

Leasden, Rhododendron Avenue, Meopham, Kent

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

3rd July 2025 / Ref No 2025/03/26

Client: Kentec DS



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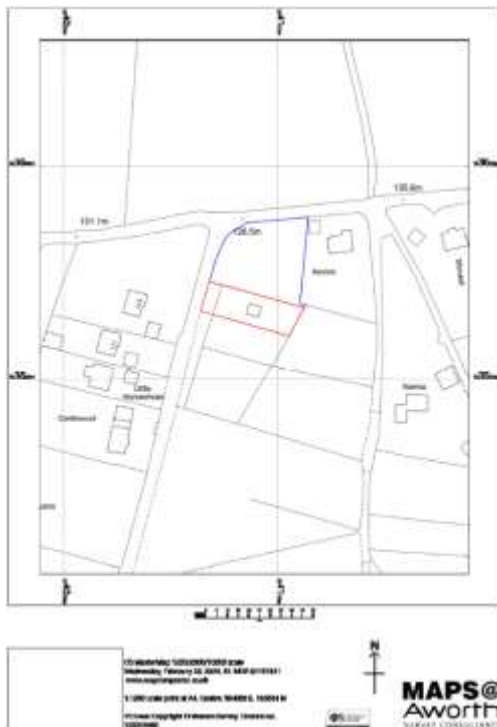
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Scheme

KB Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a baseline ecological survey and a preliminary ecological appraisal with regards to a proposed development at Leasden, Rhododendron Avenue, Meopham DA13 0DT Kent, in support of a planning application for the erection of a self-build new dwelling.

The extent of site to be surveyed is shown on the map below, as sent by the client:



1.2 Survey Location/Area

The site is located at approximately TQ640635. The location of the site is shown on Figure 1 and Figure 2.

1.3 Survey Objectives

The purpose of this survey is to provide a scoping assessment and to assist in demonstrating compliance with wildlife legislation and planning policy objectives.

The key objectives are as follows:

- Identify all relevant statutory and non-statutory designated sites and features of ecological significance within the site and its surroundings.
- Assess the potential for the presence of protected species and species of principal conservation importance, important habitats or other biodiversity features within the site and its surroundings.

- Provide recommendations for further surveys where assessed as necessary and suggest potential enhancements.
- Present the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development.
- Provide an early indication of potential ecological mitigation and compensation requirements necessary as part of any development proposals.

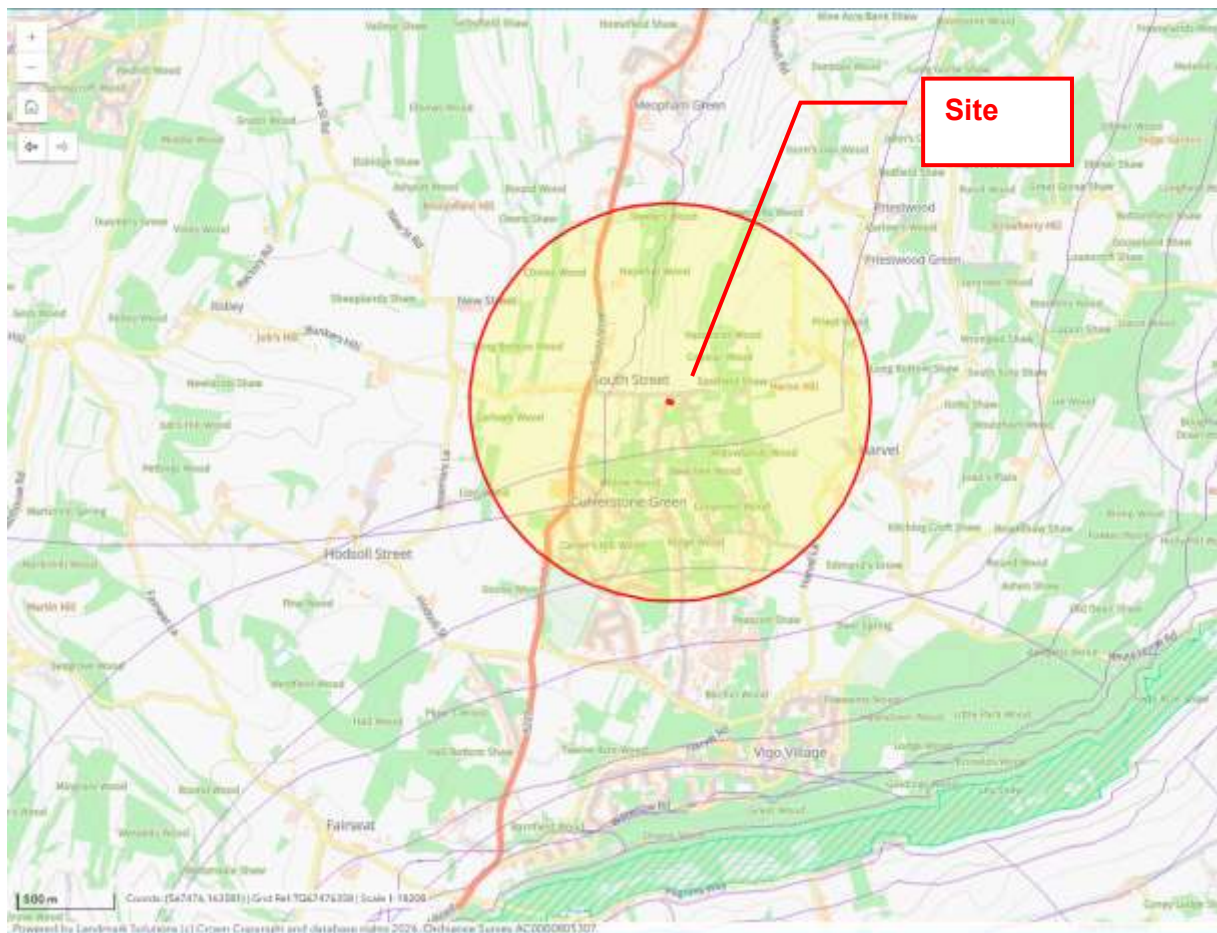
A summary of wildlife legislation and policy has been included in Appendix A.

1.4 Limitations

This report has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct and the opinions expressed are true and professional bona fide opinions. It records the potential for flora and fauna evident on the days of the site visits. It does not record any flora or fauna that may appear at other times of the year and, as such, were not evident at the time of visit.

The findings of this report represent the professional opinion of a qualified ecologist and do not constitute professional legal advice. The client may wish to seek professional legal interpretation of the relevant wildlife legislation cited in this document.

Figure 1 - MAGIC



Legend

-  Ramsar Sites (England)
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
-  SSSI Impact Risk Zones - to assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites (England)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (England)
-  Special Protection Areas (England)

K-LIS - Figure 2

July 3, 2025

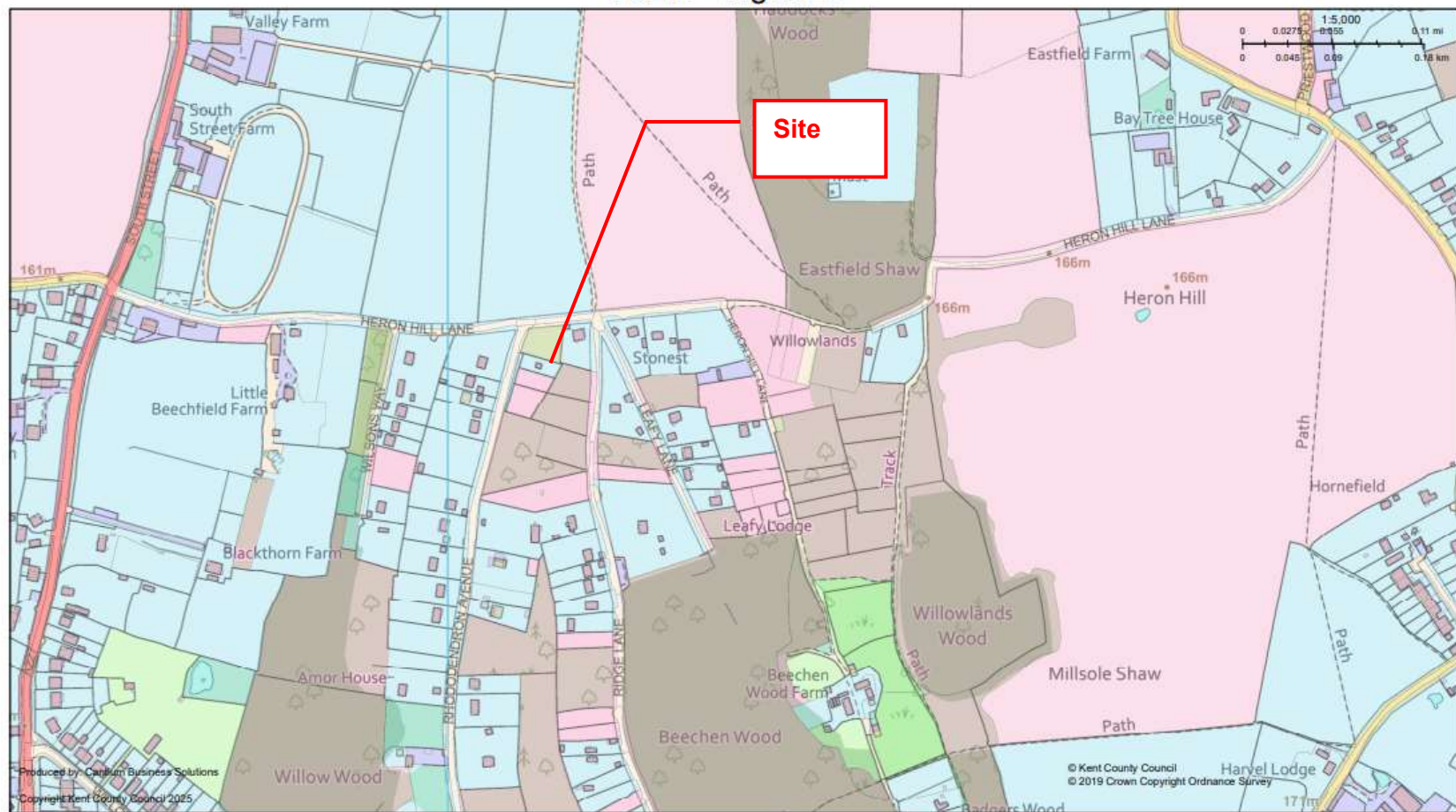


Figure 3: indicates location of ponds from Krag data search



2 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

Internet-based resources were consulted to identify designated nature conservation sites within 1km of the site and habitats of potentially high ecological importance and sensitivity within 500m of the site (e.g. ancient woodlands, ponds).

A data search was carried out with the Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group KRAG^{1,2}.

2.2 Scoping Survey

The site and its immediate surroundings were considered in terms of habitats, protected species and species of principal conservation importance during a walkover survey undertaken on 4th June 2025 by Katia Bresso CEnv MCIEEM, a qualified professional consultant ecologist with over 20 years of experience, licensed bat surveyor (Class Licence CL19, Level 3, Registration Number: 2016-27133-CLS-CLS) and Registered Consultant of the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) WML-CL21 with Natural England (Registered Consultant Reference Number RC056, since May 2015), licensed dormouse surveyor (Class Survey Licences Registration Number 2016-22060-CLS-CLS) and licensed great crested newt surveyor (Class Licence registration number 2020-50030-CLS-CLS). Evidence of the use of the site by species was recorded (i.e. field signs).

The habitat survey was undertaken in general accordance with the UK Habitat Classification³.

The survey and report aim at following the guidance and recommendations in the 'British Standard Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BS 42020: 2013)'.

Particular attention was given to signs of use by bats and barn owls. A visual survey was undertaken looking for evidence of roosting bats and roosting/nesting barn owls, including signs such as live or dead bats/owls, feathers, droppings, pellets, nest debris and eggs, using an endoscope⁴, high powered torch (Cluson CB1 Clubman Standard High Power, 500,000 candle power), night vision scope and binoculars where needed.

All trees were checked for suitability for roosting bats (Ground Level Tree Assessment) and any accessible cavity was checked using an endoscope.

¹ Please note that absence of records should not be taken as confirmation that a species is absent from the search area.

² Due to the scale of the project, it was judged disproportionate to undertake a costly data search with the local Biological Record Centre as the data would be unlikely to be relevant to this site.

³ <https://ukhab.org/>

⁴ RIDGID CA-350x Inspection Camera System 63888 and DDENDOCAM Endoscope Inspection Camera Dual-Lens Endoscope 4.3" Screen Borescope 1080P HD

3 Baseline Ecological Conditions

3.1 Designated Nature Conservation Sites

The site is not part of, nor directly adjacent to, any statutory designated sites and none are located within 1km of the site.

3.2 Habitats

The site is surrounded by paddocks to the north and woodland to the south (some being ancient woodland⁵) and a few dwellings.

The Integrated Habitat System (IHS) classification of the Kent Habitat Survey 2012 describes the site as:

- *Built-up areas,*
- *Improved grassland.*

At the time of visit, the site (and adjacent plot to the north) had been recently cleared⁶, with a derelict holiday home still present and some bare ground on site. Some vegetation was starting to grow back, with an abundance of rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion augustifolium*, low bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg and butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* saplings, but also, on site and in the wider blue line, other plants were present including bugle *Ajuga reptans*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, common fumitory *Fumaria officinalis*, common nettles *Urtica dioica*, common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, field bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis*, fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, great mullein *Verbascum Thapsus*, hedge woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum*, ivy-leaved toadflax *Cymbalaria muralis*, lesser burdock *Arctium minus*, marjoram *Origanum vulgare*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, perforate St John's wort *Hypericum perforatum*, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, red campion *Silene dioica*, rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion augustifolium*, scarlet pimpernel *Anagallis arvensis*, teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, wild strawberry *Fragaria vesca*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*.

No trees were present within the red line but a few field maple, hazel, dogwood, yew, wayfaring, and ash trees were present in the wider blue line site.

A cherry laurel hedge had recently been planted along the west boundary of the wider site.

Historical aerial photos from 1960 show that the site was mainly bare, with a structure, but then became mainly wooded by 1990, then cleared again by 2003 then started to get scrubby/wooded by 2015 once more.

At the time of visit, under the UK Habitat Classification, the baseline is thus judged as being:

- 'Urban' / 'Developed land; sealed surface'
- 'Urban' / 'Bare ground'
- 'Sparsely vegetated land' / 'Tall forbs'.

⁵ Land that has had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD

⁶ Clearance done in 2024

Taking into consideration the historical aerial photos, the wooded areas present adjacent to the site and the remaining trees in the wider plot, it's likely that the site would have been considered as 'Woodland and forest' / 'Other woodland; broadleaved' (as well as 'Urban' / 'Developed land; sealed surface'), prior to the 2024 clearance.

Plates are present in Appendix B.



3.3 Amphibians

The data search carried out with Krag (Enquiry No: CES/23/216) revealed that the closest recorded Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* site is located over 2km from the site.

Great crested newts favour areas of high pond density and occupancy levels can exceed 40% of ponds when conditions are favourable. Krag's database risk assessment indicates that the likelihood of presence of great crested newts *in the overall area* is 'Possible'⁷, with only 10 ponds present within 1km.

Like nearly all amphibians, the great crested newt is dependent on water-bodies for breeding but usually spends most of its life on land.

The 'Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines' (English Nature 2001) state the following: '*Great crested newts have been found to move over considerable distances (up to 1.3km from breeding sites). However, the vast majority of newts will inhabit an area much closer to the pond, and the exact distribution and migration patterns of newts on land depends on a variety of factors. The quality of terrestrial habitat near to breeding ponds is important, as are the lack of barriers to dispersal (such as fast-flowing rivers, or very busy roads). The distribution of ponds and hibernation opportunities may also influence movements. [...] Several studies have been conducted which reveal a great deal of variation, but great crested newts commonly move between ponds that are within around 250m of each other.*'

⁷ Likelihood of Presence Scores are described using the following categories: Unlikely<Possible<Likely<High

No ponds are present on site or within 500m. Thus, due to the paucity of ponds in the general area and the distance to the nearest pond, it is judged unlikely that great crested newts would be present on site.

3.3.1 Reptiles

The Krag datasearch revealed that the closest recorded reptile is Viviparous Lizard, located 0.7 km to the S (record id: 32292). The likelihood of reptiles to be present *in the overall area* is judged as per table below:

Reptiles		
	Likelihood of Presence	
	Score	Dist (km)
Viviparous Lizard:	Likely	0.82
Slow-worm:	Possible	2.06
Sand Lizard:	unlikely	70.82
Grass Snake:	Possible	1.86
Adder:	Likely	1.71
Smooth Snake:	n/a	n/a

Reptile survey effort in local area is considered to be below average. Results should be interpreted with caution.

Prior to the 2024 site clearance, if the site was entirely wooded, it would have been shaded and unlikely to host suitable habitat for reptiles.

As the site has now started to revegetate, it offers some suitability for very mobile reptile species such as lizards, although this would require a near-by population to colonise the site but none were seen at the time of site visit.

3.3.2 Birds

It is considered that the site has potential to support breeding birds within the trees present in the wider site and in the derelict building within the site itself. But no signs of barn owls were found.

All species of bird whilst actively nesting are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1. Some species are also listed as species of principal conservation importance, including sky lark, common cuckoo, house sparrow, tree sparrow and song thrush (See Appendix A).

For more information, guidance from Natural England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/wild-birds-protection-surveys-and-licences>

3.3.3 Hazel Dormouse

The hazel dormouse lives in deciduous woodland, hedgerows and dense scrub. It is an agile climber and mainly nocturnal, so is rarely seen as it spends most of the spring and summer up in the branches, rarely coming down to the ground. It eats buds, hazelnuts, berries and insects. Hazel dormice build nests out of grasses, stripped honeysuckle bark and fresh hazel leaves, in which the female will give birth to up to seven young. They hibernate during the

winter months, either on the ground (under logs, leaves, in grass tussocks and at the base of trees) or just beneath the ground where the temperature is more constant.

The wood which was present on site would have provided suitable habitat for dormice throughout the year, due to connection to suitable woodlands (some being ancient woodlands).

But at the time of the 2025 site visit, the site doesn't provide any suitable habitat for dormice.

The dormouse is afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and are therefore a "European Protected Species" (EPS). The dormouse is also listed as species of principal conservation importance (See Appendix A).

For more information, guidance from Natural England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/hazel-dormice-protection-surveys-and-licences>

3.3.4 Badger

No setts or signs of badgers were identified within the site.

3.3.5 Bats

No bats nor signs of bats were found during the internal/external inspection of the building. It is judged as offering negligible suitability for roosting bats, being all open with no suitable cavities.

None of the trees present on site offered suitability for roosting bats. But the surrounding area is likely to be used by foraging and commuting bats.

All species of bat are afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and are therefore a "European Protected Species" (EPS). Some species of bats (noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, barbastelle) are also listed as species of principal conservation importance.

Bats rarely use the same roosting place all year round as they need different conditions for breeding and hibernating. But bats are creatures of habit and tend to return to the same sites at the same time year after year. For this reason, roosts are legally protected even if bats don't seem to be living there at certain times of year.

The legislation makes it a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

For more information, guidance from Natural England is available at <https://www.gov.uk/bats-protection-surveys-and-licences>

3.3.6 Other Species

It is considered that the surroundings have potential to support hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*), which are a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2008 updated list) and an Indicator Species under the Kent Biodiversity Strategy⁸.

All mammals are afforded protection against unnecessary suffering by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (see Appendix A).

⁸ <http://kentnature.org.uk/uploads/files/Nat-Env/Kent%20Biodiversity%20Strategy%202020.pdf>

4 Ecological constraints and opportunities, recommendations for mitigation, compensation and further survey

The details of the proposed development were as below at the time of writing this report.



The ecological mitigation hierarchy should be applied when considering development which may have a significant effect on biodiversity. Such hierarchy should follow these principles⁹:

1. Avoidance – development should be designed to avoid significant harm to valuable wildlife habitats and species¹⁰.
2. Mitigation – where significant harm cannot be wholly or partially avoided, it should be minimised by design or through the use of effective mitigation measures.
3. Compensation – where, despite whatever mitigation would be effective, there would still be significant residual harm, as a last resort, compensation should be used to provide an equivalent value of biodiversity.

Should the scope of the proposed works be amended following the completion of this scoping survey, or be deferred for an extended period of time, there may be a requirement to update this scoping report and its recommendations.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-species-how-to-review-planning-applications#agree-avoidance-mitigation-or-compensation-measures>

¹⁰ Avoidance is always the preferred form of mitigation. It involves steps taken to avoid deliberate killing, injury or disturbance to bats and to existing roosts. The great majority of roosts are used only seasonally so there is usually some period when bats are not present and works can occur without impacting bats. By gathering ecological data about a bat roosting site at the start of development or maintenance works, it may be possible to 'design out' the impacts of a development by retaining the roosting site and building around it. Care should be given to ensure commuting routes to and from the roost are also retained and indirect impacts controlled for, such as the impact from the addition of artificial lighting.

4.1 Designated Nature Conservation Sites

A site check report was generated for the site using the Impact Risk Zones on the Magic website¹¹:

Identify Results generated on Thu Jul 03 2025

The following features have been found in your search area:

You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: TQ64106353

SSSI Impact Risk Zones - for LPAs to determine likely impacts on terrestrial SSSIs and when to consult

Natural England

Guidance

[/Metadata_for_magic/SSSI IRZ User Guidance MAGIC.pdf](#)

IRZURL

[https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000430000-es=&location=564695,164579%20\(IRZ%20polygon%20centre\)](https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0300000430000-es=&location=564695,164579%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre))

Special Protection Areas (England)

No Features found

Special Protection Areas (England) - points

No Features found

Special Areas of Conservation (England)

No Features found

Special Areas of Conservation (England) - points

No Features found

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)

No Features found

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) - points

No Features found

Ramsar Sites (England)

No Features found

Ramsar Sites (England) - points

No Features found

The proposal is not judged detrimental to any protected sites.

4.2 Habitats

Trees to be retained should be protected during any construction work and guidance is given in the 'BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations' document. This standard requires a tree protection plan to be developed which involves erecting physical barriers to prevent damage to existing trees, with an exclusion area around the trees. It also looks at defining a root protection area and requires consideration when compulsory work is carried out within the root protection area.

4.3 Amphibians

No impact is expected onto great crested newts and thus no further work is recommended for this species.

¹¹ The Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) dataset is a GIS tool which maps zones around each SSSI according to the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and specifies the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts. Natural England uses the IRZs to make an initial assessment of the likely risk of impacts on SSSIs and to quickly determine which consultations are unlikely to pose risks and which require more detailed consideration. Publishing the IRZs will allow LPAs, developers and other partners to make use of this key evidence tool. <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningdevelopment/impactriskzonesgistoolfeature.aspx>

4.4 Reptiles

Due to the low likelihood of reptile presence on site, the following precautionary mitigation strategy is proposed to minimise any potential impacts: it is recommended to prepare the development site using habitat manipulation as below:

- The works area should be mowed using hand held machinery only¹² (to 15cm height minimum), during sunny conditions, during the reptile active season (April to October), in order to force the animals out of the area;
- A second cut should be given to ground level, 2 days following the first cut, during sunny conditions.

4.5 Birds

Although a breeding bird survey is not deemed to be necessary, on the basis that the site contains suitable habitat for breeding birds, consideration must be given to the timing of the clearance works, if any is to take place.

The effect on birds can be avoided by undertaking any vegetation clearance and by demolishing the building outside of the nesting season (which extends from March – August inclusive¹³) or only after a survey has confirmed the absence of nesting birds¹⁴. New hedgerow/trees/scrub planted and bird nesting boxes erected as part of the proposed development can replace the habitat lost.

4.6 Hazel Dormouse

No impact is expected onto dormice.

But to mitigate for the loss of potential habitat which may have incurred during the 2024 site clearance, it is recommended to plant varied species of trees and hedges: hazel, oak, wayfaring tree, hornbeam, cherry, crab apple, holly, elder, dogwood, broom and honeysuckle. These species were chosen to provide food sources for dormice during all the active season¹⁵.

4.7 Badger

No impact is expected onto badgers and thus no further work is recommended for this species. However, as sett use can fluctuate (with setts becoming active when were not previously and new setts appearing over time), a pre-commencement of works badger survey is recommended if they works take place less more than one year after the date of the site visit of this report.

¹² strimmer, brush-cutter

¹³ It should be noted however that certain species are known to breed throughout the year (e.g. collard dove) and remain protected.

¹⁴ Inspection by a qualified ecologist must first be completed a maximum of 48hrs before clearance works commence. If during the inspection a nest considered to be in use is discovered, works must be delayed until the young have fledged.

¹⁵ dormice are sequential feeders which feed on nectar, pollen, seeds, fruit, nuts, invertebrates

4.8 Bats

No impact is expected onto roosting bats. However, as lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats¹⁶, the recommendations from the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals, titled 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting'¹⁷, should be considered, when designing any lighting scheme for the proposed development.

4.9 Additional Recommendations: Enhancements

Ecological enhancements should where possible be incorporated into the proposed development to contribute towards the objectives of planning legislation.

Under section 40 of the NERC Act (2006), paragraph 174 of the NPPF (2021) and the Environment Act (2021), biodiversity must be maintained and enhanced through the planning system: In England, Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. Biodiversity net gain requires developers to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development. They must assess the type of habitat and its condition before submitting plans, and then demonstrate how they are improving biodiversity – such as through the creation of green corridors, planting more trees, or forming local nature spaces. Green improvements on site would be encouraged, but in the rare circumstances where they are not possible, developers will need to pay a levy for habitat creation or improvement elsewhere¹⁸.

However, as this project is a '*Self-build and custom build applications*', it is exempt from Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain¹⁹.

But, it is still recommended to provide additional species enhancements within gardens and buildings, such as below:

- Provision of integrated 'swift bricks' in new buildings (as these are often occupied by other small cavity-nesting birds^{20, 21}). A ratio of at least two per residential dwelling is generally accepted now as good practice (see BS 42021:2022). It is suggested better to install them in small groups of 2/6 approx. one metre+ apart in suitable locations at a minimum height of 4 metres (5 metres is better).
- Provision of integrated bat boxes on new buildings²².
- Establish climbing plants on walls and other vertical structures²³.
- Establish wildflower plug/bulb planting in private gardens²⁴.

¹⁶ <https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/threats-to-bats/lighting>

¹⁷ <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain>

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments>

²⁰ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ljcJ7rlkNMrr4lxd41XcBU3YC6IFKM6z/view>

²¹ <https://www.actionforswifts.com/>

²² <https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes>

²³ More information can be found here: <http://www.greenblueurban.com/climbing-plant-guide.php> and <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/environment/urban-space/parks-green-spaces/green-roofs-walls>

²⁴ Spring flowering bulbs and plugs of nectar rich flowering plants should be embedded into amenity grassland to increase the biodiversity and amenity value of the grassland and to provide early sources

5 References and Bibliography

- Butcher B, Carey P, Edmonds R, Norton L and Treweek J (2020) – *UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1*
- Collins, J. (ed) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- English Nature (2004). *Research Reports Number 576: An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt Triturus cristatus*. English Nature, Peterborough.

Websites Visited:

- <http://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.KLIS.Web.Sites.Public/ViewMap.aspx>
- <http://www.magic.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> (contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0)
- <http://www.kentbap.org.uk/species/>

With kind permission from Google Earth Brand

of nectar for insects. Suitable bulbs include Snake's head fritillary *Fritillaria meleagris*, Ramsons *Allium ursinum*, Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris*, Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus*, Wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, Lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria*

Appendix A – Wildlife Legislation & Policy

The following is a summary of wildlife legislation and planning policy which affords protection to plants and animals and seeks to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity. This section is provided for general guidance only. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, this section should not be relied upon as a definitive statement of the law.

For further information, please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

Commonly encountered protected species

Many species of plants, invertebrates and animals receive protection under the legislation detailed above. However, of these, the following are the most likely to be affected by development in the southeast:

Species	Legal Protection
Great crested newts and other amphibians	The great crested newt is afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) and is therefore a European Protected Species (EPS); further protection is afforded by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Taken together, the legislation makes it a criminal offence to: • Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill GCN • Deliberately or recklessly disturb GCN, in particular (i) any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; (ii) any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to hibernate or migrate; or (iii) any disturbance which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species. • Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place - even if GCN are not occupying the place at the time; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a sheltering or resting place. An EPS licence is required from Natural England before works can be undertaken which will impact on GCN and/or their habitat (such as any damage to or removal of ponds, grassland, hedgerow bases or dense scrub in which they are likely to occur). Great crested newts and common toads are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.
Hazel dormice	The hazel dormouse is afforded full legal protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is also listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) and is therefore a European Protected Species (EPS); further protection is afforded by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Taken together, the legislation makes it a criminal offence to: • Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill hazel dormouse • Deliberately or recklessly disturb hazel dormouse, in particular (i) any

	disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; (ii) any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to hibernate or migrate; or (iii) any disturbance which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species. • Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place - even if dormice are not occupying the place at the time; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a sheltering or resting place. An EPS licence is required from Natural England before works can be undertaken which will impact on dormouse and/or their habitat (such as any damage or removal of hedgerows, woodland or dense scrub in which they are likely to occur). Hazel dormouse is also listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.
Bats	All British bat species receive full legal protection in the United Kingdom. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) legally protects all bat species in the UK and further protection is afforded by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedule 5) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Taken together, the legislation makes it a criminal offence to: • Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat. • Deliberately or recklessly disturb a bat, in particular (i) any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; (ii) any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to hibernate or migrate; or (iii) any disturbance which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species concerned. • Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place (roost) of a bat- even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a roost; • Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat. An EPS Licence for bats is required where works are expected to contravene the above legal protection. Under the law, a roost is 'any structure or place used for shelter or protection'. For example any building or suitable tree. Bats use many roost sites and feeding areas throughout the year. Since bats tend to re-use the same roosts for generations, the roost is protected whether the bats are present or not.
Reptiles	The more widespread species of reptile – slow-worm, viviparous lizard, grass snake and adder - are afforded legal protection against killing and injury under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All six UK reptile species are listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.
Badgers	The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 was introduced in recognition of the additional threats that badgers face from illegal badger digging and baiting. Under the Act, it is an offence to: • Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger, or to attempt to do so; • Cruelly ill-treat a badger; or • Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett by (a) damaging a sett or any part of one; (b) destroying a sett; (c) obstructing access to or

	any entrance of a sett; (d) causing a dog to enter a sett; or (e) disturbing a badger when it is occupying a sett.
Breeding birds	The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) protects all birds, their nests and eggs – it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or its eggs, and/or to take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use). There is additional protection for rarer species – making it an offence to disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 (such as hobby) while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird. Some species are also listed as species of a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, including skylark, common cuckoo, house sparrow, tree sparrow and song thrush.
Hedgehogs	Hedgehogs are listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs. They are also listed under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), which prohibits cruel treatment of hedgehogs Hedgehogs are a species of 'principal importance' under the NERC Act, the act confers 'a duty of responsibility' on local authorities with regard to the species.
Water voles	The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it illegal to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection; it is also an offence to intentionally disturb water voles while they are using these places.

Kent Biodiversity Strategy

The Kent Biodiversity Strategy was approved by the Kent Nature Partnership in February 2020. It aims to deliver, over a 25 year period, the maintenance, restoration and creation of habitats that are thriving with wildlife and plants and ensure that the county's terrestrial, freshwater, intertidal and marine environments regain and retain good health.

The Strategy looks to protect and recover threatened species and enhance the wildlife habitats that Kent is particularly important for. It also aims to provide a natural environment that inspires citizen engagement and is well used and appreciated, so that the mental and physical health benefits of such a connection can be realised by the people of Kent.

The Strategy has identified 17 priority habitats and 13 priority species that Kent can play a significant part in the restoration of. It has also identified a handful of species that can act as indicators of the health of our ecosystems. In addition, the Strategy looks to further work addressing overarching considerations affecting biodiversity recovery, including wilding, climate change, natural solutions, soil health and invasive species.

Further information can be found here:

<http://kentnature.org.uk/uploads/files/Nat-Env/Kent%20Biodiversity%20Strategy%202020.pdf>

Red Data Books

British Red Data Books (RDB) are an additional method for classifying the rarity of species, and are often seen as a natural progression from Biodiversity Action Plans.

RDB species have no automatic legal protection (unless they are protected under any of the legislation previously mentioned). Instead they provide a means of assessing rarity and highlight areas where resources may be targeted. Various categories of RDB species are recorded, based on the IUCN criteria and the UK national criteria based on presence within certain numbers of 10x10km grid-squares (see <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3425>). As with Biodiversity Action Plans, where possible, steps should be taken to conserve RDB species which are to be affected by development.

Appendix B – Plates



✔ IMG_5429



✔ IMG_5431



✔ IMG_5432



✔ IMG_5434



✔ IMG_5435



✔ IMG_5436



✔ IMG_5437



✔ IMG_5438



✔ IMG_5439



✔ IMG_5440



✔ IMG_5441



✔ IMG_5442



✔ IMG_5443



✔ IMG_5444



✔ IMG_5445



✔ IMG_5446



✔ IMG_5447



✔ IMG_5452



✔ IMG_5453



✔ IMG_5454



✔ IMG_5455



✔ IMG_5463



✔ IMG_5464



✔ IMG_5481



✔ IMG_5488



✔ IMG_5489



✔ IMG_5490