corrugated metal. There are no PRFs present and B2 was consequently assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, in line with BCT guidelines. This building will be replaced with a similar metal shed with the same footprint.

The buildings are shown in Photographs 10 to 13.



Photograph 10. Northern aspect of B1



Photograph 11. Southern aspect of B1



Photograph 12. Southern and western aspects of B2



Photograph 13. Northern and western aspects of B2

Trees

One tree which will be impacted by the proposals was subject to a ground-level tree assessment. No PRFs were observed and the tree was assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats.



Foraging and Commuting Habitat

The site contains woodland which represents optimal habitat for foraging and commuting bat species. Furthermore, the site is functionally linked by lines of trees to other areas of woodland and valuable foraging and commuting habitat within the wider landscape. Overall, the site is assessed as having high suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

4.4 Badger

The woodland provides suitable foraging, commuting and sett-building habitat for badger. A badger sett comprising two entrances is present within the woodland, both of which are a suitable size and shape to support badger. One sett entrance appears active whilst the other appears to be inactive.

4.5 Otter

The site and its surrounds support no aquatic habitats or features that could be used by otter, therefore this species is likely absent from the site.

4.6 Water vole

Due to a lack of aquatic habitat on or near the site, this species is likely absent from the site.

4.7 Hazel dormouse

The MAGIC database confirmed that no dormouse licences have been issued by Natural England within 1km of the site.

The woodland provides suitable foraging and commuting habitat for hazel dormice, with the species present within the woodland providing the food continuum of nuts, berries, seeds, catkins and invertebrates required by dormice to maintain them throughout their active season. However, the woodland understorey is sparse and nesting opportunities are likely to be limited. The woodland is connected via lines of trees to areas of suitable dormouse habitat in the wider landscape. This species is considered likely absent from the site, though they could be transiently present.

4.8 Birds

Building B1 provides sub-optimal nesting habitat for a small range of bird species such as woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, rock dove *Columba livia* and small passerine species during the breeding season. No bird nests were observed during the survey.

The woodland provides optimal nesting habitat for a range of bird species, although no nests were observed during the survey.



4.9 Reptiles

The site lacks suitable vegetative structure for reptiles, with no grassland present. The woodland could provide commuting habitat for reptiles in the wider landscape, if present, though these species are likely absent from the site.

4.10 Great crested newt

There are no ponds within 500m of the site and the terrestrial habitats within the site are generally unsuitable for great crested newt, as they lack the structure required for shelter and hibernation for this species, being mostly too exposed. As great crested newt are likely absent from the wider landscape given the lack of ponds, they are unlikely to be present on the site.

4.11 Invertebrates

The limited habitats of the site's interior offer no high quality grassland or other habitats that would attract notable invertebrate species. The woodland within the site offers limited saproxylic (deadwood) habitat, though would support a range of widespread invertebrate species.

The site is unlikely to support notable invertebrate species or be an important resource for the local invertebrate community, due to the common and widespread habitats present.

4.12 Other species

The woodland provides suitability for foraging, commuting and resting hedgehog, a Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006.

4.13 Invasive non-native plant species

No invasive plant species were observed during the survey.



5 Ecological Impact Assessment

5.1 Summary of results

Taken together, the desk study and PEA made the following findings:

- There are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation sites within a 1km radius of the site.
- There are five types of Habitat of Principle Importance within 1km of the site.
- The proposed development is exempt from the mandatory BNG requirement as it falls beneath the *de minimis* threshold as less than 5 x 5m (i.e. 25m²) of vegetated habitat will be removed.
- Four EPS licences have been granted within the search area, all of which were for bats.
- UKHab habitats present include:
 - w1c6 30 Beech forests on neutral to rich soils (H9130)/Semi-natural woodland
 - u1b5 Developed land; sealed surface – Buildings
 - u1b6 Developed land; sealed surface – Other developed land
- The site is assessed as having:
 - Negligible suitability for roosting bats.
 - Suitability for foraging/commuting bats, badger, hazel dormice, breeding birds and hedgehog.
 - Likely absence of otter, water vole, reptiles, great crested newt and notable invertebrates or important assemblages. These species are not given further consideration.
 - Likely absence of Schedule 9 invasive non-native plant species.

5.2 Ecological effects of proposal

5.2.1 Designated sites

There will be no negative impacts upon any designated sites as a result of the proposed development. Therefore no mitigation is required in respect of designated sites.

Five Priority Habitat types were recorded in the search area, the nearest being the deciduous woodland located 125m west of the site. Given the distance between the site and the closest Priority Habitat, it is not anticipated to undergo any effects as a result of the proposal due to the small scale of the work proposed. Accordingly, no mitigation is required in respect of Priority Habitats.

5.2.2 Habitats

All existing habitats will be retained, with the exception of one tree within the woodland which will be felled to facilitate the construction of the proposed detached annexe.



The proposed development is exempt from the mandatory BNG requirement.

5.2.3 Bats

The site has negligible suitability for roosting bats, and no impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed development. All trees within the woodland, with the exception of one tree, will be retained and suitably protected in line with arboricultural advice.

An increase in external lighting at the site could have an impact on foraging and commuting bats and their prey in close proximity to the site. All bats and their roosts are protected in the UK under the Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). See Section 2.2 for details.

5.2.4 Badger

The woodland provides suitable foraging, commuting and sett-building habitat for badger. A badger sett comprising two entrances was recorded within the site, both of which were a suitable size and shape to support badger. The works have the potential to impact the badger sett. Badgers and their setts are protected in the UK under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. See Section 2.2 for further details.

5.2.5 Hazel dormice

The woodland provides suitable foraging and commuting habitat for hazel dormice. One tree will be removed from the woodland to facilitate the proposed development. Consequently, there will be a loss of a very small area of hazel dormouse foraging and commuting habitat. Given that the tree to be lost is on the periphery of the woodland, immediately adjacent to the urban areas of the site, it is considered that impacts to this species as a result of the proposed development are highly unlikely. This species is not given further consideration.

5.2.6 Birds

Building B1 provides sub-optimal suitability for breeding birds. However, this building will not be impacted by the proposals. The woodland provides nesting habitat for a range of bird species. One tree adjacent to building B2 will be felled to facilitate the proposed development of the site. This will result in the loss of nesting habitat and has the potential to impact nesting birds.

5.2.7 Other species

The woodland provides suitable foraging, commuting and resting habitat for hedgehog. Hedgehog are a Priority Species under the NERC Act 2006; see Section 2.2 for further details. Given the scale and nature of the works, no negative impacts on this species are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

The provision of a hedgehog nest box within the retained woodland would provide an enhancement for this species. A wide range of products are available, such as the RSPB Silhouette Hedgehog Home. The box will be installed in line with the manufacturer's instructions.



6 Recommendations

6.1 Mitigation, compensation and enhancement

The sections below set out the measures required to mitigate, compensate and enhance the site to provide an overall Biodiversity Net Gain as part of the development, in line with relevant legislation, the NPPF and local policy, as described in Section 2.

6.1.1 Habitats

Mitigation, compensation and enhancement will be provided for the necessary fence and leaf litter removal via the following measures:

- Appropriate root protection measures will be installed around the trees within the woodland in accordance with BS 5837:2012 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations* during the construction period to ensure retained trees are not damaged by heavy plant or stored materials.
- The redeveloped site will see a biodiversity uplift via provision of a bat box, bird boxes and a hedgehog nest box.
- An oak tree will be planted near the new building to replace the tree which will be felled. This is a tree the Scouts have been growing from seed to plant in memory of a leader.

Taken together, these measures will ensure habitat loss is suitably mitigated in line with the Mitigation Hierarchy, to ensure that a Biodiversity Net Gain is delivered as a result of the proposal.

6.1.2 Bats

Both buildings and one tree were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats. In line with the BCT guidelines, no further surveys are necessary and there are no Natural England licence requirements to enable the proposed development to proceed lawfully in this respect.

In order to avoid impacts to foraging and commuting bats, external lighting on the site will be maintained at similar levels to previous operational lighting where possible. The bulbs used will be at the warmer end of the spectrum, avoiding white LED lighting, which causes greater disturbance to bats and their prey. BCT guidance¹¹ will be followed when choosing suitable lighting for the scheme.

Additional roosting opportunities will be provided for bats via the installation of 1no. Schwegler 2F bat box or suitable equivalent on a retained tree within the woodland. The box will be installed at a minimum height of 3m and will be orientated to face between south-east and south-west.

These measures will ensure that the local population of bats will be maintained at a Favourable Conservation Status,

¹¹ Bat Conservation Trust (2018) Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Bat Conservation Trust, London



and will be provided with an additional high quality roosting opportunity.

6.1.3 Badger

The current proposals show that the badger sett will not be directly impacted by the proposed development. However, as works will be undertaken within 30m of the mammal holes, there is a risk that the construction work will cause disturbance. The following activities will require a licence to allow the works to proceed lawfully:

- Use of heavy machinery within 30m of any sett entrance
- Use of light machinery within 20m of any sett entrance
- Use of hand tools such as hand digging within 10m of any sett entrance

Given the size and nature of the proposed development, it is considered that the construction activities will not cause a disturbance to the sett and a licence will not need to be sought from Natural England to close the sett. The construction works include removal of one tree, stump grinding, construction of a concrete base and erection of the detached annexe. These activities will all be completed using either heavy machinery outside of the 30m impact zone buffer, or light machinery outside of the 20m impact zone buffer.

Should these construction methods change, for example if heavy machinery is required within a 30m radius of the badger sett, a licence will need to be sought from Natural England before the works can proceed lawfully. In this scenario, badger sett exclusion or destruction can only be undertaken between 1st July and 30th November in any given year. It is not anticipated that this will be required in this instance.

6.1.4 Birds

Under current proposals, all trees within the woodland will be retained, with the exception of one tree adjacent to building B2. If possible, this tree should be felled outside of the main nesting season, which runs from March to August, inclusive. If work must take place during the nesting season, an ecologist will perform a nesting bird check of the tree immediately prior to the start of works. Any active nests identified will need to be left with a 5m undisturbed buffer until the nesting cycle has concluded naturally (i.e. the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use). These measures will ensure that potential impacts to breeding birds are avoided.

The loss of the tree will be compensated with the provision of two bird boxes to be installed on retained trees within the woodland. Additionally, to enhance the site for nesting birds, two further bird boxes shall be provided, as detailed below:

- 2no. Vivara Pro Seville 28mm Woodstone Nest Box or equivalent, to be installed on a retained mature tree
- 2no. Vivara Pro Seville 32mm Woodstone Nest Box or equivalent, to be installed on a retained mature tree

The boxes will be installed following the manufacturer's installation instructions, which will include specific heights for installation, with all boxes to be orientated to face between north and east in order to provide optimal conditions. This measure will ensure there is an overall gain in nesting habitat for breeding birds.



6.1.5 Other species

Hedgehog presence is unlikely in the works area. However, the installation of a hedgehog nest box will be installed within the woodland to provide an additional nesting opportunity. A wide range of products are available, such as the RSPB Silhouette Hedgehog Home. The box will be installed in line with manufacturer's instructions.



7 Conclusion

The survey work undertaken has confirmed that the site supports common habitats and provides suitability for foraging and commuting bats, badger, breeding birds, badger, hazel dormice and foraging/commuting hedgehog. There is likely absence of otter, water vole, reptiles, great crested newt and notable invertebrates or important assemblages. The site has negligible suitability for roosting bats and no further surveys are necessary.

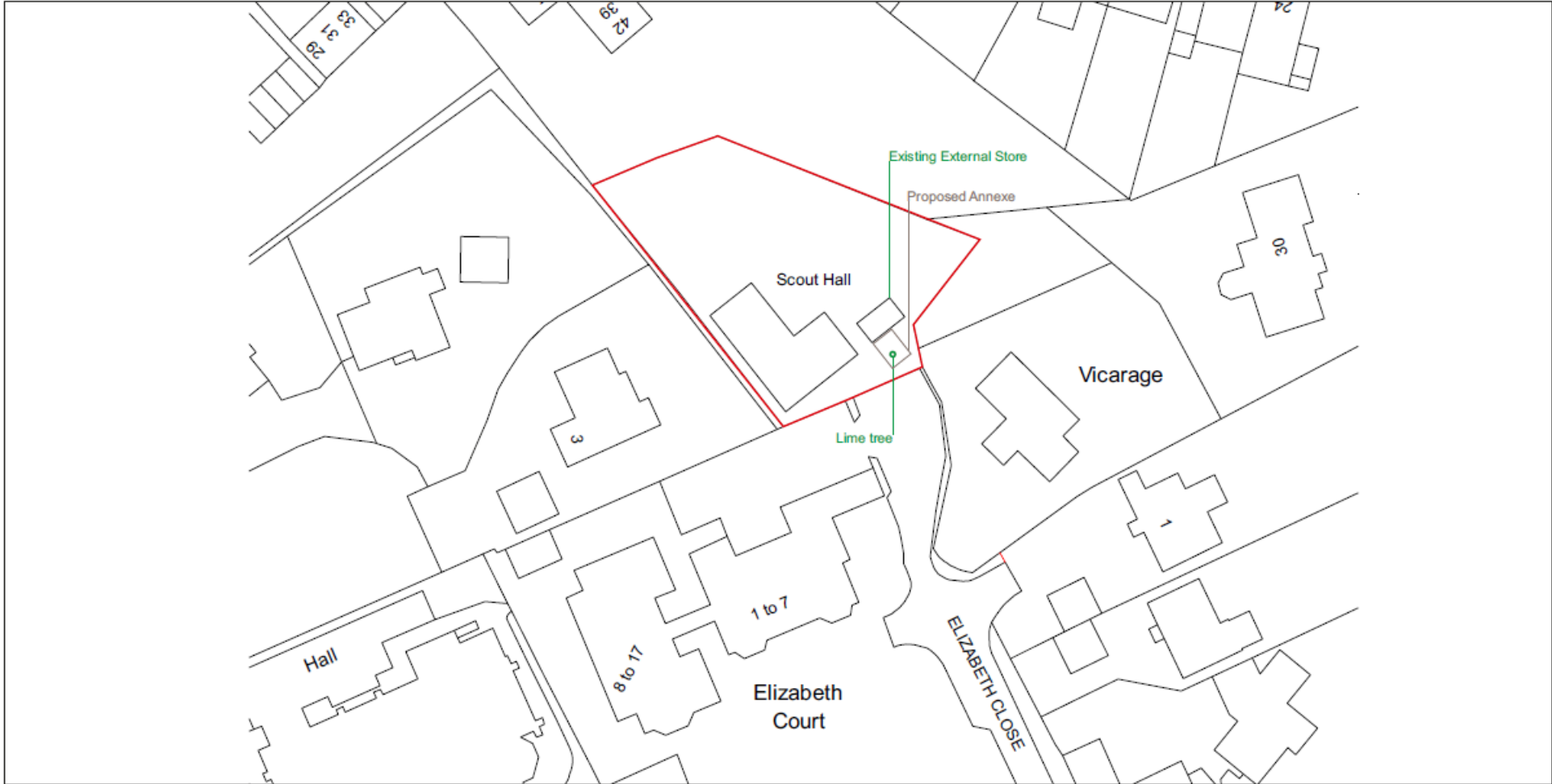
The proposal is exempt from mandatory 10% BNG. Enhancement measures proposed in this report will ensure the proposed development will result in a net gain for biodiversity in line with the NPPF, though the project is exempt from mandatory net gain. Taking this into account, as no designated sites or protected species will be significantly impacted once these measures are in place, the local planning authority can be assured that the proposal will be compliant with relevant legislation, the NPPF and policy DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (adopted April 2022).



8 References

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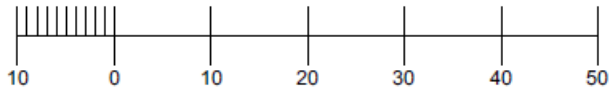
Appendix 1 Site Location Plan



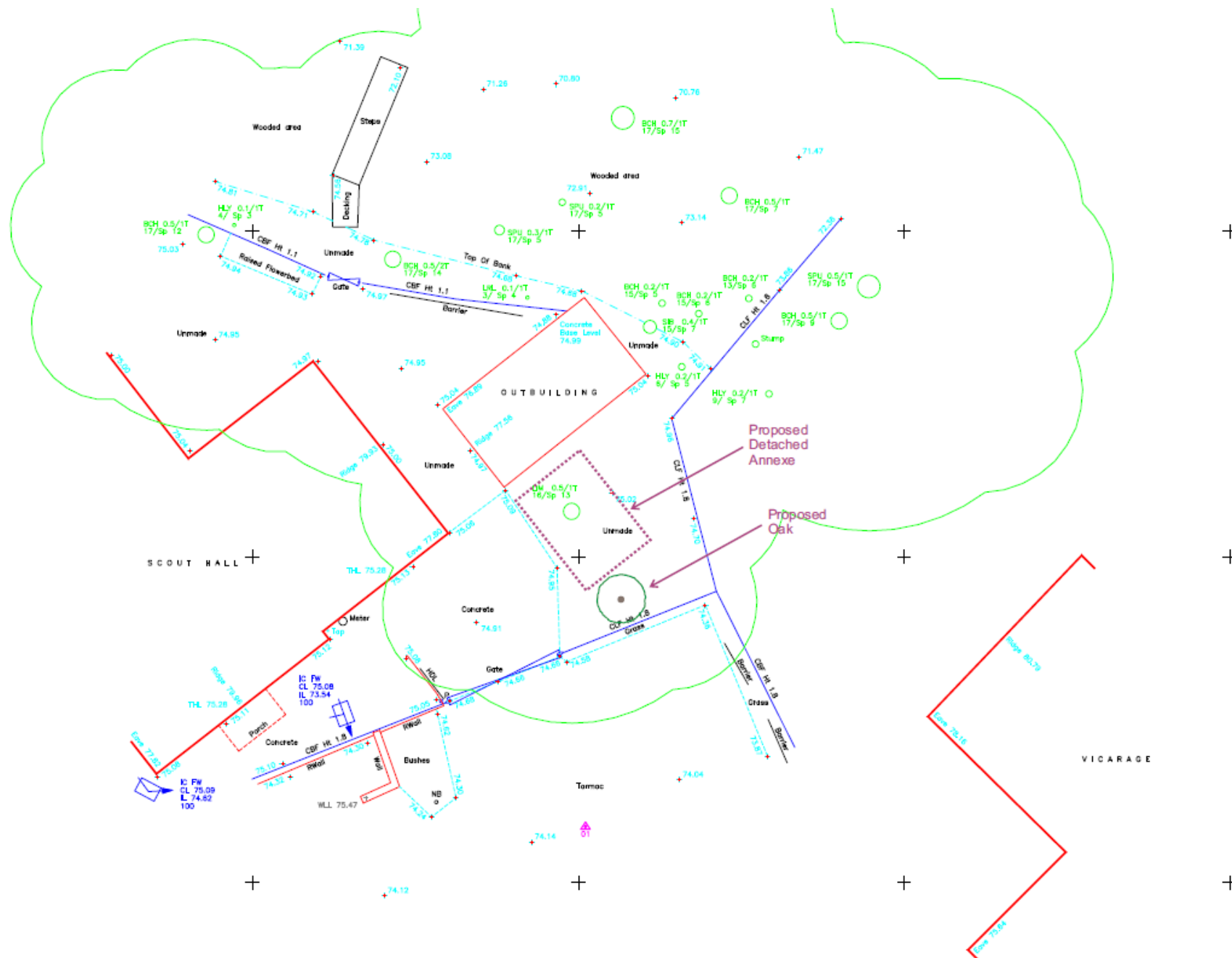
Site Address	Scout Hall, Elizabeth Close, West End, Southampton, SO30 3LT
Site Proposal	Fell 1 x Lime and Erect Detached Single-Storey Annexe
Drawing Title	Block Plan
Drawing No.	02
Revision	A
Paper Size	A3
Scale	1:500



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Appendix 2 Proposed Site Plan



Appendix 3 UKHab Habitat Map



Key:

-  Redline boundary
-  **u1b5** Buildings
-  **u1b6** Other developed land
-  **u1d** Suburban mosaic of developed and natural surface
-  **w1c6** Beech forests on neutral to rich soils (H9130)

Site	Scout Hut, West End
Report	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Map	Baseline Habitats
Date	December 2025

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