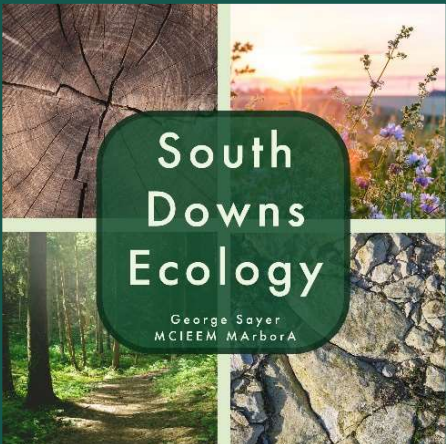




Ecological Impact Assessment

ATC Hedge End,
Southampton



South
Downs
Ecology

George Sayer
MCIEEM, MarborA

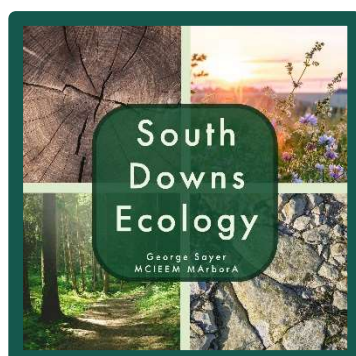
Ecological Impact Assessment

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Client	The 2428 Hedge End Air Training Corps
Author	Chris Brown BSc(Hons) ACIEEM Independent Ecologist
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Summary

The 2428 Hedge End Air Training Corps has commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of ATC Hedge End, Southampton. The proposals include the construction of a new fire escape path and relocation of spoil to reprofile an existing grassland bank.

A PEA was carried out on 5th December 2025 by George Sayer (BSc (Hons), PgDip, MArborA, MCIEEM, NE Licence Holder – Bats Level 2 and GCN – Ecologist).

The site consists of two modified grasslands with scattered trees that form part of a recreation ground. A building, hard surface paths, parking and play areas, and a broadleaved woodland lie immediately adjacent to the site. The proposals are for the construction of a new path to provide a fire escape path for the existing building. The proposals also include excavating an existing grassland bank which encroaches on a pedestrian path and using the resulting spoil to reprofile a grassland bank adjacent to the existing building.

The proposals are not anticipated to have any significant impact upon any designated sites or protected species, provided the mitigation measures listed in this report are followed. There is potential for numerous protected and notable species within the site but impacts would be relatively minor. Compensation measures are proposed which would adequately replace any lost potential and protect species in the future.

When mitigation and enhancements have been taken into account, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact upon habitats or protected species in accordance with planning policy and, once enhancements are considered, would result in a minor net gain for several species. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant local and national planning policies and the relevant legislation.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The 2428 Hedge End Air Training Corps has commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) of ATC Hedge End, Southampton. The proposals include the construction of a new fire escape path and relocation of spoil to reprofile an existing grassland bank.
- 1.2 A PEA was carried out on 5th December 2025 by George Sayer (BSc (Hons), PgDip, MArborA, MCIEEM, NE Licence Holder – Bats Level 2 and GCN – Ecologist).
- 1.3 The following EcIA report has been completed by Chris Brown (BSc (Hons), ACIEEM, NE Licence Holder – GCN Level 1 – Ecologist). The purpose of the assessment has been to identify whether any potential impacts upon protected species, habitats or designated sites might have occurred or might occur through continued use, and to propose mitigation or avoidance measures where necessary.
- 1.4 Based on the results of the appraisal, recommendations for potential ecological enhancements have been provided.

Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.5 The site consists of two modified grasslands with scattered trees that form part of a recreation ground. The site covers approximately 0.04 hectares. A building, hard surface paths, parking and play areas, and a broadleaved woodland lie immediately adjacent to the site, which is surrounded further afield by residential areas to the north and south, by woodland to the east and by a recreation ground to the west.
- 1.6 The site lies in the town of Hedge End in Hampshire. The wider landscape is mostly urban, with areas of woodland and pastoral land. The M27 lies 580m to the west.

Proposals

- 1.7 The proposals are for the construction of a new path to provide a fire escape path for the existing building. The proposals also include excavating an existing grassland bank which encroaches on a pedestrian path and using the resulting spoil to reprofile a grassland bank adjacent to the existing building.

2.0 Scope of Assessment

1. *Categorise habitats present on the site;*
2. *Identify habitat which may have potential for protected species;*
3. *Identify whether any signs of protected species are present on-site;*
4. *Recommend whether further surveys are required, or whether there are any relevant constraints with regards to protected species;*
5. *Identify impacts of the proposed development either historic or potential and set out appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures;*
6. *Provide recommendations as to how the site and proposals could be enhanced with regards to protected species and habitats.*

- 2.1 This appraisal and assessment is deemed to be relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site. Should the site or proposals alter, the ecologist should be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

3.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. 'Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' states that development should be 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'
- 3.2 The Government Circular 06/2005, which is referred to by the NPPF, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.3 The site sits within the Eastleigh Borough. The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016 – 2036) includes the following relevant policies:

- Policy DM11: Nature Conservation

General Approach

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 (see strategic policy S9).

International Designations

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 Damsely Conservation Strategy (or other strategy) specifically to deliver biodiversity net gain.

National and Local Designations

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.

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

- 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 must clearly outweigh the adverse effects on priority habitats, priority and protected species, and the local ecological network.

Irreplaceable habitats

- 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.

Buffers

- 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.

Surveys

- 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.

Legislation

- 3.4 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this EclA includes:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
 - The Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
 - The Protection of Mammals Act 1996.
- 3.5 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat (live or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not.
- 3.6 All UK bird species are protected against disturbance whilst occupying a nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Developments that could predictably disturb, kill or injure nesting birds could result in an offence. Furthermore, a number of bird species are targets of UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans and listed as Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This obligates local authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity with particular emphasis on targeted species.
- 3.7 All other mammals receive general protection against cruelty, inhumane killing or injuring under the Protection of Mammals Act 1996.
- 3.8 All widespread reptiles are protected against killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, with rarer reptiles receiving further protection under EU regulation. Reptiles must also be given consideration under the NERC Act 2006 as part of the planning process.
- 3.9 Great crested newts (GCN) are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a GCN or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.
- 3.10 Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence to harm badgers or disturb badgers and their setts.
- 3.11 Water voles are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is a priority conservation species. It is an offence to intentionally capture, kill or injure water voles, damage, destroy or block access to their places of shelter or protection (on purpose or

by not taking enough care), disturb them in a place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), possess, sell, control or transport live or dead water voles or parts of them (not water voles bred in captivity).

- 3.12 In the UK, dormice are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and have significant further protection as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Dormice are also a 'Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity' listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC). It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a dormouse or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.
- 3.13 All other mammals receive general protection against cruelty, inhumane killing or injuring under the Protection of Mammals Act 1996.

4.0 Methodology

Desktop Study

- 4.1 A desktop study was conducted using the government 'MAGIC' Map GIS tool; a search was carried out for all international statutory designated sites (Ramsar, SAC, SPA) within 2km of the site; national statutory designated sites (SSSI, NNR, LNR) within 1km of the site; and non-statutory designated sites (SNCI) and priority habitats within 1km of the site. Any sites of relevance to the proposals are summarized below and their significance considered in the context of the development proposals. Given the nature of the proposals only sites which might be impacted are considered below and this is not an exhaustive list of all sites.
- 4.2 A search was carried out to identify features of ecological interest in the area, such as water bodies and ancient woodland. Given the overall scale and nature of the site and the proposals, a full data search from HBIC was not considered appropriate. This is in accordance with CIEEM current guidance for such projects.

Site Visit

- 4.3 A site visit was conducted on 5th December 2025. Habitats were recorded broadly according to the UKHab Classification System as described within the UK Habitats Manual v2.01 (UKHab Ltd, 2023). All habitats present on-site were recorded on a UKHab map (Figure No. 01) and the site's location is shown on the site location plan (Figure No. 02).
- 4.4 During the survey any constraints with regard to protected species were considered; the site was considered for its potential for protected species even when signs of these species were not noted at the time of survey. Protected and Notable Species considered as part of this assessment include but are not limited to:
- Bats – Foraging, Commuting, Roosting, Swarming and Hibernating
 - Badgers – Sett-building, Commuting and Foraging
 - Dormice – Nesting and Commuting
 - Great Crested Newts and other Amphibians such as Common Toads – Terrestrial Active and Hibernation Habitat and Aquatic Habitat, including Commuting
 - Reptiles – Terrestrial Active and Hibernation Habitat
 - Rare or Notable Invertebrates
 - Rare or Notable Plants
 - Water Voles – Foraging and Shelter Habitats
 - Otters – Foraging and Shelter Habitats
 - White-clawed Crayfish

- 4.5 Due to the site visit being carried out over one day, it is possible that some signs of protected species may not be apparent within this short timeframe. This is a constraint recognised within the Survey Guidelines and all reasonable effort has been made to identify evidence of protected species.

Ecological Impact Assessment

- 4.6 The methodology for EclA follows best practice guidelines set by the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM): 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' (CIEEM, 2018). This includes identifying the baseline conditions on the site and subsequently rating the potential effects of the development (Figure No. 03) based on the sensitivity and value of the resource affected, combined with the magnitude, duration and scale of the impact (or change). This is initially assessed without mitigation measures, and then assessed again after allowing for the proposed mitigation measures; this provides the residual effects. The assessment is divided into construction effects and longer-term operational effects.
- 4.7 Each ecological feature within the site has been considered within a defined geographic context such as:
- International and European;
 - National;
 - Regional;
 - County;
 - District;
 - Local;
 - Site Level;
 - Negligible.
- 4.8 Based upon CIEEM guidance, value was determined with reference to the following factors:
- Its inclusion as a Designated Site or other protected area;
 - The presence of habitat types of conservation significance, e.g. Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
 - The presence (or potential presence) of species of conservation significance e.g. Species of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
 - The presence of other protected species e.g. those protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
 - The site's social and economic value.

5.0 Baseline Ecological Conditions and Protected Species Assessment

Desktop Study

Designated Sites and Habitats

- 5.1 The following information is included so that the site can be considered within the ecological context of the surrounding area, guiding decisions related to habitat change and protected species; these sites are not necessarily representative of the habitat on, or surrounding, the site and may not be influenced by the proposals.
- 5.2 One statutory designated site falls within 2km of the site. Wildern Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located immediately north of the site. This site is a wetland habitat featuring a mosaic of ponds, two flooded meadows, woodlands and a valley mire all linked by streams which flow through the site. The LNR supports a range of birds, dragonflies and butterflies.
- 5.3 The site lies within the Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ).
- 5.4 A total of three non-statutory designated sites fall within 1km of the site. The closest non-statutory site is Wildern Nature Park Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which lies 55m north-east of the site.

Habitats

Desk Study

- 5.5 Two Priority Habitats are present within 1km of the site, including deciduous woodland and purple moor grass and rush pasture.

Site Assessment

- 5.6 The site is given over to two areas of modified grassland with scattered trees, a habitat of **low to moderate value** which is discussed further below.
- 5.7 A number of off-site habitats are present immediately adjacent to the site. These habitats include a building, developed land and other broadleaved woodland. Although they do not fall within the site boundaries, they have been described in the Sections below as they are relevant to the site and this assessment.

g4 32 – Modified Grassland with Scattered Trees

- 5.8 Two areas of modified grassland with scattered trees are present within the site. The first area, to the north of the pedestrian path, comprises a grassland bank which encroaches on the footpath. The modified grassland in this area has a slightly higher density of forbs and is dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, with locally abundant Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* alongside a range of forbs such as creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, dove's-foot crane's-bill *Geranium molle*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris* and white clover *Trifolium repens*. Two English oak *Quercus robur* trees are present within this grassland.

5.9 The second area, to the south of the pedestrian path, comprises a grassland bank to the east of the 2428 SQN ATC building. The species composition of this modified grassland bank is similar to that of the other modified grassland bank to the north, though the modified grassland in this area has a lower density of forbs due to the shading of the trees, which are present at a much higher density. A total of nine trees are present including apple *Malus sylvestris*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, English oak and silver birch *Betula pendula*.

5.10 The grasslands are frequently managed and generally lacking in diversity. The habitat offers **site ecological value**.

w1g 29 – Other Broadleaved Woodland, Plantation (Off-site)

5.11 A broadleaved plantation woodland is present immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. Species present include oak, ash, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, field maple *Acer campestre* and wild cherry *Prunus avium*. This habitat offers **local ecological value**.

u1b – Developed Land (Off-site)

5.12 A hardstanding path is present immediately adjacent to the site. The modified grassland bank is encroaching on the path, which is sealed and provides access to Turnpike Pavilion and the 2428 SQN ATC building. This habitat is unvegetated and offers **negligible ecological value**.

u1b5 – Building (Off-site)

5.13 The 2428 SQN ATC building is immediately adjacent to the site. The building is in good overall condition and offers **negligible ecological value** in a broader sense. The potential for the building to support protected species is discussed in the preliminary bat roost assessment and protected species assessment below.

6.0 Protected Species Assessment

Bats

Desk Study

- 6.1 Four European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences were recorded within 2km of site, for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats. The closest licence to the site was EPSM2013-5805 which lies 125m to the west of the site and was granted for the destruction of a common pipistrelle resting place in 2013.

Site Assessment

- 6.2 The building adjacent to the site is a modern brick and concrete tile building which is well-used and in a good state of repair. No Potential Roost Features (PRFs) for bats were observed and the building has been assessed as having **negligible suitability** for bats.
- 6.3 There are no mature trees within the site that support PRFs for bats.
- 6.4 The immediate surroundings are mostly urban, though the broadleaved plantation woodland immediately adjacent to the site is likely to be of high value for foraging and commuting bats. The habitats within the site are considered unlikely to support significant foraging habitat or to form a commuting route, given their isolation and sparsity. The trees within the site are of **site value** for bats.

Birds

Site Assessment

- 6.5 The grasslands are too short and sparse to support ground nesting birds such as skylark. The mature scattered trees have suitability to support nesting birds. The broadleaved plantation woodland immediately adjacent to the site has suitability for foraging and nesting birds. The trees within the site are of **site value** for birds.

Reptiles

Desk Study

- 6.6 No EPS mitigation licences for rare reptiles have been granted within 2km of the site.

Site Assessment

- 6.7 The grasslands are relatively short and sparse at present, lacking in diversity or structure. It is possible that reptiles may commute across the grasslands but these habitats are unlikely to support a resident population. The broadleaved plantation woodland immediately adjacent to the site offers limited hibernation potential. The habitats within the site are of **site value**.

Amphibians

Desk Study

- 6.8 No EPS mitigation licences for GCN have been granted within 2km of the site and there are no GCN survey or licence returns (positive or negative) within the search area either. This suggests either limited survey effort due to lack of local development, or a lack of suitable ponds due to the geology.
- 6.9 There are four waterbodies within 500m of the site. The closest waterbody lies 65m north-east of the site.

Site Assessment

- 6.10 The grasslands are relatively short and sparse at present, lacking in diversity or structure. It is possible that GCN may commute across the grasslands but these habitats are unlikely to represent a key habitat for this species during their terrestrial phase due to their extremely limited extent and regular use and management. There is no suitable foraging or sheltering habitat for GCN within the site. The broadleaved plantation woodland immediately adjacent to the site offers limited hibernation potential. The habitats within the site are of **site value**.

Dormice

Desk Study

- 6.11 Three EPS mitigation licences have been granted within the search area. All three licences were located approximately 785m north-west of the site, dated between 2013 and 2015. All three licences were located to the west of the M27 which represents a major barrier to hazel dormice dispersal.

Site Assessment

- 6.12 The trees within the site do not have suitability for foraging, commuting or nesting dormice. The trees are isolated from areas of suitable dormice habitat in the wider landscape and do not represent a significant resource for this species. The broadleaved plantation woodland immediately adjacent to the site has limited suitability to support this species. The habitats within the site offer **negligible value**. No impacts upon this species are considered likely and therefore they have not been assessed further.

Badger

Site Assessment

- 6.13 The grasslands offer foraging and commuting habitat for badgers, though no evidence of foraging was observed during the site visit. The grassland banks offer sett creation opportunities, though this is considered sub-optimal due to the high level of disturbance at the site. No evidence of sett building was observed during the survey. The broadleaved plantation woodland immediately adjacent to the site could offer suitable building habitat and could be used for foraging and commuting. The habitats within the site are of **site value**.

Other

Site Assessment

- 6.14 No potential for, or evidence of, any other protected species such as otter, water vole, white-clawed crayfish, rare plants or notable invertebrates was recorded. The modified grasslands within the site offer suitable foraging habitat for hedgehog. No impacts upon this species are considered likely and therefore they have not been assessed further.

7.0 Evaluation of Impacts and Mitigation

Designated Sites

Potential Impacts

- 7.1 Wildern LNR lies immediately north of the site. Due to the proximity of the LNR, it is possible that the proposals may result in direct impacts upon this site, without mitigation.
- 7.2 The site is within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of the Upper Hamble Estuary and Woods SSSI. However, the proposals do not meet the criteria that would warrant consultation with Natural England. No further mitigation is required with regard to the SSSI IRZ.
- 7.3 Given the size and nature of the proposals, it is considered unlikely that they would have any direct impact upon any other statutory designated sites.
- 7.4 Wildern Nature Park LWS lies 55m north-east of the site. Given the size and nature of the proposals, no impacts upon non-statutory sites are predicted. Additionally, the mitigation measures outlined in Section 7.5 will serve to protect the LWS.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.5 To ensure no impacts from pollution or root compaction, current best practice must be strictly followed with regard to minimising pollution and damage to ecological features. For designated sites the main points are:
 - Ensuring no light pollution from construction and operation-phase lighting
 - Ensuring no dust arises from the soil movements

Residual Impacts

- 7.6 Once mitigation is taken into account, the impacts will be **negligible**.

Habitats

Potential Impacts

- 7.7 The proposals require the removal of modified grassland to facilitate the construction of the new fire escape path and the reprofiling of the two modified grassland banks. Modified grassland is a habitat of low overall distinctiveness.
- 7.8 One tree, a silver birch adjacent to the existing building, will be removed to facilitate the construction of the new fire escape path. The tree is a habitat of medium overall distinctiveness but limited value given its size and lack of wildlife features. In the absence of mitigation, the proposals might harm other trees by smothering of their roots.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.9 All construction must be undertaken in accordance with best practice advice with regards to control of dust, noise, pollution and emissions onto the trees.

- 7.10 Scattered trees within the site and the broadleaved plantation woodland immediately north of the site will be retained and protected in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012. This will include protecting trees with barriers during work, avoiding compacting soil within root protection areas and ensure soil is not banked up against stems or over roots.
- 7.11 The loss of modified grassland will be offset through the enhancement of an area of the retained grassland which is currently in poor condition. The condition of this habitat can be increased through the over-sowing the grassland with a species-rich grassland seed mix.
- 7.12 The loss of the silver birch will be offset through planting new trees such as oak, silver birch and alder *Alnus glutinosa*.

Residual Impacts

- 7.13 Once mitigation is taken into account, the impacts will be negligible.

Bats

Potential Impacts

- 7.14 There is no significant roost suitability within the building or trees within the site. All trees, with the exception of one silver birch, will be retained. The silver birch scheduled for removal supports no PRFs and will not require any further surveys prior to removal.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.15 The three proposed trees to be planted as part of the proposals will eventually improve the commuting and foraging potential of the site.
- 7.16 Works shall be designed to minimise disturbance of any bats which might use the surroundings. Any new external lighting must strictly accord with the BCT/ILP Guidance Note 08/23, with minimal illumination of the woodland to the north of the site in particular. Lighting shall be strictly controlled to avoid unnecessary illumination at night.

Residual Impacts

- 7.17 The overall impact of the proposals would likely be **positive for bats**, with additional trees to be planted as part of the proposals improving foraging resources within the site.

Nesting Birds

Potential Impacts

- 7.18 The proposals required the removal of a silver birch tree. This could impact nesting birds.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.19 If possible, tree removal will take place outside of the main nesting season, which runs from March to September, inclusive. However, if work must take place during the nesting bird season, an ecological clerk of works will perform a nesting bird check of vegetation to be removed immediately prior to the start of works. Any active nests identified will need to be left with a 5m undisturbed buffer until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

- 7.20 The three proposed trees to be planted as part of the proposals will eventually improve the nesting resource within the site.

Residual Impacts

- 7.21 The overall impact of the proposals would likely be **positive for birds**, with trees being planted to create more nesting and foraging potential.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Potential Impacts

- 7.22 The proposals are unlikely to have any impacts on reptiles or amphibians, provided the low sward heights of the grasslands are maintained prior to removal. Cutting or grazing the grasslands regularly would further limit the species using the site regularly.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.23 Ongoing cutting of any areas shall be undertaken with due regard to reptiles and amphibians, operating in a directional manner to allow individuals to disperse. Where possible, the grassland margins should be left uncut to allow longer swards that offer shelter.

Residual Impacts

- 7.24 The overall impact of the scheme will be **negligible**.

Badgers

Potential Impacts

- 7.25 Sub-optimal sett creation opportunities are present within the site. Should badgers occupy the site prior to the commencement of works, there is a risk that the proposals could result in harm to badgers.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.26 Prior to the commencement of works, a suitably experienced ecologist should inspect the modified grassland banks to ensure badgers have not occupied the site.

Residual Impacts

- 7.27 The overall impact of the scheme will be **negligible**.

Other

Potential Impacts

- 7.28 The proposals will slightly reduce the suitability of the site to support hedgehog through the temporary loss of foraging habitat.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.29 None required. Hedgehog will benefit from tree planting within the site, increasing foraging, commuting and sheltering opportunities.

Residual Impacts

- 7.30 The overall impact of the scheme will be **positive for hedgehog**.

8.0 Ecological Enhancements

8.1 In accordance with the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan, the proposals should aim to achieve a net gain of some form.

8.2 A number of enhancement options listed below are recommended to be adopted as part of the proposals:

- Re-seeding of the modified grassland banks with a wildflower mix to increase species diversity and to provide increased foraging opportunities for invertebrates;
- Where possible, leaving of a 1m strip of grassland along the boundary of the broadleaved plantation woodland to allow reptiles to forage, small mammals to proliferate and insects to shelter; this should be cut every other year such that a thatch develops for the mammals, supporting barn owls and raptors;
- Addition of a bird box and a bat box to retained, mature trees within the site to enhance roosting opportunities for a range of species;

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 Overall, the proposals are considered to represent a 'low' impact upon ecology and no further surveys are recommended. The proposal area consists of low-moderate value modified grassland with scattered trees.
- 9.2 The proposals are not anticipated to have any significant impact upon any designated sites or protected species, provided the mitigation measures listed in this report are followed. There is potential for numerous protected and notable species within the site but impacts would be relatively minor. Compensation measures are proposed which would adequately replace any lost potential and protect species in the future.
- 9.3 When mitigation and enhancements have been taken into account, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact upon habitats or protected species in accordance with planning policy and, once enhancements are considered, would result in a minor net gain for several species. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant local and national planning policies and the relevant legislation.

10.0 References

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11.0 Species Lists

g4 32 Modified Grassland with Scattered Trees

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	F
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	R
Black medick	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	O
Broadleaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	O
Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	R
Common dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	O
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	LF
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	R
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	LF
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	F
Dovesfoot Cranesbill	<i>Geranium molle</i>	LF
English oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	F
Hairy bittercress	<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>	O
Hairy mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	O
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	D
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	O
Sedge sp.	<i>Carex sp.</i>	R
Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	O
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	R
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	O
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	LA

w1g 29 Other Broadleaved Woodland, Plantation (Off-site)

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	O
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	LA
English oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	F
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	F
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	F

12.0 Appendix A – Site Photos

Photo 1 – Modified grassland bank to the north of the existing path (looking north)



Photo 2 – Modified grassland sward with slightly higher density of forbs



Photo 3 – Broadleaved plantation woodland immediately north of the site



Photo 4 – Modified grassland bank with scattered trees



Photo 5 – Building adjacent to the site, with the modified grassland bank to be reprofiled in the foreground



Photo 6 – Scattered trees within the modified grassland



Photo 7 – Modified grassland bank to be reprofiled with the silver birch scheduled for removal (right)



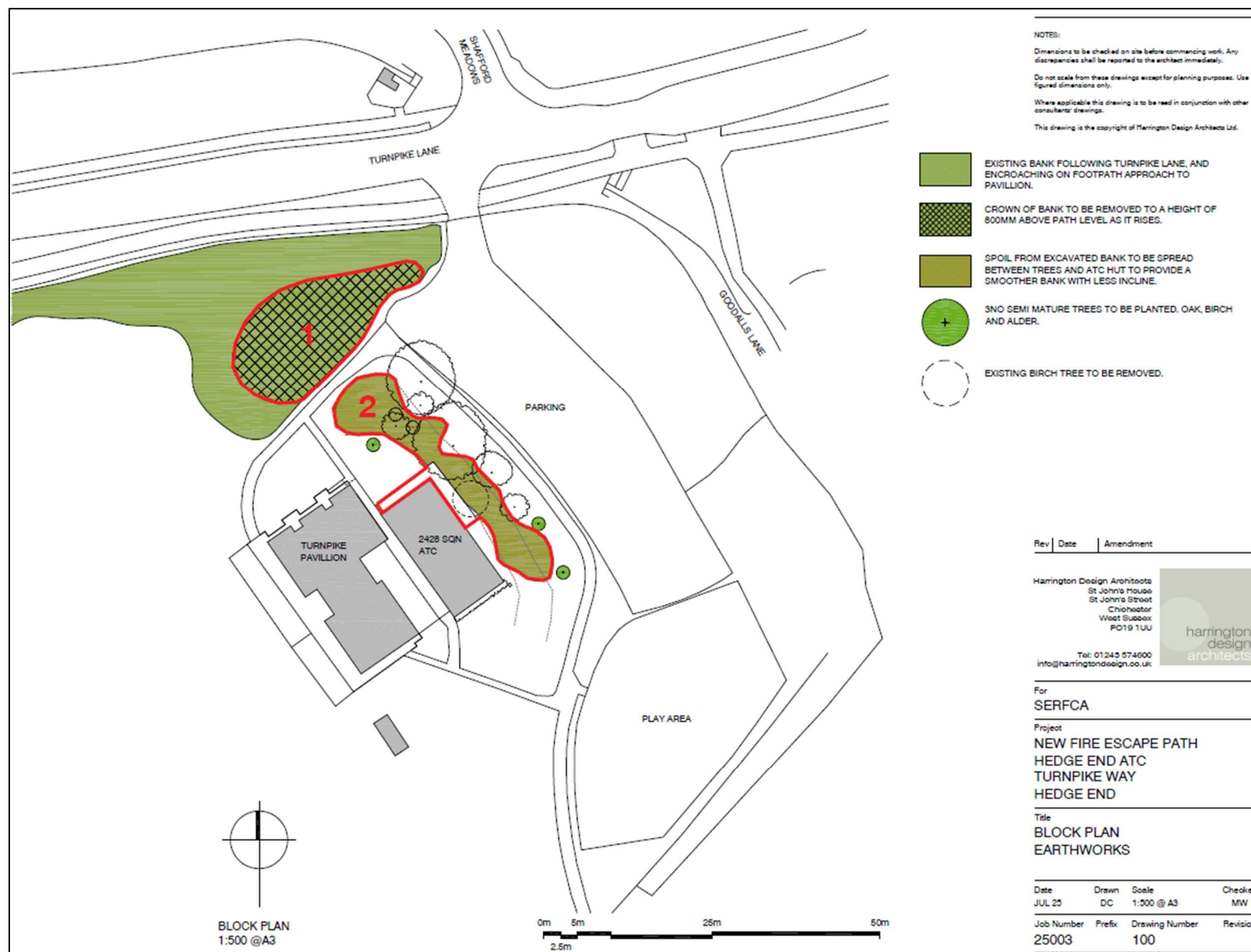
Photo 8 – Less forbs are present in the modified grassland nearest the building, with bare patches underneath the scattered trees



13.0 Figure No. 01 – UKHab Habitat Map



14.0 Figure No. 02 – Site Location Plan



15.0 Figure No. 03 – Proposed Site Layout

