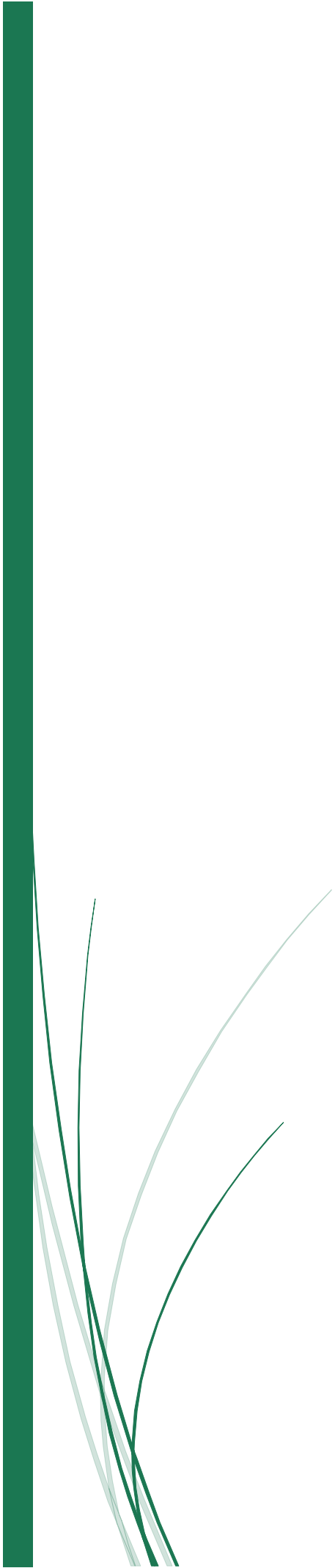




New Green Farm, Lower Shorne, Gravesend

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

A Report for Bloomfields Chartered Town
Planners

January 2025



**Greenspace
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Solutions**

www.greenspace-ecology.co.uk

info@greenspace-ecology.co.uk

New Green Farm, Lower Shorne, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 3HL

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Client:	Bloomfields Chartered Town Planners	
Project Ref:	New Green Farm	
Report Ref:	J24-021686	
Author:	Technical Review:	Approved:
Hana Ketley BA (Hons) BSc (Hons), Ecologist	Matthew Clark BEng (Hons), Ecologist	Charlotte Bell BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, Associate Director
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Disclosure:		
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1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Client: Bloomfields Chartered Town Planners

Site Address: New Green Farm, Lower Shorne, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 3HL

Associated Ecologist: Matthew Clark

Survey Date: 5th December 2024

Site Proposals: Construction of a store building.

Associated Planning
Reference Number: Not yet submitted.

Source of Relevant Documents:

Document:	Source:
Site Location Plans:	Google Earth Pro Location Plan. AC Goatham & Son, Drawing No: ACG&S-NGF-900
Site Proposal Plan:	Proposed Block Plan. AC Goatham & Son, Drawing No: ACG&S-NGF-901
Desk Study	Magic.gov.uk Kent Landscape Information System (KLIS)

2 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 2.1 In response to the proposed development at New Green Farm, Gravesend ('the Site'), a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land within the redline boundary (Figure 1) has been undertaken.
- 2.2 The Site occupies approximately 0.76ha and largely comprises arable land, with a small area in the north-eastern corner of semi-improved grassland and ephemeral vegetation on an earth bund.
- 2.3 Development of the Site is unlikely to impact designated sites, areas of ancient woodland or Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) as listed on s41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- 2.4 No evidence of badger was recorded. However, the habitats present are suitable for the species, therefore, a sensitive working strategy during construction should be implemented in full.
- 2.5 Precautionary working methods to protect nesting birds and reptiles are required.
- 2.6 Proposed biodiversity enhancements for the Site include:
- Installation of 2 x externally mounted bird boxes on the proposed building
 - Incorporation of a wildlife-friendly planting scheme
 - Native tree planting
 - Installation of an invertebrate house
- 2.7 Provided the recommendations set out within this report are implemented, the proposed development will not contravene any relevant legislation or planning policies pursuant to nature conservation.

3 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Context

3.1.1 In response to a proposed development at New Green Farm, Lower Shorne, Gravesend (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'), a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land within the redline boundary was undertaken (see Phase 1 Habitat Map, Figure 1).

3.1.2 The Site's suitability to support protected and/or notable species and habitats was assessed and appropriate recommendations are provided within Section 6 of this report. Ecological features of interest are depicted in Figure 1: Phase 1 Habitat Map. Photographs of the Site are provided in Appendix A.

3.2 Site Location

3.2.1 The Site is located in a rural area approximately 0.6km from the village of Higham, a civil parish in the borough of Gravesham, Kent, at National Grid Reference: TQ 70180 72259. The location of the Site is depicted in Image 1 below.

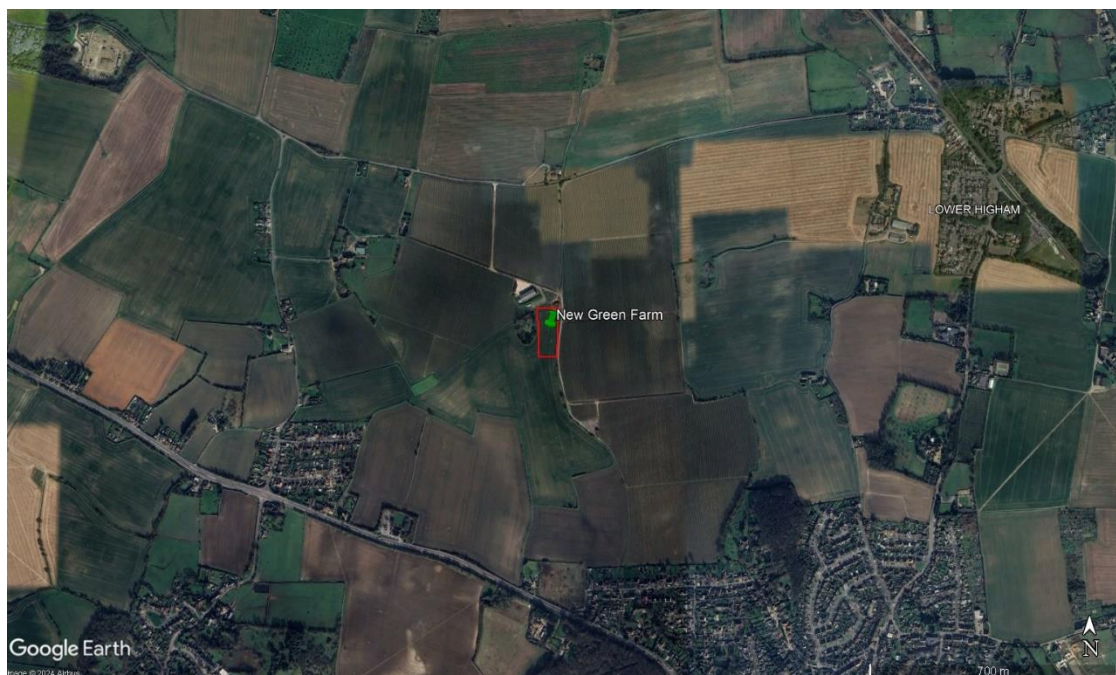


Image 1 – Geographical Location of the Site

3.3 Site Description

3.3.1 The Site occupies approximately 0.76ha and mainly comprises arable land, with a small area in the north-eastern corner consisting of semi-improved grassland and ephemeral vegetation on an earth bund.

3.3.2 The Site is bound by agricultural fields on all sides. The wider landscape comprises further agricultural fields and scattered residential properties with associated gardens.

3.4 Legislation and Planning Policy

3.4.1 Relevant legislation and policies that apply to ecological issues within the Site are:

- [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 \(as amended\)](#)
- [The Environment Act 2021](#)
- [The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(as amended\)](#)
- [The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000](#)
- [The Natural Environment and Rural Communities \(NERC\) Act 2006](#)
- [Hedgerows Regulations 1997](#)
- [The Protection of Badgers Act 1992](#)
- [The Wild Mammal \(Protection\) Act 1996](#)
- [The National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\) 2024](#)
- [Government Circular 06/05](#)
- [Gravesham Borough Council Local Plan](#)

3.4.2 The above summary serves as guidance only. Further information is presented in Appendix B.

3.5 Objectives of the Survey

3.5.1 The objectives of the survey were to:

- Classify the main habitats present within the Site.
- Evaluate the ecological importance of these habitats.
- Assess the suitability for protected species and any otherwise notable species to occur within the Site.
- Provide appropriate recommendations for further surveys and mitigation where required, as well as opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

4 METHODS

4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 A desk study was undertaken in December 2024 to determine the presence of sites and habitats of conservation importance, along with freely available existing records of European Protected Species (EPS) within the Site's zone of influence.

4.1.2 The following bodies were consulted for the desk study:

- Google Earth Pro for aerial imagery.
- Magic Map (Magic.defra.gov.org) for statutory designated sites, ancient woodland, habitats of Principal Importance (NERC Act 2006) and records of European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) sites and great crested newt (GCN) licence return records.
- Kent Landscape Information System for local non-statutory designated sites
- OS mapping for ponds within 250m of the Site.

4.1.3 The desk study involved obtaining the following information:

- International statutory designated sites and UK National Site Network within 2km.
- National statutory designated sites within 1km.
- Non-statutory designated sites within 1km.
- EPSMLs and GCN records within 1km.
- Ancient woodland parcels within 30m.
- Waterbodies within 250m.
- Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC Act 2006) within or immediately adjacent to the Site.

4.1.4 These search areas are considered sufficient to cover the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.

4.2 Habitats

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

4.2.1 The Site was surveyed using the methods outlined in '[The Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit](#)' (JNCC, 2016). The techniques applied during the survey involve identifying the main plant communities present on the Site and classifying the habitat types following the JNCC methodology. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and enables areas of greater botanical interest which may require further, more detailed, surveys to be identified.

Invasive Non-Native Species

- 4.2.2 Any occurrences of recognised invasive species as listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were also noted, if present.
- 4.2.3 A map of the habitats and areas of interest (using a variation of the JNCC (2016) protocol for Phase 1 Habitat plans) is provided in Figure 1. Photographs of features of interest are presented in Appendix A.
- 4.2.4 The survey was undertaken by GES Ecologist Ashley Walker on 5th December 2024.

4.3 Protected and Notable Species

- 4.3.1 The survey was 'extended' to consider the suitability of the Site to support protected and notable species. Species considered included those identified during the desk study, or those considered appropriate by the surveyor during the survey. Detailed surveys were not completed for these species. However, based on an understanding of species ecology, consideration was given to the Site's potential to provide sheltering or foraging habitat and/or connectivity from other areas of potentially suitable habitat to allow dispersal between populations. Core species considered during the survey are outlined below.

Badger

- 4.3.2 Evidence of badger *Meles meles* activity within the Site (and, where possible, on land adjacent to the Site) was assessed by searching for signs such as:
- Presence of setts, indicated by suitably sized holes or burrows.
 - Evidence of badger latrines, badger hair and/or footprints.
 - Evidence of well-used runs supported by secondary evidence such as foraging signs.

*Bats**Foraging and Commuting Habitat Assessment*

- 4.3.3 An assessment of suitable foraging, commuting, roosting and swarming habitat for bats both within the Site and adjacent habitats was carried out in accordance with current good practice guidance (Collins, 2023). The presence of features suitable for bat foraging or commuting was noted and the assessment enabled the Site and surrounds to be categorised as having either 'none,' 'negligible,' 'low,' 'moderate,' or 'high' suitability for bats.

Roosting Habitat Assessment

- 4.3.4 No trees or buildings exist within the Site.

Dormouse

- 4.3.5 The Site was surveyed for suitable hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* habitat, such as the presence of well-connected broadleaved woodland, hedgerows, mature scrub and suitable food sources such as oak *Quercus sp.*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and other nut-bearing trees, fruiting trees and shrubs and flowers. Evidence of hazel dormouse searched for included woven nests and/or dormouse-gnawed nuts.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

- 4.3.6 Any suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* including long grass, tall ruderal, woodland and hedgerow borders, as well as wood and rubble piles that act as sheltering places, was searched for.

Reptiles

- 4.3.7 The Site was assessed for any suitable habitat for reptiles including long grass, vegetated boundaries, woodland and hedgerow borders, as well as wood and rubble piles that provide sheltering opportunities.

Nesting Birds

- 4.3.8 The habitats within the Site were assessed for their suitability to support nesting birds. Factors considered include suitable cover and feeding habitat. Evidence was searched for in the form of any active or disused birds' nests.

4.4 Constraints

- 4.4.1 The survey was carried out outside the optimal period for conducting Phase 1 habitat surveys (generally considered to be April to September inclusive) and, therefore, certain plant species may not have been recorded during the survey. However, the habitats within the Site were mainly arable and common and widespread. Therefore, the level of information gathered during this survey is sufficient to effectively evaluate the habitats within the Site and this does not pose a constraint to the survey findings.
- 4.4.2 Any measurements or indications of area provided within this report are estimates and are provided as a guide only.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Desk Study

Designated Sites

- 5.1.1 Designated sites identified within the potential zone of influence (ZOI) of the proposed development are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Designated Sites within ZOI of the development

Site Name	Description	Distance and Orientation from Site
Statutory Designated Sites		
Internationally Designated Sites (Ramsar) and UK National Site Network (SPA, SAC)		
Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar	<i>Comprises a complex of brackish, floodplain grazing marsh ditches, saline lagoons and intertidal saltmarsh and mudflat along the River Thames between Gravesend and Sheerness in Essex and Kent.</i>	1.3km NW
Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA	<i>Comprises a complex of brackish, floodplain grazing marsh ditches, saline lagoons and intertidal saltmarsh and mudflat along the River Thames between Gravesend and Sheerness in Essex and Kent.</i>	2.1km NE
Nationally Designated Sites (SSSI, NNR, LNR)		
	<i>None within 1km of the Site</i>	
Non-Statutory Designated Sites		
Court Wood LWS	<i>Eastern parcel, Site of ancient woodland</i>	0.8km S
Court Wood (The Warren) LWS	<i>Area of grassland and scattered trees</i>	1km SW

(Ramsar – a wetland site of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention, SPA – Special Protection Area, SAC – Special Area of Conservation, SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest, LWS – Local Wildlife Site)

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)

- 5.1.2 The Site is within the IRZs of Great Crabbles Wood SSSI, Shorne and Ashenbank Woods SSSI and South Thames Estuary & Marshes SSSI.

Ancient Woodland

- 5.1.3 The desk study returned no records of ancient woodland parcels within 30m of the Site.

NERC s41 Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI)

- 5.1.4 The desk study returned no records of a habitat listed under s41 of the NERC Act 2006 within or adjacent to the Site.

European Protected Species (EPS) Mitigation Licences and GCN Licence Records

- 5.1.5 The desk study returned no records of EPS mitigation licences or GCN licence return records within 1km of the Site.

5.2 Habitats

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

5.2.1 The following habitat types were recorded within the Site on 5th December 2024:

- Poor semi-improved grassland
- Ephemeral
- Arable

5.2.2 A summary of the key botanical species present within each habitat type is included within the descriptions below. While considering this information, reference should be made to the Phase 1 Habitat Map presented in Figure 1, and photographs presented in Appendix A.

Semi-improved Grassland

5.2.3 A small area of semi-improved grassland exists in the north-eastern corner of the Site. The habitat has an average sward length of <10cm, with 10% bare ground. Grass species include abundant perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, frequent creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and occasional Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*. Herbaceous species within the grassland include frequent nettle *Urtica dioica*, with occasional white dead-nettle *Lamium album* and dove's-foot cranes-bill *Geranium molle*.

Ephemeral

5.2.4 A large earth bund covered in ephemeral vegetation is present in the north-eastern corner of the Site. The area is dominated by knotgrass *Polygonum sp.* but also contains frequent greater plantain *Plantago major* and occasional groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*, perennial rye-grass and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*.

Arable

5.2.5 The habitat which covers the majority of the Site is arable. The crops, mainly wheat and rye, had been harvested at the time of the survey and there was heavy grass and herb encroachment. The average sward length was <10cm. Grass species present include dominant perennial rye-grass and occasional cock's-foot and creeping bent. While present, false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* was rare. Herbaceous species present included frequent herb mercury *Mercurialis annua*, with rare instances of common mallow *Malva sylvestris*, cleavers *Galium aparine* and nettle.

5.3 Protected and Notable Species

Badger

5.3.1 The habitats within the Site provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for badgers, and the raised earth bund provides suitable opportunity for sett creation (albeit sub-optimal given that it is such an exposed location with no hedgerows, woodland or tree lines nearby).

5.3.2 No signs of badger or their setts were observed during the survey.

Bats

5.3.3 The grassland within the Site provides limited suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. Furthermore, the Site is connected to areas of grassland within field margins which provide foraging opportunities within the surrounding landscape, albeit sub-optimal due to the mainly arable nature of the wider area.

5.3.4 There is no potential for roosting bats within the Site, as there are no trees or built structures.

Dormouse

5.3.5 No evidence of dormouse was recorded during the survey and there is no suitable hazel dormouse habitat within the Site.

Great Crested Newt

Terrestrial Habitat

5.3.6 The grassland provides suitable terrestrial foraging habitat for GCN, whilst the raised earth bund provides suitable refugia and hibernacula.

Aquatic Habitat

5.3.7 A review of available online OS mapping identified no ponds within 250m of the Site.

Reptiles

5.3.8 The semi-improved grassland and earth bund provide suitable habitat for reptiles.

Nesting Birds

5.3.9 No nesting birds or disused nests were recorded during the survey. Suitable ground-nesting habitat is present within the Site in the form of arable habitat.

5.3.10 Bird species observed within the Site include carrion crow *Corvus corone*, goldfinch *Carduelis Carduelis*, buzzard *Buteo buteo* and wood pigeon *Columba Palumbus*.

Other Species

5.3.11 Beyond those noted above, the survey identified negligible suitability for other species of conservation concern within the Site.

6 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Designated Sites

Statutory Designated Sites

Internationally Designated Sites and UK National Site Network

6.1.1 The desk study returned records of two internationally designated sites within 5km of the Site.

6.1.2 Thames Estuary & Marshes Ramsar & SPA are located approximately 1.3km NE and 2.1km NE of the Site at its closest point, respectively. The proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on these international sites as it does not meet the criteria that would require consultation with Natural England and would not provide any net increase in residential units, given that the proposed development comprises the construction of a building to be used for storage.

Nationally Designated Sites

6.1.3 The desk study returned no records of nationally designated sites within 1km of the Site.

Non-statutory Designated Sites

6.1.4 The desk study returned two records of non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the Site.

6.1.5 The closest of these is Court Wood LWS, located 0.8km south of the Site. However, due to the limited extent of proposals (i.e. construction of a store building) and the spatial separation between the Site and this (or any other) LWS, no impacts will occur as a result of the proposed development.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)

6.1.6 The Site is within the IRZs of several SSSIs. However, the development proposals do not meet any of the criteria that would require consultation with Natural England, therefore, it is considered unlikely that any adverse impacts on any statutory designated sites would occur as a result of the proposed development within the Site.

6.2 Ancient Woodland

6.2.1 Guidance from Natural England and the Forestry Commission states that no development should occur within 15m of an ancient woodland. The proposed development lies well beyond 15m and, therefore, no detrimental impacts to any area of ancient woodland are likely to result from the proposed development.

6.3 Habitats and Botanical Species of Interest

6.3.1 No HPis are present within or adjacent to the Site.

6.3.2 The habitats present within the Site are common and widespread and of low ecological value, therefore, no further botanical surveys are required.

6.4 Protected and Notable Species

Badger

6.4.1 Although suitable habitat for badger is present within the Site, no evidence of badger was recorded within or adjacent to the Site, and no further consideration to the presence of badgers is required at this time.

6.4.2 However, badgers are a highly mobile species that will readily move into new areas and as badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the following sensitive working strategy to ensure the welfare of badgers should be implemented in full:

- Prior to the start of works all contractors working on the development should be briefed regarding the potential presence of badgers and the method of works detailed below, and a quick site check of the earth bund for any signs of a badger sett.
- To prevent badgers becoming trapped in excavations, any trenches or deep pits should be covered or closed overnight, any excavations that are to be left open overnight should be provided with a means of escape should a badger enter. This could be achieved through the construction of a graded bank or the installation of a rough sawn timber board such as a scaffold board or similar, which will allow the badgers to exit of their own accord. Any trenches or pits should be inspected each morning to ensure no badgers (or any other wildlife) have become trapped overnight. In the event that a trapped badger is encountered and the insertion of a means of escape prove futile, then the appointed ecologist should be contacted immediately to discuss an appropriate manner in which to proceed.
- Should the development require the installation of culverts and/or large diameter piping, measures to ensure the ends are closed should be implemented overnight.
- The storage of topsoil or other soft building material should be subject to daily inspections for the presence of badgers, stored on pallets or ring-fenced with a badger-proof fencing material. Badgers will readily adopt such mounds for a sett and should this event occur, the mound will be afforded the same level of protection as an established sett.
- To avoid any upset/spillage by badgers, the storage of any chemicals required during the development will be away from unaffected habitats and preferably within a steel container.

- As badgers are a highly mobile species that readily occupy new territory, should works not commence within 12 months from the time of writing, an update badger survey should be carried out prior to the start of works.

Bats

Commuting and Foraging Habitat

- 6.4.3 The semi-improved grassland provides suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats, though it is limited in size and quality. The Site is connected to other small areas of grassland but the majority of the surrounding landscape comprises arable land with a lack of mature trees, scrub, hedgerows or woodland. The Site's habitats are, therefore, considered to offer 'Low' suitability for foraging and commuting bats, and given the small scale of the Site, it is not considered necessary or proportionate to undertake bat activity surveys in this instance.
- 6.4.4 However, since lighting can be detrimental to bats using vegetation for foraging and commuting, if any external lighting is proposed for the development (only if deemed necessary for safety or security) this should be designed to be sensitive to the surrounding habitats, avoiding direct illumination of them, such as through the use of highly directional L.E.D lighting (with no UV component), downward facing and ideally of a colour temperature of 2700K or less. Also could utilise luminaires that are PIR activated and therefore only illuminated when motion detected. The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP), in partnership with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), has published guidance relating to bats and lighting – this is available at the following link: <https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>.

Dormouse

- 6.4.5 No suitable habitat for dormice exists within the Site, therefore no further consideration to the species is needed.

Great Crested Newt

- 6.4.6 Habitats within the Site are suitable for the species during its terrestrial phase. However, the desk study identified no ponds or standing water within 250m of the Site, via review of OS and aerial mapping, which are essential to sustain a breeding population of GCN. Therefore, the species is considered to be likely absent from the Site and no further surveys or consideration to GCN is required.

Reptiles

- 6.4.7 The semi-improved grassland and earth bund provide suitable foraging and sheltering habitat for reptiles within the Site. However, given the limited size of the suitable area and availability

of additional suitable habitat immediately adjacent to the Site, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate.

6.4.8 However, all UK native reptile species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from intentional killing and injury amongst other offences. Therefore, the following precautionary working methods should be implemented in full, during the active period of April-October inclusive:

- To ensure wildlife that may be present within the development area are able to move quickly out of harm's way, the cutting of suitable vegetation will be undertaken during the active season for reptiles (mid-March to mid-October).
- Prior to the start of works, the contractors working on the project should be subject to a 'Toolbox Talk'. This would outline the legislation and ecology related to reptiles and the appropriate manner in which to proceed with the work.
- To enable animals to relocate outside of the development area and into the disused gravel pit, the vegetation cut will commence from the east of the Site and move west, using hand tools only (trimmer and brush cutters are acceptable).
- The initial cut will be restricted to a height of 10cm from ground level.
- Following a period of a minimum of 24 but no more than 72 hours, the second phase of habitat manipulation will be undertaken in the same direction as the first phase, with vegetation cut to approximately 5cm in height.
- Upon completion of the habitat manipulation, the habitats deemed sensitive to the presence of wildlife, such as the ephemeral bund (if required), will be subject to a destructive/fingertip search to ensure any animals that have remained can be safely removed.
- The destructive/fingertip search will be conducted in accordance with the HGBI advisory notes (1998) guidance and under the supervision of the appointed ecologist.
- Suitable habitats beyond those to be affected should be protected from encroachment of construction activities through use of temporary barriers such as HERAS fencing.
- To ensure the semi-improved grassland habitat remains unsuitable for reptiles during construction, the grassland should be kept at a sward height of <5cm with a regular mowing regime.

Nesting Birds

- 6.4.9 Suitable habitat for ground-nesting birds is present within the Site in the form of arable land, and potentially within the earth bund. In this instance given that suitable habitats present for birds is limited in size, further surveys for birds are considered disproportionate
- 6.4.10 However, as all nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is recommended that works to these areas (where necessary) are conducted outside the core breeding period for birds of late February – August inclusive.
- 6.4.11 Should this timeframe be unobtainable, a thorough search for the presence of nesting birds should be conducted by a suitably experienced ecologist immediately prior to the start of works. Should evidence of nesting birds be recorded, works within 5m of the nest, or works that have the potential to destroy the nest(s), should stop until the eggs have hatched, and the chicks fledged, or the nest is deemed by a suitably experienced ecologist to no longer be active.

Other Species

- 6.4.12 There are no obvious and immediate issues regarding other protected or notable species on the Site and no further surveys to determine the presence of other protected or notable species is required in this instance.
- 6.4.13 Should at any point during the development a protected or notable species be identified within the Site, then all works should **stop** and the appointed ecologist consulted on the appropriate manner in which to proceed.

7 ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

7.1 Opportunities to include biodiversity enhancements within the Site exist and, in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF 2024, the following recommendations are considered appropriate for the Site:

- The installation of two building-mounted bird boxes on the proposed building would increase the Site's suitability for nesting birds. Boxes such as [Woodstone house sparrow nestbox](#) could be used. To maximise suitability, boxes should be installed on sheltered aspects, close to vegetation to the west, under the eaves at a height of at least 2-3m.
- The incorporation of a wildlife-friendly planting scheme within the Client's landownership post-development, including native plant species, would be of benefit to invertebrates, and subsequently birds and bats. Particularly the planting of a connected hedgerow network within the Client's landownership would significantly increase the biodiversity opportunities within the Site and surrounding area, for a range of wildlife.
- The incorporation of a bug hotel and/or bee post would enhance the opportunities within the Site for invertebrates.
- Any tree planting should be undertaken using native species such as pedunculate oak, small leaved lime *Tilia cordata*, black poplar *Populus nigra*, wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis* or similar.

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<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/made>

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006).
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) 1981. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1377>

Figures



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Arable cropland
- Semi-improved Grassland
- Ephemeral / Earth Bund

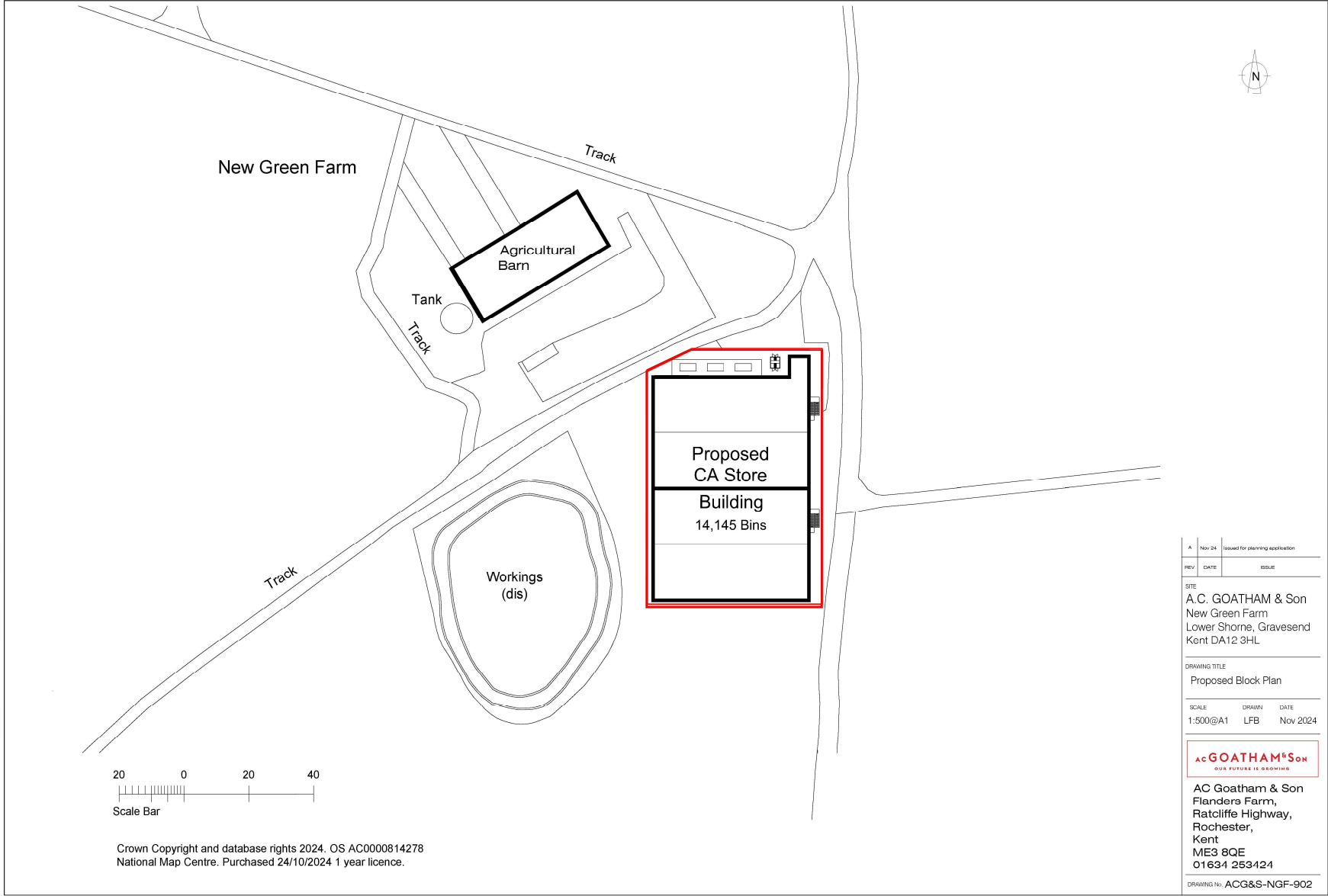
A	Nov 24	Issued for planning application
REV	DATE	ISSUE
SITE		
A.C. GOATHAM & Son New Green Farm Lower Shorne, Gravesend Kent DA12 3HL		
DRAWING TITLE		
Existing Block Plan		
SCALE	DRAWN	DATE
1:500@A1	LFB	Nov 2024
AC Goatham & Son Flanders Farm, Ratcliffe Highway, Rochester, Kent ME3 8QE 01634 253424		
DRAWING No: ACG&S-NGF-901		



Job Reference : J24-021686
Project Title: New Green Farm

Drawing Title:
Figure 1: Phase 1 Habitat Map

Date : 17/12/24 Checked : CB
Drawn : MC Approved : CB
Status : Final Scale : NTS



Job Reference : J24-021686

Project Title: New Green Farm

Drawing Title:
Figure 2: Project Proposals

Date : 17/12/24 Checked : CB

Drawn : MC Approved : CB

Status : Final Scale : NTS

Appendices

APPENDIX A – Site Photographs



Photo 1: Earth bund covered in ephemeral vegetation in the north-east of the Site



Photo 2: Earth bund and semi-improved (poor) grassland in the north-east of the Site



Photo 3: Harvested arable land



Photo 4: Disused gravel pit (off-site) to the west of the Site, which offers suitable reptile habitat

APPENDIX B – Legislation and Planning Policies

Legislation

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) transposes European Union Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into National law. These regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European Sites', the protection of 'European Protected Species' and the adaptation of planning controls for the protection of such sites and species. Under the regulations, public bodies have a duty in exercising their functions to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.
- The Environment Act 2021 operates as the new framework of environmental protection following the United Kingdom's departure from the EU. The Environment Act allows the UK to enshrine some environmental protection into law, and offers new powers to set new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction. The Act mandates the creation of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Site Strategies, Species Conservation Strategies, and the use of conservation covenants to support the design and delivery of strategic approaches to deliver better outcomes for nature. Additional mandates covered by The Act (Part 7) will come into force in November 2023 and include:
 - A requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain for developments, to ensure all development deliver a minimum of 10% net gains in biodiversity (Section 98).
 - Strengthening of the duty placed on all public bodies to “conserve” and “enhance” biodiversity (Section 102).
 - Duty placed upon Local Authorities to consult prior to felling street trees (Section 115).
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides detail on a range of protection and offences relating to wild birds, other animals, and plants. The level of protection depends on which Schedule of the Act the species is listed on. Licences are available for specific purposes to permit actions that would otherwise constitute an offence in relation to species.
- The Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 provides additional support to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; for example, increasing the level of protection for certain species of reptiles.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 imposes an obligation on all public bodies, including local authorities, to consider whether their activities can contribute to the protection of wildlife. The duty is created by section 40(1) of the Act, which states that:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 are enforced under the Environment Act 1995, and serves to: restrict the removal of hedgerows, or parts of hedgerows which are over 20m in length. In this case, removal includes digging up and replanting elsewhere, as well as removing from the land completely or destroying in the course of other actions. This includes developments or activities which destroy the roots, causing the vegetation to die.
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 exists to protect badgers *Meles meles* from cruelty. Under the act it is a criminal offense to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so, or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett.
- The Wild Mammal (Protection) Act 1996 protects wild mammal species from certain cruel acts, including kicking, beating, nailing, or otherwise impaling, stabbing, burning, stoning, crushing, drowning, dragging or asphyxiation of any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering. Crushing and asphyxiation are most likely to occur as a result of development proposals, should these works collapse any mammal burrows, or encounter wild mammals on site.

National Planning Policy

- The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) states (Section 15) that the planning system should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks; promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. It also states that local planning authorities should refuse planning on the following principles:
 - If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.
 - If development is on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and is likely to have an adverse effect on it (the exception being where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh its likely impact);
 - If development results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees (unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists).

Additionally, the NPPF states that 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.

- Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation in England and Wales and priority habitats and species listed in the Gravesham local plan are species which are targeted for conservation. The government has a duty to ensure that involved parties take reasonable practice steps to further the conservation of such species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. In addition, the Act places a biodiversity duty on public authorities who 'must, in exercising their functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (Section 40 [1]). Criteria for selection of national priority habitats and species in the UK include international threat and marked national decline.

Local Planning Policy

- Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted September 2014) Policy CS19: Development and Design Principles: New development will protect and, where opportunities arise, enhance biodiversity and the Borough's Green Infrastructure network. Support will be given to environmental enhancements where opportunities arise.