

Stables Cottage, Hermitage Road, Higham, Kent

Retrospective and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

9th September 2022 / Ref No 2022/06/10

Client: Ms K Roberts



Prepared by Katia Bresso CEnv MCIEEM
Trading as 'KB Ecology Ltd' (Reg 7595382)
9 Barleyfields,
Weaving, Maidstone
ME145SW Kent
Tel: 07810 412 773
Email: katia.bresso@kbecology.co.uk

Copyright KB Ecology Ltd. All rights reserved.

No part of this report may be copied or reproduced by any means without prior written permission from KB Ecology Ltd. If you have received this report in error, please destroy all copies in your possession or control.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by KB Ecology Ltd, no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of this report. No liability is accepted by KB Ecology Ltd for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided.

Opinions and information provided in the report are on the basis of KB Ecology Ltd using due skill, care and diligence in the preparation of the same and no warranty is provided as to their accuracy. Surveys are undertaken on the understanding that nothing in the final report will be omitted, amended or misrepresented by the client or any other interested party. This report and its contents remain the property of KB Ecology Ltd until payment has been made in full.

It should be noted and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to KB Ecology Ltd has been made.

Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Background to the Scheme	2
1.2	Survey Location/Area.....	2
1.3	Survey Objectives	2
1.4	Limitations	3
2	Methodology	7
2.1	Desk Study	7
2.2	Scoping Survey.....	7
3	Baseline Ecological Conditions	8
3.1	Designated Nature Conservation Sites	8
3.2	Habitats	8
3.3	Amphibians	10
3.4	Reptiles.....	11
3.5	Birds	11
3.6	Hazel Dormouse	11
3.7	Badger	11
3.8	Bats	12
4	Ecological constraints and opportunities, recommendations for mitigation, compensation and further survey	13
4.1	Designated Nature Conservation Sites	13
4.2	Habitats	13
4.3	Amphibians	14
4.4	Reptiles.....	14
4.5	Birds	14
4.6	Hazel Dormouse	14
4.7	Badger	14
4.8	Bats	14
5	References and Bibliography	15

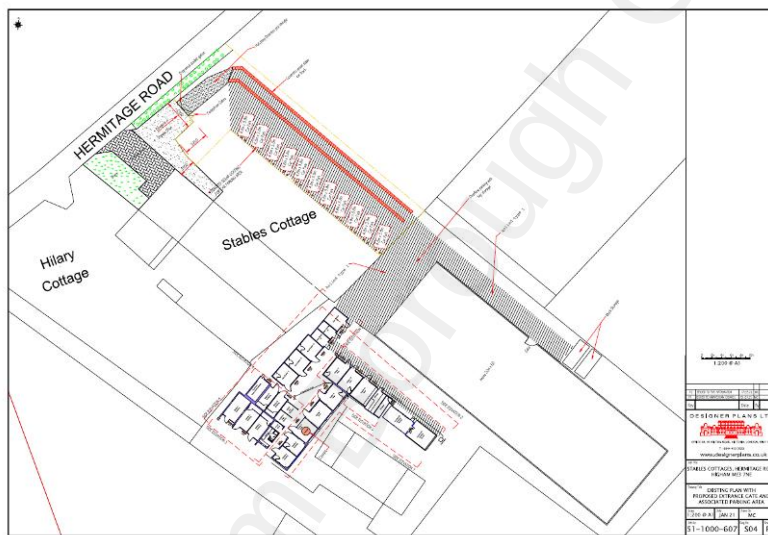
1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Scheme

KB Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a baseline ecological survey and an ecological appraisal with regards to a proposed development at Stables Cottage, Hermitage Road, Higham, Kent ME3 7NE, in support of a part-retrospective application 20/200957:

- to increase the number of horses on site from 19 to 21,
- demolition of an existing field shelter and construction of ten new stables, with feed stores and tack room
- development of ancillary parking area with use of existing access.

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 TQ 716713. 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.

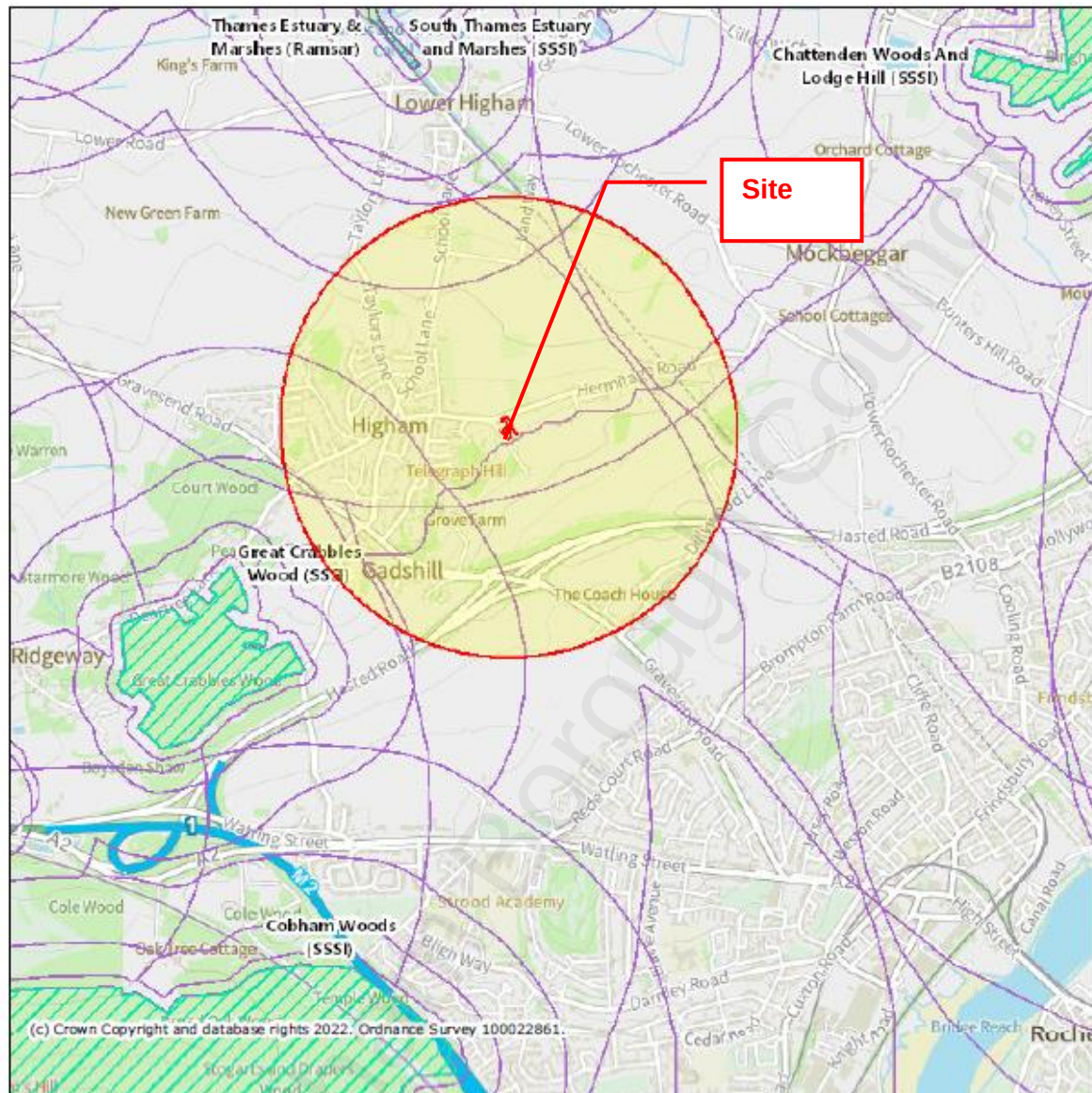
- Present the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development.
- Provide an early indication of potential ecological mitigation and compensation requirements necessary as part of any development proposals.

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.



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)

0 0.75 1.5
km

Projection = OSGB36

xmin = 565500

ymin = 167700

xmax = 578200

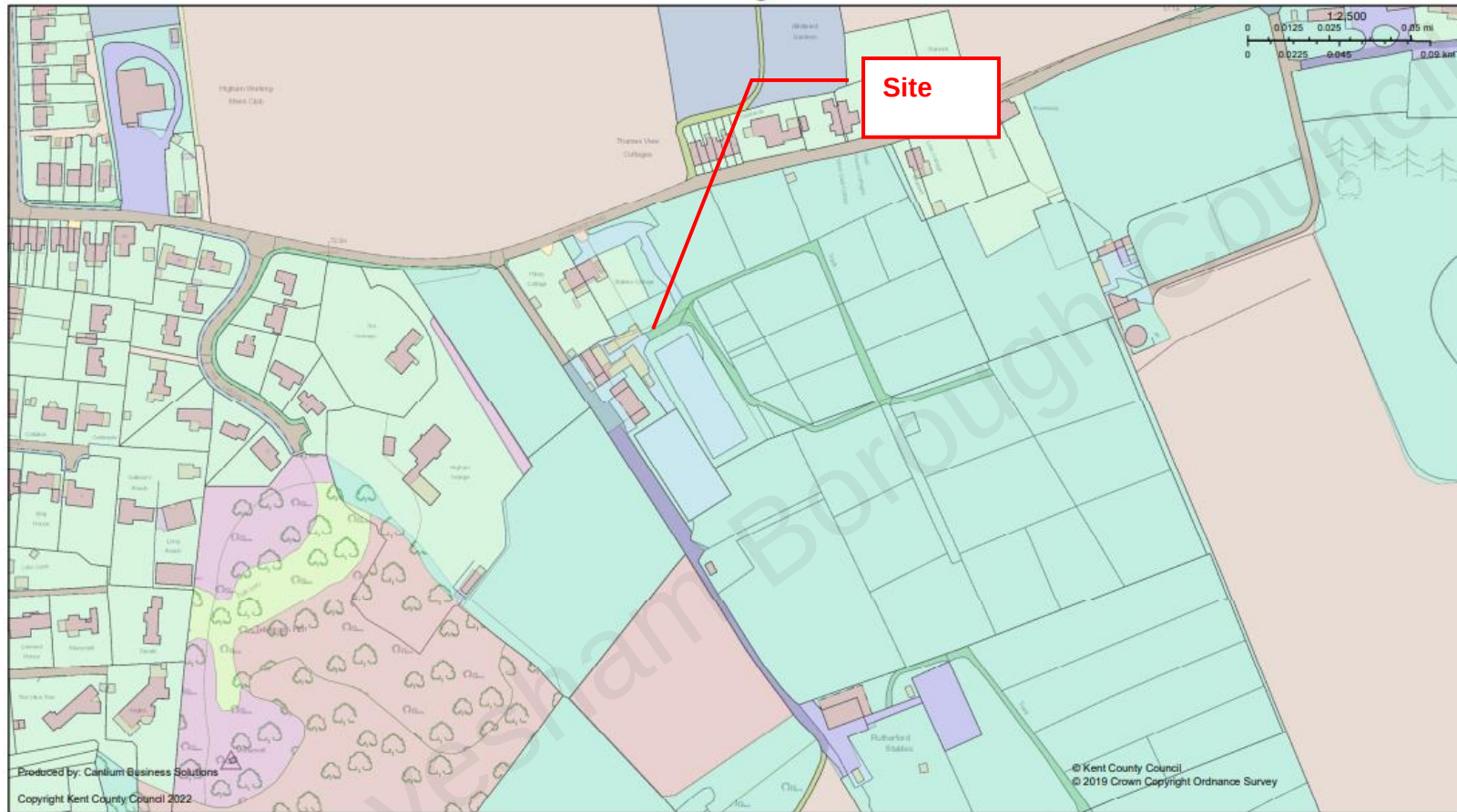
ymax = 173900

Map produced by MAGiC on 9 September, 2022.

Copyright resides with the data suppliers and the map must not be reproduced without their permission. Some information in MAGiC is a snapshot of the information that is being maintained or continually updated by the originating organisation. Please refer to the metadata for details as information may be illustrative or representative rather than definitive at this stage.

K-LIS - Figure 2

September 9, 2022



Legend

Kent Habitat Survey 2012

Acid grassland	Bracken	Coniferous woodland	Inland rock/quarry	Neutral grassland	Supralittoral Sediment
Arable and horticulture	Broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland	European dry heaths	Littoral Rock	Rivers and streams	Traditional orchard
Boundary and linear features	Built-up areas	Fen, marsh and swamp	Littoral Sediment	Standing open water and canals	Unknown terrestrial vegetation
	Calcareous grassland	Improved grassland	Maritime grassland	Supralittoral Rock	Ancient Woodland

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 31st August 2022 by Katia Bresso CEnv MCIEEM, a qualified professional consultant ecologist with over 20 years of experience³, 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 adjacent area of garden to the west was also visited.

The habitat survey was undertaken in general accordance with Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC 2010), i.e. within the survey area every parcel of land is classified, recorded and mapped in accordance with a list of ninety specified habitat types using standard colour codes to allow rapid visual assessment of the extent and distribution of different habitat types.

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)'.

All trees were also checked for suitability for roosting bats.

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 Katia Bresso is a Suitably Qualified Ecologist with regards to Code for Sustainable Homes assessment and BREEAM

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.

But there is a coastal SPA⁵/Ramsar site within 3km, the South Thames Estuary and Marshes. It is a Ramsar site⁴, a Special Protection Area⁵ and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), from Gravesend to the eastern end of the Isle of Grain, which forms a major component of the Greater Thames Estuary. The site consists of an extensive mosaic of grazing marsh, saltmarsh, mudflats and shingle characteristic of the estuarine habitats of the north Kent marshes. Freshwater pools and some areas of woodland provide additional variety and complement the estuarine habitats. The site supports outstanding numbers of waterfowl with total counts regularly exceeding 20,000. Many species regularly occur in nationally important numbers and some species regularly use the site in internationally important numbers. The breeding bird community is also of particular interest. The diverse habitats within the site support a number of nationally rare and scarce invertebrate species and an assemblage of nationally scarce plants. It is located within 2km to the North East of the site.

3.2 Habitats

The site is surrounded by arable land, a small copse and horse paddocks.

At the time of site visit, the site consisted of an access drive (with pea shingle then concrete grass slabs) with an area of short-mowed grass to its west, leading to a large sand school (built circa 2016 under 2014/1054) with timber stable blocks to the west. A very large muck heap is present along to the east of the access track.

As this report is for a part-retrospective application as the erection of stables has already taken place (circa Dec 2018-May 2019), historical aerial photos were checked with regards to habitats present prior to works.

The aerial photos below show the changes that took place. From these, and from the Integrated Habitat System (IHS) classification of the Kent Habitat Survey 2012 (which pre-dates these changes, see Figures 4 and 5), it seems that the habitats impacted by these works were only:

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

⁴ Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Wetlands are designated, protected and promoted in order to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands, which are broadly defined to include marsh, fen, peatland and water.

⁵ Special Protection Areas (SPA) are designated under the EC Birds Directive, to conserve the habitat of certain rare or vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory birds. Any significant pollution or disturbance to or deterioration of these sites has to be avoided. There are 6 SPA sites in Kent, and as with all SPA sites, they are also designated as SSSIs.

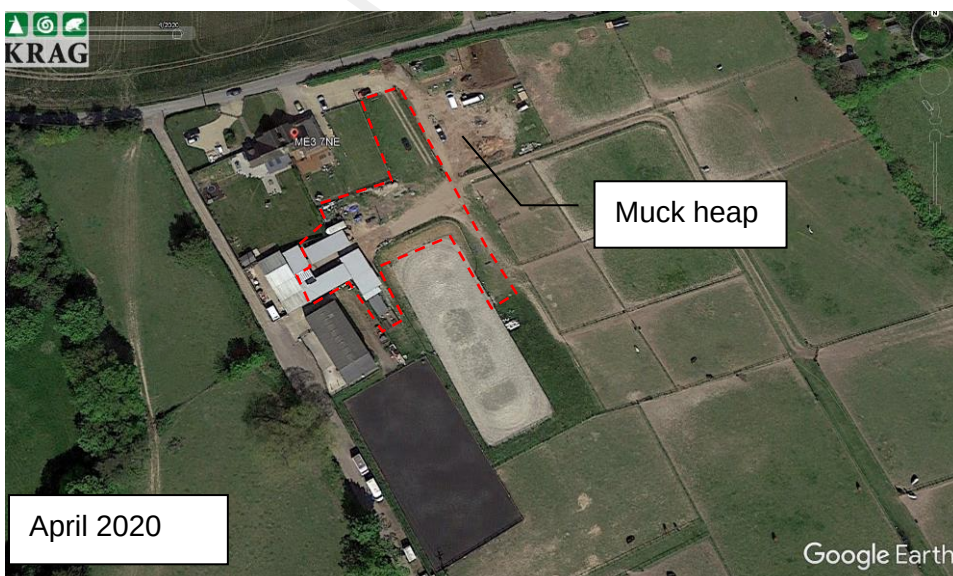
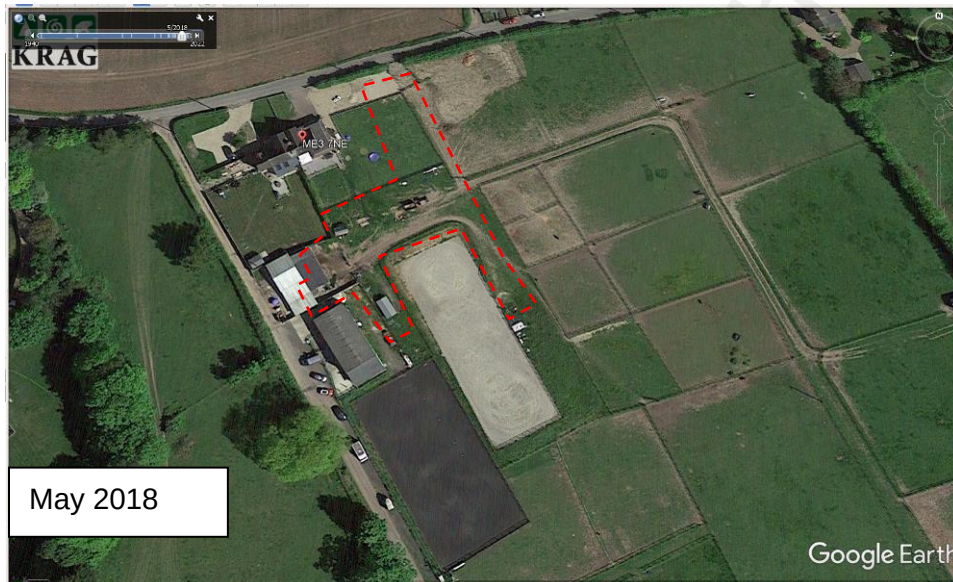


Figure 4

September 9, 2022

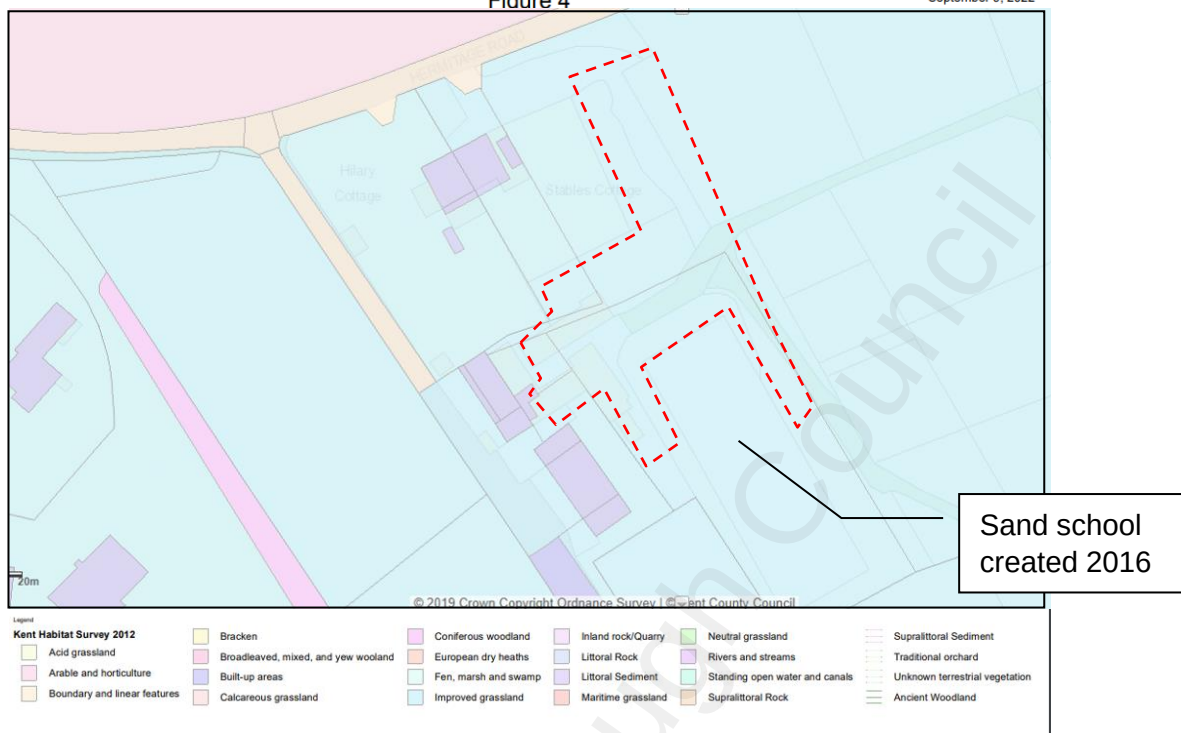


Figure 5

September 9, 2022



Historical aerial photos show that the site has been used as horse paddocks since at least 2011, which would have resulted in short-grazed improved grassland indeed.

3.3 Amphibians

The data search carried out with KRAG (Enquiry No: CES/22/084) revealed that the closest recorded Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* site is located 2.51 km to the W (record id: 116585).

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', with only two 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.'

No ponds were 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.

3.4 Reptiles

The development area consisted and still consists (for the proposed ancillary parking area along the existing access track) of grassland, which is species poor, heavily managed and kept at a short sward, without a thatch layer due to horse grazing or mowing. This habitat is considered unsuitable for common reptile species, due to a lack of cover from predators and foraging opportunities.

3.5 Birds

There are no trees on site and none seem to have been present at the time when the stables were erected in 2018. However, field shelters are sometimes used by nesting birds. A

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>

3.6 Hazel Dormouse

It is considered that the site has and had no potential to support the hazel dormouse due to lack of connection to suitable woodlands.

3.7 Badger

No setts or signs of badgers *Meles meles* were identified during the survey.

3.8 Bats

Field shelters are generally single skin timber open buildings and thus unlikely to provide suitability for roosting bats.

However foraging bats are likely to be present during the active season to feed on the numerous insects associated with equestrian facilities.

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.

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>

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

4.1 Designated Nature Conservation Sites

A site check report was generated for the site using the Impact Risk Zones on the Magic website⁶:

Site Check Report generated on Fri Sep 09 2022
You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: TQ71677137
The following features have been found in your search area:

SSSI Impact Risk Zones - to assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites (England)

1. DOES PLANNING PROPOSAL FALL INTO ONE OR MORE OF THE CATEGORIES BELOW?	2. IF YES, CHECK THE CORRESPONDING DESCRIPTION(S) BELOW. LPA SHOULD CONSULT NATURAL ENGLAND ON LIKELY RISKS FROM THE FOLLOWING:
All Planning Applications	
Infrastructure	Pipelines, pylons and overhead cables. Any transport proposal including road, rail and by water (excluding routine maintenance). Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
Wind & Solar Energy	
Minerals, Oil & Gas	Planning applications for quarries, including: new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions (ROMP), extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil & gas exploration/extraction.
Rural Non Residential	Large non residential developments outside existing settlements/urban areas where footprint exceeds 1ha.
Residential	
Rural Residential	Any residential development of 100 or more houses outside existing settlements/urban areas.
Air Pollution	Any industrial/agricultural development that could cause AIR POLLUTION (incl: industrial processes, livestock & poultry units with floorspace > 500m ² , slurry lagoons & digestate stores > 200m ² , manure stores > 250t).
Combustion	General combustion processes >20MW energy input. Incl: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/ combustion.
Waste	Landfill. Incl: inert landfill, non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill.
Composting	Any composting proposal with more than 75000 tonnes maximum annual operational throughput. Incl: open windrow composting, in-vessel composting, anaerobic digestion, other waste management.
Discharges	Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 5m ³ /day to ground (ie to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream.
Water Supply	Large infrastructure such as warehousing / industry where total net additional gross internal floorspace following development is 1,000m ² or more.
Notes 1	Strategic solutions are in place. Please contact your Local Planning Authority as they have the information to advise on specific requirements.
Notes 2	
GUIDANCE - How to use the Impact Risk Zones	/Metadata for magic/SSSI IRZ User Guidance MAGIC.pdf

The type of development proposed is not listed as being a category for which the LPA should consult Natural England. The proposal is not judged detrimental to any protected sites.

4.2 Habitats

The proposal (including already constructed stables and still to create ancillary parking) amounts to the loss of 0.1ha of low-quality improved grassland. However the proposal would actually restore 0.03ha of land currently used as a muck heap (through the use of muck storage containers).

⁶ 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>

4.3 Amphibians

No impact is expected to have happened onto great crested newts due to the construction of the stables in 2018-2019 or are expected for the ancillary parking proposal.

4.4 Reptiles

No impact is expected to have happened onto reptiles due to the construction of the stables in 2018-2019 or are expected for the ancillary parking proposal.

4.5 Birds

As the demolition/removal of the field shelter prior to construction of stables is said to have taken place in December 2018, this would have been outside the bird nesting season and no impact is expected to have happened.

4.6 Hazel Dormouse

No impact is expected to have happened onto dormice due to the construction of the stables in 2018-2019 or are expected for the ancillary parking proposal.

4.7 Badger

No impact is expected to have happened onto badgers due to the construction of the stables in 2018-2019 or are expected for the ancillary parking proposal.

4.8 Bats

No impact is expected to have happened onto roosting bats due to the construction of the stables in 2018-2019 or are expected for the ancillary parking proposal. However, as lighting can be detrimental to roosting, foraging and commuting bats⁷, the recommendations from the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals, titled 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting'⁸, should be considered, when designing any lighting scheme for the proposed development.

⁷ <https://www.bats.org.uk/about-bats/threats-to-bats/lighting>

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

5 References and Bibliography

- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2003). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. JNCC, Peterborough.⁹
- 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>
- <http://www.kentbap.org.uk/species/>

With kind permission from Google Earth Brand

⁹ http://www.jncc.gov.uk/pdf/pub90_HandbookforPhase1HabitatSurveyA5.pdf

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_2029



✓ IMG_2030



✓ IMG_2031



✓ IMG_2032



✓ IMG_2033



✓ IMG_2034



✓ IMG_2035



✓ IMG_2036



✓ IMG_2037



✓ IMG_2038



✓ IMG_2039



✓ IMG_2040



✓ IMG_2041



✓ IMG_2042



✓ IMG_2043



✓ IMG_2044



✓ IMG_2047



✓ IMG_2048



✓ IMG_2049



✓ IMG_2051