



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

For

**Harbinder Bhandal
East Court Manor
Church Ln
Gravesend
DA12 2NL**

Reference: Q-PH-202608-073

Prepared by
ProHort Limited
Waterbridge Farm
Yarnfield Lane
Stone
Staffordshire
ST15 0NE
Telephone: 01782 479479
Email: info@prohort.co.uk
Website: www.prohort.co.uk

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Principle Author	Hannah Burton 
Qualifications	MSci (Hons), Qualifying Member of CIEEM
Surveyor	Owen Brown 
Qualifications	B
Reviewed By	Owen Brown 
Qualifications	BSc (Hons)

Disclaimers

All information set out in this report is true and based on the opinions and knowledge of ProHort at the time of writing. This report has been set out for the sole use of the client under the conditions set out in this document.

This report was prepared to the standard set out in the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. Adhering to this guidance, this report is considered valid for a period of 12 months after the date of the site visit, after this date this report will no longer be an accurate assessment of the current conditions of the Site/project area.

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Summary

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken at East Court Manor, Church Ln, Gravesend DA12 2NL (grid reference: TQ 68454 72898), to support a planning application to convert the existing building into a residential building. A site survey was undertaken on the 18th August 2026, and a desktop study was undertaken in September 2026.

The appraisal assessed the current ecological value of habitats within the Site and their potential to support protected and notable species.

Overall, no further surveys are required to determine species presence within the Site. However, precautionary measures should be implemented during the proposed works, particularly for Great Crested Newts and other amphibians.

For full details, please read the report in its entirety.

1. Introduction

ProHort Limited have been commissioned by Harbinder Bhandal of East Court Manor, Church Ln, Gravesend DA12 2NL (grid reference: TQ 68454 72898) to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), hereafter referred to as the 'Site'. The purpose of the survey was to assess the likely presence of rare or protected species, to identify any features, habitats or species which would constitute potential constraints to any development which may take place on the Site, and to make recommendations for mitigation and/or further survey work.

This report sets out the results of a desk-based study and a survey of the Site, undertaken 18th August 2026. A PEA is required to support a planning application.

1.1. Site location

The Site is an agricultural storage building (Figure 1). The Site is west of Lower Higham and west of Northfleet Green. The Site is surrounded by grass and arable fields, with small numbers of residential agricultural properties.

There are plans to develop the site. The planning application involves the conversion of the existing building into a residential property.



Figure 1 – Red line boundary of the Site

Taken from Bing Maps (© 2026 Microsoft Corporation, © 2026 Maxar, ©CNES (2026) Distribution Airbus DS)

1.2. Historic Context

According to opensource historic mapping, there have been buildings on or surrounding the Site since before 1900. There have been scattered residential developments in the wider area since this time.

2. Methodology

2.1. Aims and Objectives of the Survey

The aims and objectives of this report are as follows:

- To record and describe the current habitats and species present within the Site.
- To identify any occurrences or rare and/or protected plant species within the Site.
- To identify any invasive, non-native plant species.
- To undertake a habitat appraisal and assess the potential of the site to support protected species.
- To identify any potential ecological concerns or constraints that could influence the development and provide feedback on appropriate mitigation measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate for impacts on protected species and other local wildlife.

2.2. Desk Top Study

The purpose of a desk study is to collect baseline ecological data held by statutory and non-statutory consultees. This includes any records of species from the Site and the surrounding 2km.

To ensure the information within this report is current, only species data collected within the last 10 years was considered. This data is used as an indicator of species presence and should not be used to indicate absence.

A search on DEFRA's open source, online MAGIC Maps tool was used to identify any designated sites, priority habitats, and previous protected species licences within 2km of the Site.

Data provided by the Site's Local Record Centre was used to identify any non-statutory designated sites and any protected and notable species records within 2km of the Site.

Any trees with the Site or any trees affected by the proposed works will be checked to identify any existing Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). The local authority maps/records were searched.

2.3. Habitat Survey

A survey was completed of the defined boundary of the Site as well as the surrounding area, where applicable. The Site area was assessed in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd 2023). A species list of flora was compiled for each habitat and an estimate of abundance was assigned using the DAFOR (Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, or Rare) scale (Walker *et al.* 2010). The Site was then assessed for its suitability for any protected and notable species. The surrounding area was assessed for any evidence or suitability for any protected and notable species.

2.4. Preliminary Roost Assessment

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken on any objects of interest within the Site (buildings or trees etc. where applicable) in reference to the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition (Collins, 2023). A thorough search for evidence of bats was undertaken in any internal loft spaces or voids and on any external features of any appropriate buildings, notably any windowsills, walls, floors and flat surfaces.

A ground level tree assessment for all individual trees and tree groups within the Site was undertaken to determine any bat roosting potential. A note was made of any features (e.g. cracks, holes, crevices, loose bark, or dense ivy *Hedera helix*) or evidence of bats visible from ground level.

Evidence of roosting bats include:

- Presence of live/dead bats.
- Bat droppings (can be distinguished from rat/mouse droppings by their crumbly texture).

- Staining from fur around access points.
- The presence of feeding remains, such as insect wings and casings.
- Absence of cobwebs around crevices

A building/tree would be identified as a 'confirmed' bat roost if evidence of roosting bats was recorded.

Evidence of bats is often concealed and/or inaccessible due to remote nature of the roost. Therefore, where no evidence of roosting bats was recorded, an assessment on the availability of potential roosting areas and bat access points around the building/tree, as well as the quality/availability or surrounding bat habitat, was conducted. The building/tree was then assigned a category that is based on a sliding scale of 'negligible' to 'high potential' (based on Collins, 2023).

2.5. Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index Assessment

Ponds within 250 m of the Site, where possible, were assessed for the suitability for Great Crested Newts (GCN). The assessment of these ponds followed the GCN Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) methods (ARG UK, 2010). The HSI methods assess a number of parameters that influence breeding populations of GCN. These parameters include: location, pond size, permanence of pond, water quality, bank shading, waterfowl activity, presence of fish, number of ponds within the surrounding area, terrestrial habitat type, and macrophyte cover of the pond. Each of these variables can score a number between 0 and 1 and the geometric mean of these numbers provide a final value which can be used to categorise the suitability level (poor, below average, average, good, or excellent). These categories can then be used to inform the need for further surveys.

2.6. Legislation and Policy

Appendix 2 sets out the relevant policies and environmental and wildlife legislation relevant to the Site. The project must follow these documents, and this report is set out to avoid any offenses being committed regarding these policies and legislations.

2.7. Limitations of the Survey

There were no limitations to the survey; the whole of the site was accessible on foot, allowing the full appraisal of habitats and species present. It should be noted that a single visit cannot always ascertain the presence or absence of a protected species. However, an assessment is made of the likelihood for protected species to occur based on habitat characteristics and ecology of each species. Where there is potential for protected species, additional survey work may be required to ascertain their presence or absence.

Data on species that has been obtained from local records, are sometimes only available at low spatial resolutions and are constrained by the voluntary nature of the contributions and what has been chosen to be submitted. While these records provide a useful indication of species recorded in the local area, the data is not necessarily an accurate reflection of species assemblages or abundance in the vicinity.

3. Results

3.1. Designated Sites

3 statutory designated sites were identified within 2km of the Site. However, no non-statutory designated sites were identified within 2 km of the Site (Table 1).

Table 1 – All statutory designated sites within 2km of the Site; taken from Magic Maps in September 2026

Site and Designation	Distance from the Site	Connectivity	Site description
Thames Estuary & Marshes (SPA, Ramsar)	360 m N	<u>Moderate</u> – Small number of dispersal barriers to Site, including residential and agricultural developments and a minor road.	Wetland supporting significant populations and assemblages of wintering and breeding waterbirds. It comprises extensive intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, grazing marsh and associated wetland habitats.
Shorne and Ashenbank Woods (SSSI)	1880 m S	<u>Moderate</u> – Small number of dispersal barriers to Site, including residential and agricultural developments and a road.	Ancient and plantation woodland supporting a diverse and important invertebrate fauna, particularly beetles, true bugs and dragonflies. The site also supports a range of characteristic woodland flora and breeding birds.
South Thames Estuary and Marshes (SSSI)	360 m N	<u>Moderate</u> – Small number of dispersal barriers to Site, including residential and agricultural developments and a minor road.	Wetland site comprising extensive intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh, grazing marsh and associated habitats. It supports diverse and nationally important populations of wintering and breeding waterbirds.

3.2. Priority and Notable Habitats

The priority habitats (outlined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended)) within 2km of the Site are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – All priority habitats within 2km of the Site; taken from Magic Maps in September 2026.

Priority habitat	No. of sites within 2km	Closest site	Connectivity
Deciduous woodland	14	120 m NE	<u>Low</u> – No indicator species for habitat found within the Site.
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	45	240 m NE	<u>Low</u> – No indicator species for habitat found within the Site.
Traditional orchard	8	190 m SW	<u>Low</u> – No indicator species for habitat found within the Site.
Ancient woodland	1	1995 m S	<u>Low</u> – No indicator species for habitat found within the Site.
Reedbeds	1	1370 m N	<u>Low</u> – No indicator species for habitat found within the Site.
Coastal saltmarsh	17	1570 m N	<u>Low</u> – No indicator species for habitat found within the Site.
Mudflats	2	1620 m NW	<u>Low</u> – No indicator species for habitat found within the Site.

It is considered that multiple hedgerows and ponds within 2km of the Site may meet criteria of priority habitats.

3.3. European Protected Species Licences

No European Protected Species licences were identified within 2km of the Site (Table 3).

3.4. Tree Preservation Orders

No TPOs were found within or directly surrounding the Site.

3.5. UK Habitat Classification Survey

1 UKHab habitat was identified within the Site:

- Buildings – u1b5

An on-site habitat plan is shown in Appendix 3 and photographs of the Site are shown in Appendix 4. Each of these habitats are described in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – All UKHabs classification descriptions.

Habitat Type	Habitat Description	Flora Species
Buildings – u1b5	The red line boundary was entirely occupied by a storage building.	-

3.6. Species Records

A search of local biological records was conducted by the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre up to 2km from the Site. Only records within the past 10 years were included in the following assessment. The records were filtered based on the relevance to the project proposal.

3.6.1 Badgers

The records returned no occurrences of Badger (*Meles meles*) within 2km of the Site. During the Site visit, no signs of Badgers were found, and none of the on-site habitats appeared favourable to Badgers. The surrounding area is not suitable for sett creation due to the amount of amenity grassland and developed land. Overall, the likelihood for the Site to support Badgers is negligible, and no further action is required.

3.6.2 Bats

The records search and European Protected Species licence application identified breeding, foraging and resting bats were locally present

2 records of bats were returned by the data search.

3.6.3 Birds

There were 38 species of protected or priority bird species (species listed in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 or Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) returned by the local records (Table 4).

Table 4 – bird records (these are not all the examples of birds within these lists).

Species name	Number records	of Likelihood of presence on site
Schedule 1		
Bearded Tit (<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>)	21	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Bittern (<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>)	1	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Black-throated Diver (<i>Gavis arctica</i>)	1	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Black-necked Grebe (<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>)	1	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Black redstart (<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>)	3	Low – May occasionally use the building for shelter.

Black-winged Stilt (<i>Himantopus</i> <i>Himantopus</i>)	2	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Brambling (<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>)	1	Low – May occasionally use the building for shelter.
Cetti's Warbler (<i>Cettia cetti</i>)	215	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Cirl Bunting (<i>Emberiza cirlus</i>)		Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)	2	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>)	21	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Green Sandpiper (<i>Tringa ochropus</i>)	23	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Hobby (<i>Falco Subbuteo</i>)	53	Low – May occasionally overfly or forage around the Site.
Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)	47	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Little Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius dubius</i>)	11	Low – May occasionally forage around the Site.
Merlin (<i>Falco columbaris</i>)	8	Low – May occasionally overfly or forage opportunistically.
Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>)	19	Low – The open-ended building may provide limited nesting or roosting opportunities.
Whimbrel (<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>)	34	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Redwing (<i>Turdus iliacus</i>)	73	Low – May occasionally forage around the Site.

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Common Cuckoo (<i>Cuculus canorus</i>)	82	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
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Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)	99	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla</i>)	5	Low – The building may provide limited nesting opportunities.
Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>)	2	Low – The building may provide limited nesting opportunities.
Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>)	222	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>)	185	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citronella</i>)	18	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Grasshopper warbler (<i>Locustella neavia</i>)	7	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Linnet (<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>)	137	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Lesser redpoll (<i>Carduelis cabaret</i>)	19	Low – May occasionally overfly or forage around the Site.
Reed bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>)	91	Low – The building may provide limited nesting opportunities.
Corn bunting (<i>Millaria calandra</i>)	69	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Ring Ouzel (<i>Turdus torquatus</i>)	1	Low – May occasionally forage around the Site.
Herring gull (<i>Larus argentatus subsp. Argenteus</i>)	71	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)	315	Low – May occasionally overfly or forage around the Site.
House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)	268	Moderate – The open-ended building may provide suitable nesting opportunities.

Tree Pipit (<i>Anthus trivialis</i>)	1	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.
Song thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i> subsp. <i>Clarkei</i>)	1	Low – May occasionally forage or pass through the Site.
Yellow wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava</i>)	62	Negligible – No suitable habitat present.

If works are to commence within the bird nesting season (March-September), any trees or dense vegetation surrounding the Site will need to be inspected by an ecologist within 48 hours of works commencing. If evidence of nesting birds is found, a 5 m exclusion zone must be created around the tree and left in place until the birds have fledged.

3.6.4 Great Crested Newt

The local record search returned 8 occurrences of Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) (GCN). The closest record was 388 m northeast from the Site. Connectivity is high due to the connecting tree and hedgerow line, as well as the woodland parcel which contains a pond.

No ponds were located within the Site and 3 ponds were present within 250m of the Site boundary. However, two ponds were not accessible due to being surrounded by dense woodland vegetation, and the other was dry.

The terrestrial habitat surrounding the Site is not suitable for GCN due to the amount of developed land on Site and in the surrounding area.

Given the lack of breeding habitat for GCN within the Site, as well as the nature of the works taking place on existing developed land, the proposed works can be considered as having a low impact on GCN breeding populations. Therefore, no further surveys are required; however, precautionary measures should be implemented to ensure that the works do not disturb or harm any GCN that may be present within the wider area.

- Prior to the commencement of works, a suitably qualified ecologist should deliver a toolbox talk to all personnel working on the Site, covering GCN identification, legal protection and the precautionary measures.
- The contractors should be provided with a GCN identification sheet and contact details for the appointed ecologist.
- All works to remain within the existing building footprint wherever practicable.
- Material and machinery storage should be restricted to existing hardstanding or other areas of negligible suitability for GCN, such as managed grassland with a sward length of less than 50mm.
- No vegetation clearance, soil stripping, excavation or ground disturbance outside the existing building footprint unless first agreed with the ecologist.
- Materials should not be stored in piles that could provide potential refugia/hibernation opportunities for GCN.
- Any temporary materials stored outside should be raised off the ground where practicable and removed promptly.
- The working area should be kept tidy and free from rubble, timber, sheet materials and other objects beneath which amphibians could shelter.

- Avoid creating temporary pits, trenches or other excavations that could trap amphibians. Any unavoidable excavations should be covered overnight or provided with a means of escape.
- Any excavations left open overnight should be checked by a suitably experienced person each morning before works recommence.
- If a GCN is encountered, works in the immediate area should stop, the animal should be left undisturbed, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice.
- No chemicals, fuels, concrete washout or other pollutants should be allowed to enter drainage systems or reach the pond.

3.6.5 Other Mammals

No records of Hazel Dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) were returned from the records search. The habitats on Site are not suitable for Hazel Dormice, and no signs of Hazel Dormice were seen on Site at the time of the survey. Overall, the likelihood for the Site to support Hazel Dormice is negligible and no further action is required.

No records of otter (*Lutra lutra*), beaver (*Castor fiber*) or white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) were returned by the records search; however, there were 18 records of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), the closest being located 690 m north of the Site. The nearest watercourse to the Site are the network of drains to the north, which at their closest point are located 360 m north of the Site. Connectivity between these watercourses and the Site is low, due to the presence of multiple dispersal barriers including roads and residential/agricultural developments. The Site does not contain suitable habitats for watercourse species, and no signs of watercourse species were found on Site at the time of the survey. Overall, the likelihood for the Site to support watercourse species is negligible and no further action is required.

3 records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) but no records of brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) were returned from the records search. The habitats on Site are not suitable for small mammals, and no evidence of small mammals was seen on Site at the time of the survey. Overall, no further action is required. Any rubble or brash piles created as a result of the proposed works or already present on Site could be utilised by hedgehogs. These piles should be removed by hand during the proposed works and should not be removed during the hibernation period.

3.6.6 Reptiles

12 records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), 7 records of common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and 15 records of grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) were returned from the records search. The closest record was located 590 m northwest from the Site. Connectivity is low due to the presence of dispersal barriers such as a road and residential/agricultural properties. The Site does not contain suitable habitats for reptiles, and no evidence of reptiles was found on Site at the time of the survey. Overall, the likelihood for the Site to support reptiles is negligible and no further action is required. Any rubble or brash piles created as a result of the proposed works or already present on Site could be utilised by reptiles. These piles should be removed by hand during the proposed works and should not be removed during the hibernation period.

3.6.7 Amphibians

No records of amphibians were returned from the records search. The habitats on Site are not suitable for amphibians, and no evidence of amphibians was found on Site at the time of the survey. However, there are 2 ponds within 250 m of the Site which could not be assessed and therefore may support breeding amphibians. Overall, the likelihood for the Site to support amphibians is low and precautionary measures should be followed, as outlined in section 3.6.4. Any rubble or brash piles created as a result of the proposed works or already present on Site could be utilised by amphibians.

These piles should be removed by hand during the proposed works and should not be removed during the hibernation period.

3.7. Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.7.1 Bat Building Assessment

The on-site building was assessed for its potential for roosting bats and nesting birds. The results are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5 – Description of all on-site buildings

Building name	Description	Bat roosting potential
B1	B1 is a one-storey, open-ended agricultural storage building. The building was constructed of wooden walls and a pitched slate roof. The beams were presented in moderate condition, with a moderate amount of cobwebs and bitumen roofing felt lining. There was light ingress as the north aspect was open. There were no potential roosting features noted; the roof appeared intact, with no suitable gaps for roosting bats. Due to the unstable temperatures within the building due to being open, it was deemed unsuitable for roosting bats.	Negligible

3.7.3 Foraging and Commuting Bats

The general surrounding area has moderate suitability for commuting and foraging bats, due to the Site's proximity to several wooded blocks, the number of open agricultural spaces that could produce high yields of insects and the proximity of the site to a nearby watercourse. Due to the suitability for foraging and commuting bats in the area, it is recommended that an Artificial Lighting Strategy is implemented throughout the proposed works (see section 4.1.1).

3.7.4 Conclusions on Roosting Bats

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the property was undertaken, and the building was considered to hold a 'negligible potential' for roosting bats due to a lack of bat roosting provisions and potential access points. Roosting bats are considered to not be impacted as part of the proposed works as due to the lack of suitability of the building and therefore, no further action is needed.

It must be noted that the PRA provides a current assessment of the bat roosting potential on Site. It is always possible for bat species to ingress at any point in the future, and therefore it is recommended that if 18 months pass and no works have been undertaken, and/or if the condition of the buildings change, an updated PRA is required to assess whether the potential of the buildings to support roosting bats has altered.

In the unlikely event bat(s) are encountered at any stage, work will cease and Natural England or a suitably qualified bat ecologist must be sought for advice by the applicant/landowner. The applicant must be aware of the severe penalties associated with bat crimes and their legal obligations to report this information.

3.8. Evaluation

Based on these results, precautionary measures should be implemented to prevent harm or disturbance to amphibians, particularly Great Crested Newts, which may be present in the wider area. No further surveys are required before the proposed works begin.

4. Biodiversity Mitigation and Enhancement Plan

4.1. Mitigation

All the following measures should be adhered to throughout the proposed works to protect local fauna and flora:

- In the situation where any protected, notable or vulnerable animals are encountered during the works all work must stop and a suitable ecologist should be consulted before continuing.
- Any trenches created by the works should be covered overnight or a means of escape should be provided for any fauna that enters it.
- The creation of rubble, soil or brash piles should be avoided where possible as these can be used by hedgehogs, reptiles and amphibians.
- Using artificial lights between dusk and dawn should be avoided/minimised where possible.
- Avoid using unnecessary chemicals during the works and if any chemicals are required leakages are avoided through fuel drip trays, drip-capture devices and/or spill mitigation devices.

4.1.1 Artificial Lighting Strategy

Artificial lighting can impact local bats as it can impede their ability to forage successfully and can deter bats from commuting across the property. Therefore, to ensure any lighting disturbance on bats is minimised, the following strategy for artificial lighting around the property will be adhered to:

- Where lighting is required for health and safety purposes only, any external lighting required as part of the scheme (e.g. security lighting) will be motion triggered, set on timers (1 minute or less) and directional towards the ground to avoid upward light spill.
- Any light spill must be directed away from the roof and from surrounding tree canopies and vegetation.
- All luminaires used will lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, fluorescent sources will not be used.
- LED luminaires will be used due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability.
- A warm white spectrum (ideally <2700 Kelvin) must be adopted to reduce blue light component.
- Luminaires must feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats.
- Internal luminaires will be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill.
- The use of specialist bollard or low level downward directional luminaires to reduce upwards lighting spill can be considered, however, should be used as a final resort.
- Column heights should be carefully considered to minimise light spill. Only luminaires with an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control must be used.
- Luminaires will always be mounted on the horizontal, i.e., no upward tilt.

4.2. Recommendations for biodiversity enhancement

The below measures are recommended to increase viable habitat for specific species within the local environment:

- At least 1 bat roosting box should be installed on the on Site building or mature trees. The box should be 1FW Schwegler Bat Hibernation Boxes (available at nhbs.com) or of a similar standard and be mounted at least 4m from the ground. The box should face between southwest and southeast and should remain unobstructed.
- At least 1 bird box should be installed on the on Site building or mature trees. These boxes should be to target a variety of species (e.g. Schwegler 1B 32mm bird box to target tits, redstart, nuthatch, flycatchers, wrynecks or sparrows; or Vivara Pro Woodstone Swift nest box etc.).
- A Biocube planter (available at bioscapes.co.uk) should be placed within the Site to create a habitat for a variety of species.
- Green and Blue Bee bricks (available at greenandblue.co.uk) should be used within the brick walls of the building to be constructed.
- Transporting of any offsite soil should be avoided. However, where unavoidable, ensure soil is peat free.
- Avoid pollutants and litter/debris within the Site and the surrounding area.

Appendix 1 Reference List and Useful Sources

- **Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK (2010)** Advice Note 5: Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index. London, Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK.
- **British Standards (2012)** BS 5837: 2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. London, British Standards Institution.
- **British Standards (2020)** BS 42020: 2013 - Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development. London, British Standards Institution.
- **British Standards (2021)** BS 8683: 2021 - Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain. London, British Standards Institution.
- **CIEEM (2017a)** Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (2nd Edition). Winchester, CIEEM.
- **CIEEM (2017b)** Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing (2nd Edition). Winchester, CIEEM.
- **CIEEM (2018)** Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.1. Winchester, CIEEM.
- **CIEEM (2019)** Advice Note: On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports & Surveys. Winchester, CIEEM.
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Appendix 2 Planning Policy & Legislation

National Planning Policy Framework 2026

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2026) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF states that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan.
- Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
- Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.
- Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions, such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.

A list of principles which local planning authorities should follow when determining planning applications is included in the NPPF which includes the following:

- Distinguish between international, national and locally designated sites.
- Allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value.
- Maintain and enhance habitats and green infrastructure networks.
- Enhance natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
- Give weight to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including wildlife corridors and stepping stones, and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation.
- Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species
- If significant harm 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.
- 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 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 Species Scientific Interest.
- 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 development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981

The WCA is the primary piece of legislation relating to nature conservation in Great Britain. The Act is supplemented by provisions in the CRoW Act 2000 and the NERC Act 2006.

Part 1 of this act makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird, to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built, and/or to take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Part 1 also makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 of the act, and to take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird included in Schedule ZA1. Schedule 5 lists non-avian species that are afforded various protections under Sections 9.1a, 9.1b, 9.2, 9.4a, 9.4a (Wales), 9.4b, 9.4c, 9.5a and 9.5b.

Schedule 8 lists plant species that are protected from intentionally picking, uprooting or destroying under Section 13.

Schedule 9 lists non-native invasive plants for which it is an offence under Section 14 to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any part of said plants.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Section 43 of Part 3 of this legislation makes it an offence to do any of the following with regards to European Protected Species (animals) as listed on Schedule 2:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species.
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species.
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute this activity).

Section 43 of Part 3 of this legislation makes it an offence to do any of the following with regards to European Protected Species (plants) as listed on Schedule 5:

- Deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild plant of a European Protected Species.
- Be in position of or to transport said plant.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

The CRoW Act applies only to England and Wales, and importantly adds the word “reckless” to the offence of damaging or destroying a place a bat uses for shelter or rest or disturbing a bat while using a roost.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 40 of Part 3 of this act compels public bodies (local authorities, police, fire and health authorities, and utility companies) with exercisable functions within England to consider actions to be taken to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England—in particular to have regard to the United Nations Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity of 1992, any relevant local nature recovery strategies, and any relevant species conservation strategy or protected site strategy (prepared by Natural England).

Section 41 of Part 3 of this Act ensures the publishing of a list containing species and habitat types that are of principle importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity in England.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

Under this legislation it is an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with the intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Under this legislation it is an offence to (or intend to, or to be reckless as to whether your actions would have these consequences):

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempts to do so).
- Damage or destroy any part of a badger sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).
- Obstruct access to a badger sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett. (Note: no intentionality is necessary to prosecute these activities).

Appendix 3 Habitat Plan of the Site



Appendix 4 Additional Photographs



Photograph 1 – The front elevation of the building.



Photograph 2 – The west elevation of the building.



Photograph 3 – The internal aspect of the building.