

Updated Ecological Appraisal

**Land at Green Farm,
Kent DA12 3HL**

Report to:
Mr. Julian Houghton

10th July 2026



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Information, including any survey data, contained within this report must only be relied upon for a maximum period of 18 months from the date of the report. If there is any alteration to site conditions within this period, the assessment should be updated.

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1. Summary

Background

- 1.1 A former tractor shed at Green Farm has been proposed for conversion into a new residential dwelling.
- 1.2 Calumma Ecological Services was commissioned to undertake an updated ecological assessment of the site to advise on the need for additional survey work and mitigation.

Updated Assessment

- 1.3 A walkover survey of the site found that conditions in July 2026 were broadly similar to those observed during the original PEA undertaken in August 2024.
- 1.4 Recommendations in the original PEA remain valid with the exception of great crested newt.

Great Crested Newt

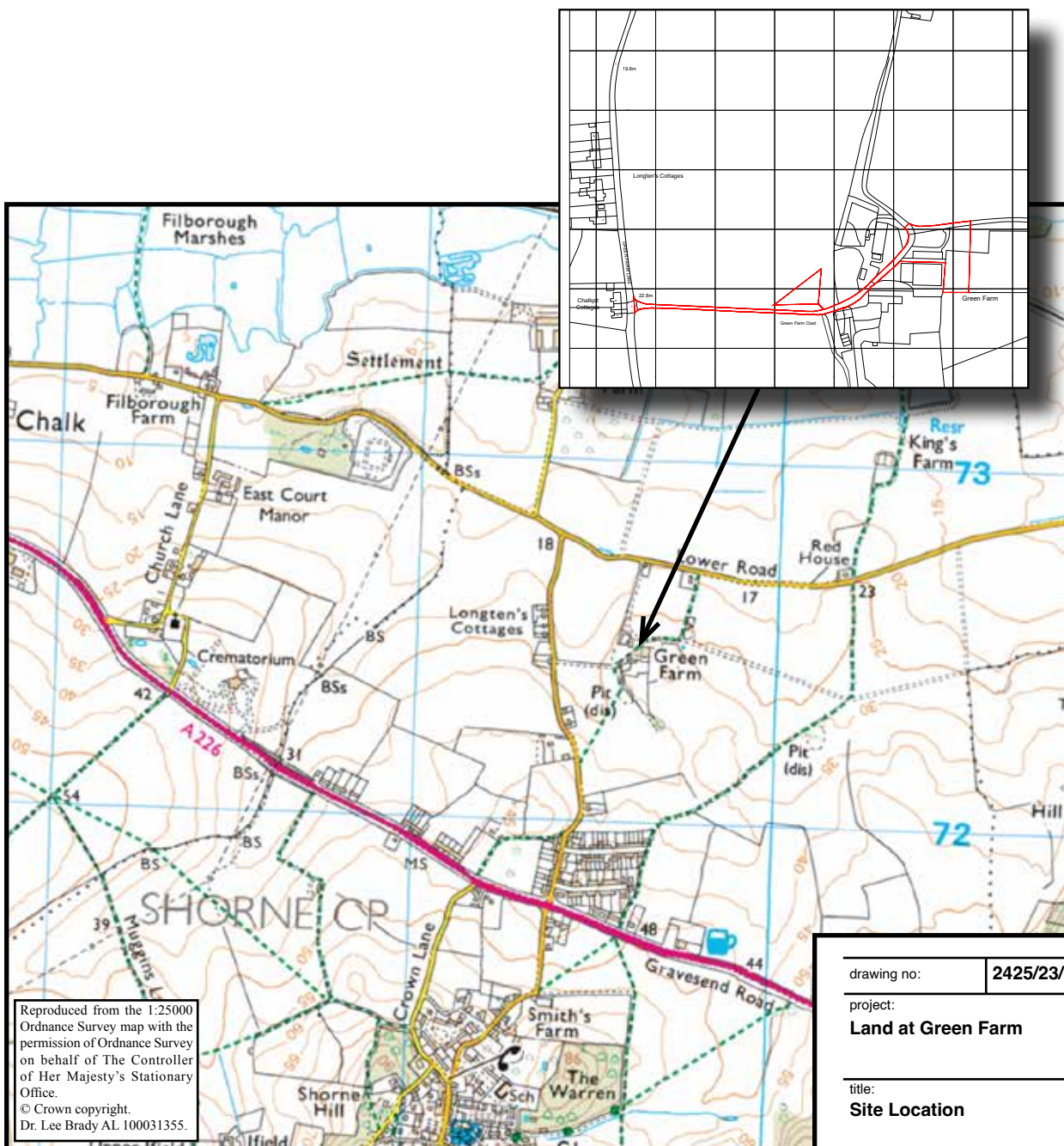
- 1.5 No ponds are located within the site. Two ponds were previously reported to be present within 250 m.
- 1.6 One pond located within 90 m of the site was found to be no longer extant. The landowner reported that this pond had not been known to hold water for several years.
- 1.7 A second pond located more than 250 m from the proposed development was fully desiccated in July 2026 and considered to offer poor potential for breeding great crested newts (HSI = 0.47).
- 1.8 Additional survey and/or mitigation works are not required.

2. Site Location and Assessment

Site Name:	Land at Green Farm, Kent; Fig. 2.1 For the purposes of this report, the term <i>site</i> refers to the planning application boundary (red line application area) associated with the proposed development.
Grid Reference:	TQ 695 724
County:	Kent
Planning Authority:	Gravesham Borough Council
Planning Refs:	20260186
National Character Area:	North Kent Plain
Client:	Mr. Julian Houghton
Proposed Disturbance:	Conversion of former tractor shed into residential dwelling
Red Line Application Area:	0.37 Ha
Project Size:	Small
Survey Request:	Updated Ecological Appraisal
Surveyor:	Lee Brady PhD, BSc (Hons), MCIEEM Great Crested Newt Class Licence: 2015-19076-CLS-CLS Accredited Under Level 2 Bat Licence: 2023-11064-CL18-BAT
Assessment Period:	9 th July 2026
Limitations:	This assessment did not include detailed surveys of protected species. Updated ecological appraisals assess likely presence of species on a site and recommend follow-up survey work, management and mitigation as appropriate. This report should be read in conjunction with the original PEA and may need to be updated if new information becomes available (e.g. ponds not previously known to be present).
Reliance:	Information, including any survey data, contained within this report must only be relied upon for a maximum period of 18 months from the date of the report.

Fig. 2.1 Land at Green Farm, Kent (TQ 695 724)

Location of study site.



13 Woodside Cottages,
Dunkirk,
Kent ME13 9NY
info@calumma.co.uk
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3. Proposed Development and Summary Site Description

3.1 Site Location

The proposed development site includes an agricultural building located in the North Kent Plain Natural Character Area. The site is accessed from a track leading from Lower Road.

3.2 Proposed Development

Conversion of an agricultural building into a new residential dwelling.

The site is approximately 0.37 Ha and illustrated in Fig. 3.1.

3.3 Available Habitat

Habitat within the site was assessed during a daytime walkover survey.

3.3.1 Aquatic Habitat

Ponds located within the local area have been identified using the following sources:

- Ordnance Survey (<https://www.bing.com/maps>)
- MAGIC (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>)
- Google Earth

No ponds are located within the site.

Two ponds were previously reported within 250 m of the site. Other small ornamental ponds could also occur in nearby residential gardens.

The search area for waterbodies is illustrated in Fig. 3.2.

3.3.2 Terrestrial Habitat

Vegetation within the site includes modified grassland (improved grassland). In 2024, grassland was found to be transitioning into tall ruderal vegetation along the eastern boundary. In 2026, grassland was being actively managed and displayed a short sward with low structural complexity. Grassland to the south is grazed by ponies. Several small self-sown trees previously observed adjacent to the building were no longer present in 2026.

Habitat available within the proposed development area is illustrated in Fig. 3.3

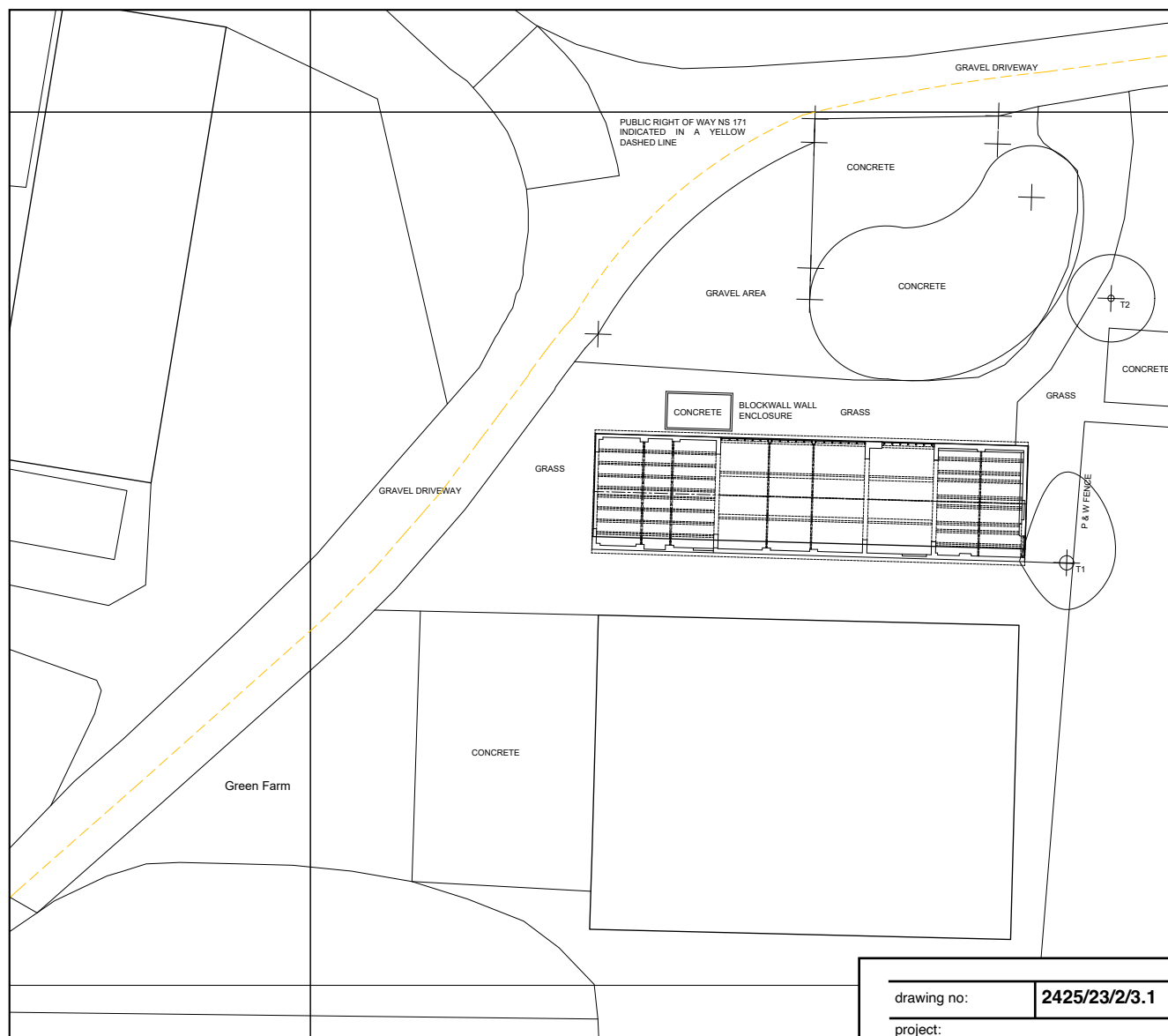
3.4 Buildings

One building is located within the site:

B1 – open fronted former tractor shed.

Fig. 3.1 Proposed Development Area

application area = 0.37 Ha



drawing no: **2425/23/2/3.1**

project:
Land at Green Farm

title:
Development Area

scale: **N.T.S.**

date: **July 2026**



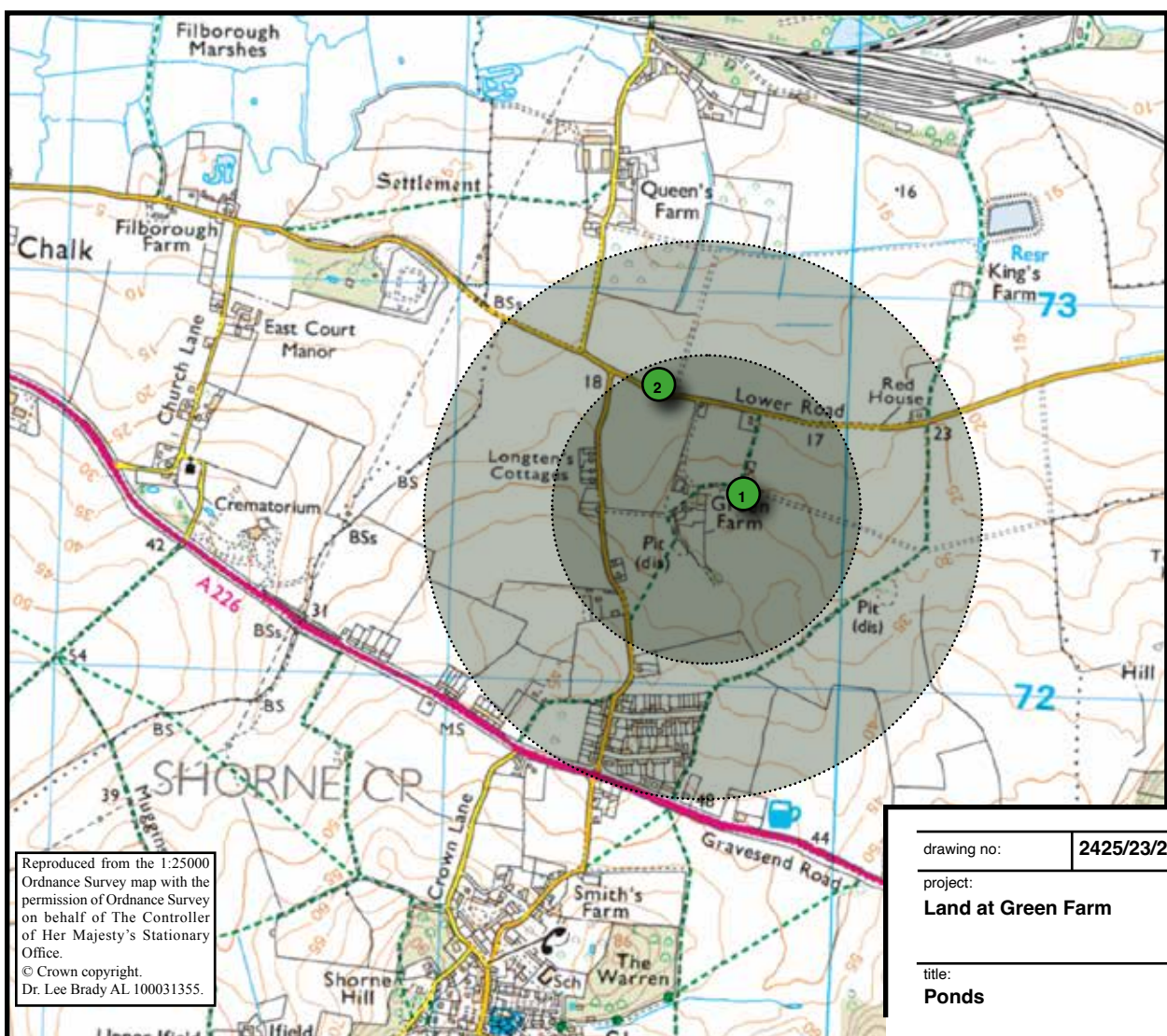
13 Woodside Cottages,
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www.calumma.co.uk

Fig. 3.2 Ponds

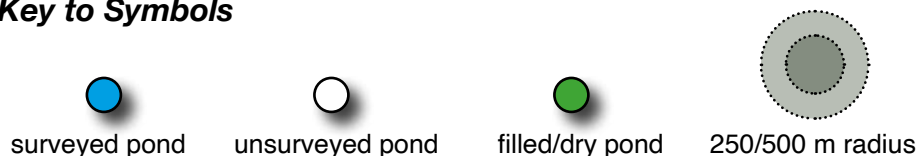
Figure illustrates ponds known to occur within recommended area of search for great crested newt.

Two ponds were previously reported within 250 m. An updated assessment found that WB1 is no longer extant and WB2 is ephemeral and fully desiccated in July 2026.

For ponds located more than 250 m from a proposed development, Natural England recommend that survey work is most appropriate when (a) the pond has the potential to support a large population, (b) the development includes particularly favourable habitat, (c) the development will have a significant impact on available habitat, (d) there is an absence of dispersal barriers.



Key to Symbols





The proposed development site includes conversion of a former tractor barn into a residential dwelling. An inspection of the barn undertaken in July 2026 found the structure to be in a similar condition to that reported in the previous PEA.

In July 2026, vegetation adjacent to the barn was broadly similar to that reported in the previous PEA, consisting of modified grassland that had recently been cut.

Fig. 3.3 Site Photographs
Figure illustrates habitat features located within the study area.



WB1 is a former pond that is no longer extant.

WB2 is a roadside pond that was fully desiccated in July 2026. The pond is considered to offer poor potential for breeding GCN (HSI = 0.47).

drawing no:	2425/23/2/3.3
project:	Land at Green Farm
title:	Available Habitat
scale: N.T.S.	date: Jul 2026



4. Protected Species Assessment

4.1 Previous PEA (August 2024)

The previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) concluded that the building offered negligible potential for roosting bats, although adjacent hedgerows and trees provided potential commuting and foraging habitat. The building supported feral pigeons and retained potential for nesting birds, requiring appropriate timing of works. A small area of structurally diverse grassland adjacent to the building provided possible reptile habitat, for which precautionary mitigation was recommended. No evidence of badger was recorded, and habitat was considered unsuitable for hazel dormouse, beaver, otter and water vole. Hedgehog was considered likely to forage and/or shelter within the local area, with precautionary mitigation recommended. Habitats within the application area were also considered suitable for common and widespread invertebrates, and the scheme was recommended to incorporate appropriate biodiversity enhancement measures.

4.2 Reptiles

Vegetation within the site includes a small area of grassland that previously displayed moderate to high structural complexity. Since such habitat could support a small number of reptiles, precautionary mitigation for reptiles was recommended in the PEA.

In July 2026, the grassland was found to be regularly managed and supported a short sward with little structural diversity. The current condition of the habitat substantially reduces its suitability for reptiles compared to that recorded during the previous PEA. Nevertheless, the precautionary mitigation measures recommended in the previous PEA remain appropriate.

4.3 Amphibians

No ponds are located within the site. Two ponds were previously identified within 250 m of the site. During the July 2026 update survey, the nearest pond (WB1), located approximately 90 m east of the site, was found to be no longer extant. The landowner reported that the pond had not held water for several years. WB2, located more than 250 m from the site, was found to be completely desiccated and offered poor potential for breeding great crested newts (HSI = 0.47).

Whilst every reasonable effort has been made to identify ponds surrounding the site, small garden ponds and recently created ponds may not be represented within available mapping or aerial photography. Should additional ponds be identified in close proximity to the site, this assessment may require review.

4.3.1 Updated Amphibian Assessment

Given the small scale of the development, the absence of ponds within the site and the distance to the nearest extant pond, significant impacts on great crested newt are not anticipated.

Although boundary vegetation, gardens and the surrounding rural landscape may be used by widespread amphibian species, on-site terrestrial habitat is of limited suitability. Significant impacts on widespread amphibians are therefore considered unlikely.

5. Recommendations

Appropriate measures should be implemented during site preparation, construction and landscaping works to avoid or minimise impacts on protected and notable species and to safeguard retained habitats. Retained habitats should be protected during construction and subsequently managed to maintain or enhance their biodiversity value.

If any habitats with potential to support protected species are proposed for management, clearance or other disturbance (including ground investigations, archaeological works or vegetation removal), the proposed works should first be reviewed and agreed by a suitably experienced ecologist.

Should evidence of protected species be identified during the course of works, all works within the affected area should cease and advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist before works recommence.

The following recommendations from the 2024 PEA remain appropriate for the scheme.

5.1 Trees

Where proposals are likely to be in close proximity to trees and hedgerows to be retained, it is recommended that any works within the tree protection zones are carefully monitored to protect trees in the long-term. All tree protection, work to trees and any work in the vicinity of trees is to accord with the relevant sections of the following standards:

BS 3998 - Recommendations for Tree Work.

BS 4428 - Code of practice for general landscape operations.

BS 5837 - Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction.

BS 1722 - Fences.

5.2 Birds

5.2.1 Timing of Works

To avoid any potential offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, no clearance of features that could support nesting birds should be undertaken during the bird-nesting season (1st March to 31st August inclusive).

If this is not practicable, any potential nesting habitat to be removed must first be checked by a suitably experienced ecologist in order to determine the location of any active nests. Any active nests identified will then need to be cordoned off (within a minimum 5 m buffer) and protected until the end of the nesting season or until the birds have fledged. These checking surveys would need to be carried out no more than three days in advance of vegetation clearance. If vegetation clearance works have not been completed within this timeframe, an update check should be undertaken.

5.2.2 Bird Nesting Boxes

The applicant should consider installing one or more bird nesting boxes in suitable locations. Suitable exterior boxes should be installed at a height of ~3 m above ground with a minimum

distance of 3 m between boxes. Boxes should face north to east. Suitable exterior boxes include house sparrow terraces, robin and/or blue/great tit boxes.

In addition, two to four swift nest bricks should be installed at least 5 m above ground with a distance of 0.5 - 1 m between boxes. Boxes should receive some shade. Swift bricks typically encroach into the wall cavity, or even span the cavity. If they are placed under the eaves, or under fascia boards, this is generally not a problem, however lower locations may need to incorporate a cavity tray to prevent water penetration. Swift bricks should not overheat on south-facing walls, but if they have a thin front wall, they should not be placed in the sun, but should be sheltered under the eaves. If the design of the building is unsuitable for bricks, exterior boxes can be fitted instead.

For more information see:

https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Swift_brick

<https://www.swift-conservation.org/Leaflet%20-%20Swift%20Nest%20Bricks%20-%20installation%20&%20suppliers-small.pdf>

<https://www.nestbox.co.uk/products/swift-nest-box>

Details of the boxes that will be installed together with their locations should be included with the application.

5.3 Bats

5.3.1 Lighting

Some artificial lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats especially Daubenton's, Whiskered, Natterer's and Long-eared. Impacts on bats are higher in the April/May and September/October time periods, when bats emerge earlier and when most lighting will be on. The impact on bats is increased after mid-October when British Summer Time ends (by subtracting an hour).

If lighting is required, this should be low or zero UV, which is preferred to reduce attraction of insects to lighting and therefore to reduce the attraction of foraging bats to these areas. The Bat Conservation Trust's *Bats and Lighting in the UK guidance* must be adhered to in the lighting design (Appendix VIII).

Lighting should be directed away or shielded from any green areas/ponds/trees, and bat boxes to allow bats safe foraging routes where they will not be visible to predators.

5.4 Reptiles

5.4.1 Precautionary Mitigation

Available habitat offers potential habitat for a small number of reptiles. The following precautionary mitigation actions are recommended for garden areas that will be disturbed.

- The application should include a landscape drawing that indicates areas that will not be disturbed by proposed construction works.
- Any ground objects suitable for sheltering animals should be removed and checked for sheltering reptiles. Such work should not be undertaken during the winter hibernation period (November to February).

- Areas proposed for disturbance should be strimmed to ground level and vegetation maintained at this height until completion of all works.
- All reasonable effort should be undertaken to minimise disturbance to remaining habitat outside of the red line application area.
- Reptile exclusion fencing is not considered necessary.
- If any reptiles are found within the working area, they should be removed to a suitable location that will not be disturbed by proposed works. Further advice can be sought from Calumma Ecological Services if required.

For more information see:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reptiles-protection-surveys-and-licences>

5.5 Hedgehogs

5.5.1 Hedgehog Gates

If any installed fencing will be of a design similar to that of close board fencing which are typically solid from ground level, *hedgehog gates* should be installed in the fencing within the proposed site. The gates consist of semi-circular holes (measuring 0.13 m x 0.13 m) cut into the bottom of the fence to allow the movement of hedgehogs into adjacent areas of land.

5.5.2 Open Excavations

During months when hedgehogs are most likely to be active (March to October), excavations should not be left open for animals to fall into. If this is not possible, suitable planks of wood should be placed to allow trapped animals to escape. Any open excavation should be inspected before works commence in the morning and trapped animals relocated to a suitable place of safety along the site boundary.

5.6 Ecological Enhancement and Biodiversity Net Gain

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages new developments to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity through incorporation of enhancement measures. The proposals present the opportunity to deliver ecological enhancements at the site for the benefit of local biodiversity, thereby making a positive contribution towards the broad objectives of national conservation priorities and the local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

Details of habitat management and enhancement works that the applicant has confirmed will be undertaken to achieve net gain should be included with the application and form part of the landscaping proposals. As well as protected species, such work should target more widespread species that are of biodiversity interest.

Features that can be considered for inclusion in the landscaping proposals include:

- Bird nesting boxes (to include swift bricks);
- Bat roosting boxes;
- Hedgehog gates;

- Landscaping proposals should include appropriate management of retained grassland/shrubs/trees to protect and enhance biodiversity value;
- Where appropriate, ecologically sympathetic soft landscaping that provides shelter and nectar for invertebrates such as bees;
- If appropriate, bee bricks can be included within the construction of the new building;
- Green roofs and walls where appropriate.

6. References

Calumma Ecological Services (2024) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Land at Green Farm, Kent
DA12 3HL



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