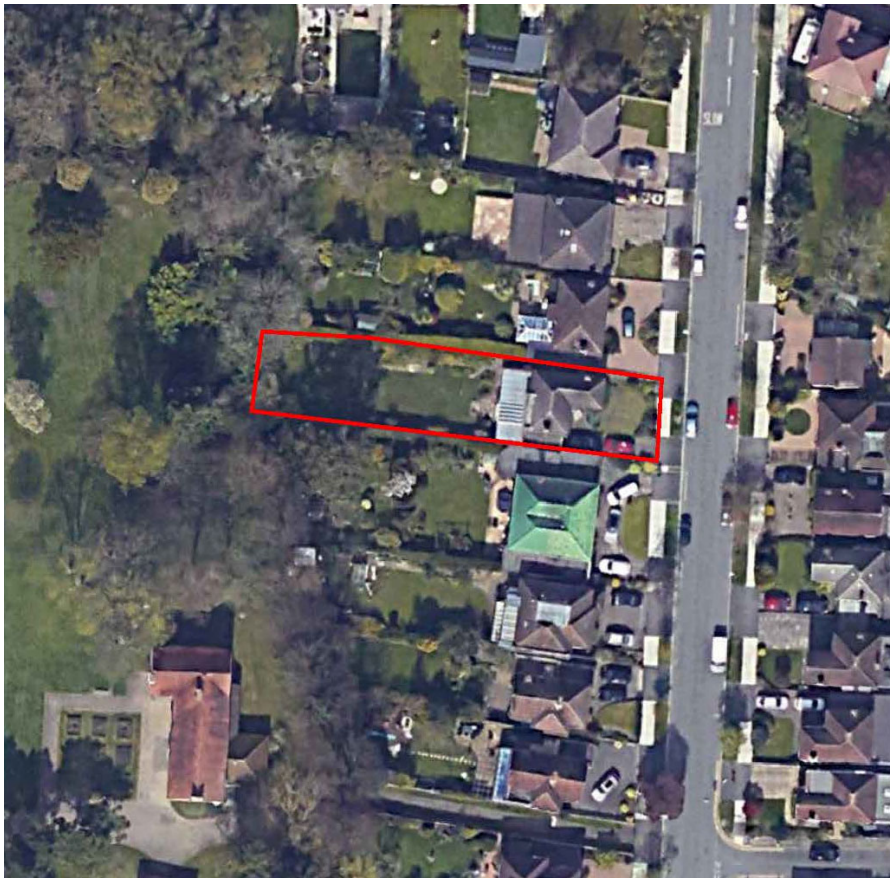
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Relating to a development at
25 St. Martin's Approach
Ruislip
Middlesex
HA4 7QB



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL REPORT
RELATING TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT 25 ST. MARTIN'S APPROACH, RUISLIP, MIDDLESEX HA4 7QB

1. Introduction

Instructions were received on the 20 December 2024 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at 25 St. Martin's Approach, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 7QB. The site survey was carried out on 11/01/2025.

No previous Ecological Appraisals or Bat Surveys have been produced for this site for building alterations carried out prior to the date of the application submitted on or about 10.11.2023.

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been requested by Hillingdon Borough Council in the response to a consultation response in December 2024 referring to the possible presence of Bats.

Under current legislation some developments fall below the threshold for a mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of 10% is required, also most householder applications are also exempt from the mandatory need to need to demonstrate a BNG of 10%.

A development will fall below the threshold for mandatory BNG if the completed development's does not significantly impact a priority habitat and impacts less than:

- 25 Sq M of on-site habitat
- 5 Metres of on site linear habitats such as hedgerows.

In the case of the proposal at 25 St. Martin's Approach the proposed extension replaces the existing garage and adds a new two storey side extension to the side of the existing house, at the rear the existing footprint is not increased. In Table 1 and 2 below we have analysed the impact of the proposal may have in the existing primary habitat.

Description	Existing (Sq M)	Proposed (Sq M)
Front Soft Landscape	73.59	24.58
Front Hard Landscape	36.79	71.98
Rear Soft Landscape	347.89	347.89
Rear Hard Landscape	33.46	33.46
Building Footprint	129.47	158.74

Table 1 – Analysis of Existing and Proposed Primary Habitat

Description	Existing (M)	Proposed (M)
Front - Shrubs & Hedgerow	9.72	19.47
Rear - Shrubs & Hedgerow	45.63	67.84

Table 2 – Analysis of existing perimeter planting (Shrubs & Hedgerow)

2. Ecological Assessment Methodology

During the survey, habitats were assessed for their suitability to support protected species, and field signs indicating their presence recorded. The assessment takes into consideration the findings of the desk study, the habitat conditions on site and in the context of the surrounding landscape, and the ecology of the protected species. The likelihood of the presence of protected species is ranked; the habitats on site are evaluated against their likelihood to provide suitable habitat for protected species.

The ecological value of the survey area has been assessed based on the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018), and the Handbook of Biodiversity Methods: Survey, Evaluation and Monitoring (Hill, 2005), using geographic frames of reference. The biodiversity value of any identified designated sites, habitat types and associated species assemblages has been considered. The distribution and extent of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended 1996) were also noted throughout the survey area.

The habitats on site were evaluated as to their likelihood to provide sheltering, roosting, foraging, basking or nesting habitat.

3. Roosting Assessment Methodology

All features that will be impacted by the project proposals were assessed for their bat roosting and/or commuting habitat. The surveyor systematically surveyed all features suitable for bats and signs of bat activity.

Existing Building: A non-intrusive visual appraisal from the ground using binoculars, inspecting the external features of the building(s) for potential access/egress points, and for signs of bat use. An internal inspection of the building was also made, including the living areas and accessible roof spaces of the building, using an endoscope, torch and ladders. The surveyor paid particular attention to the flat surfaces and the horizontal timber struts and purlins within the loft space, while a detailed inspection of the roof space was conducted.

Existing Trees: A visual inspection from ground level using binoculars and where accessible and safe to do so, an internal inspection of potential roosting features using an endoscope, torch and ladders.

4. Results and Evaluation

4.1 A full summary of the Ecological Evaluation is set out in the table attached in Appendix 1.

4.2 Details of any statutory and non-statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the survey site, including their reasons for notification:

Statutory Sites:	None
Non-Statutory Sites:	London Area Greenbelt

5. Field Survey Results

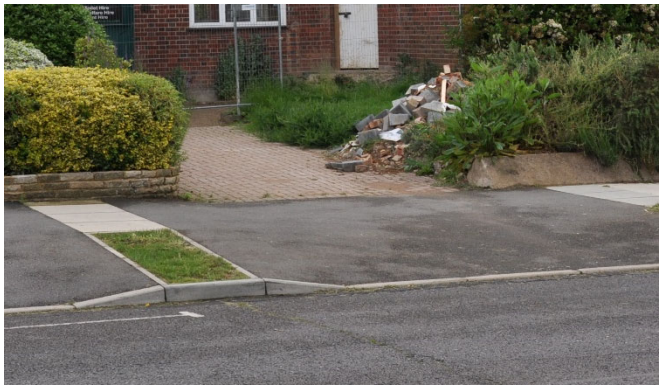
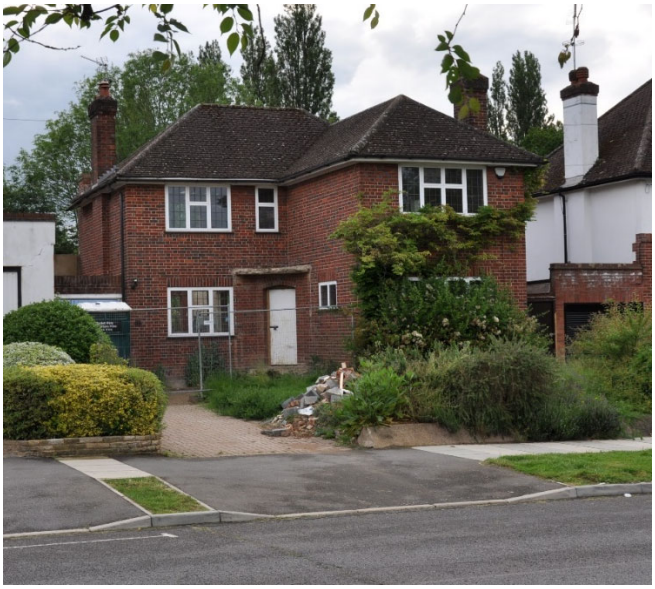
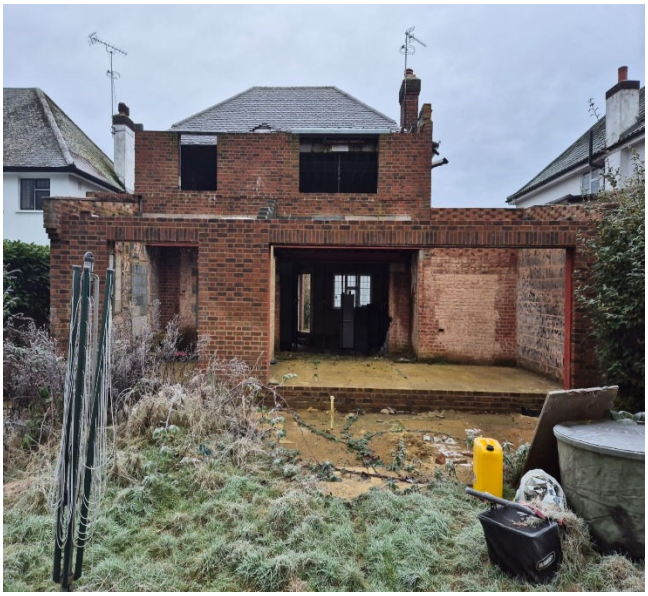
The site of the proposed development is a two storey detached residential building, located in an urban setting on a quiet cul-de-sac surrounded by similar urban plots. The plot size is approximately 665 Sq M with an existing building footprint of approximately 130 Sq M. The front garden (118 Sq M) is open to the road with no boundary fencing, the rear garden (410 Sq M) is contained by a 1.8m high close-boarded timber fence. The weather conditions recorded at the time of the survey are scheduled below:

Date:	11 January 2025
Temperature:	-1 ^{o}C
Humidity:	85%
Cloud Cover:	25%
Wind:	0.5 kts
Rain:	None

Field Survey Report: The house is currently unoccupied and has been stripped out internally as refurbishment works were underway in the summer of 2023. Originally it was intended to refurbish and re-model the house within the existing building envelope. The construction works were halted in October 2023 when the owners decided to apply for planning permission to add a two-storey extension to the front and side of the existing dwelling.

A full planning application was submitted on or about the 11 November 2023 and as yet the application is undetermined.

The Front elevation facing the street is largely intact and all of the windows are intact and in good condition. All of the windows and the original mono-pitched roof have been removed, and the building was left open to the elements when the construction work stopped in October 2023.

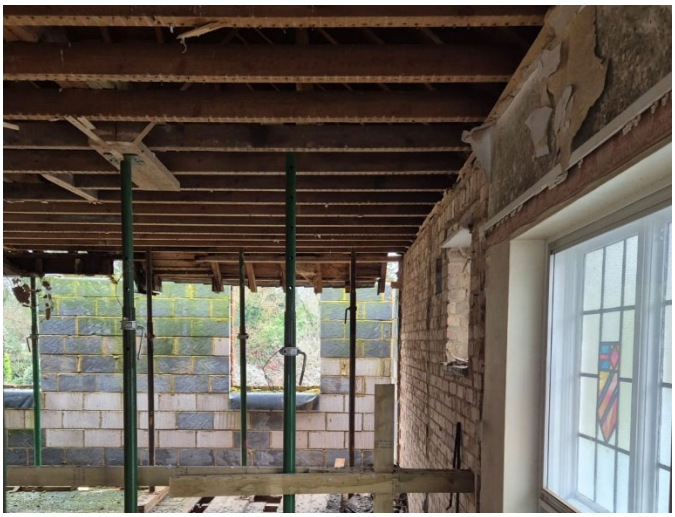
Bare Ground (Hard Standing): There are areas of hard standing to the south-east. Common ruderals and moss occur occasionally between the interlocking bock paving. The front garden consists of a lawned area with perimeter planting to the road edge. The lawned area is supported at the road edge by a concrete retaining wall.	 Existing block paving and concrete retaining wall
Exterior – Front Elevation: The existing dwelling is a detached is a detached two-storey brick-built building. It has a simple roof structure with hipped, pitched and flat roof sections. The building is currently unoccupied. The windows and external doors are UPVC with timber soffits/ fascia which are all in relatively good condition. The elevation is predominantly a two-storey structure with a flat roof over the garage and entrance porch.	 Front Elevation (Southeast Facing)
Exterior – Rear Elevation: The windows, doors and the mono-pitched roof to the rear elevation have been removed as part of the refurbishment works that were underway before the work was stopped and a planning application submitted in November 2023.	 Rear Elevation (Northwest Facing)

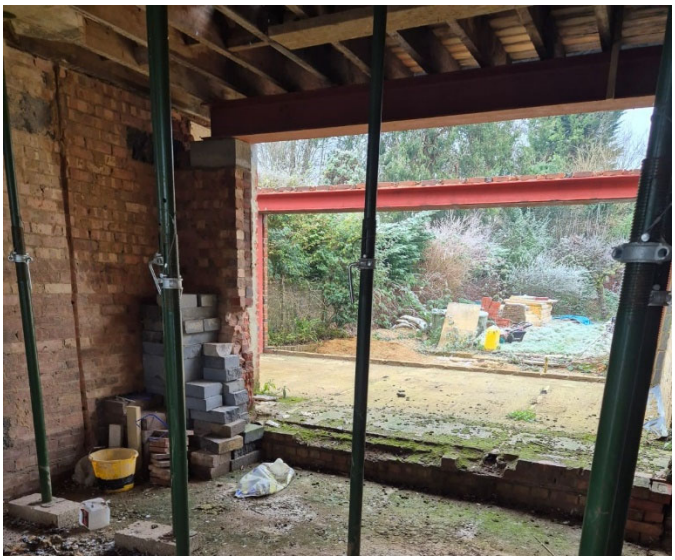
Interior – Ground and First Floor:

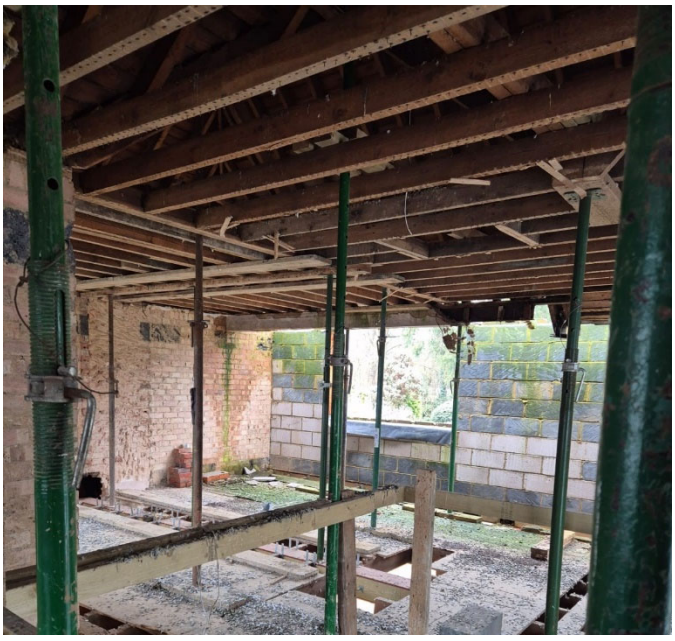
The ground and first floor of the house is open to the elements at the rear of the house. There is clear evidence that the house has become a roost for pigeons and there is an accumulation of pigeon droppings, including feathers, detritus and debris.

There is a significant accumulation of Pigeon droppings which must be cleared prior to any construction work recommencing.

A careful investigation of the accumulated detritus did not contain any evidence of Bat droppings and on the day of the survey there were no pigeons roosting in the house.



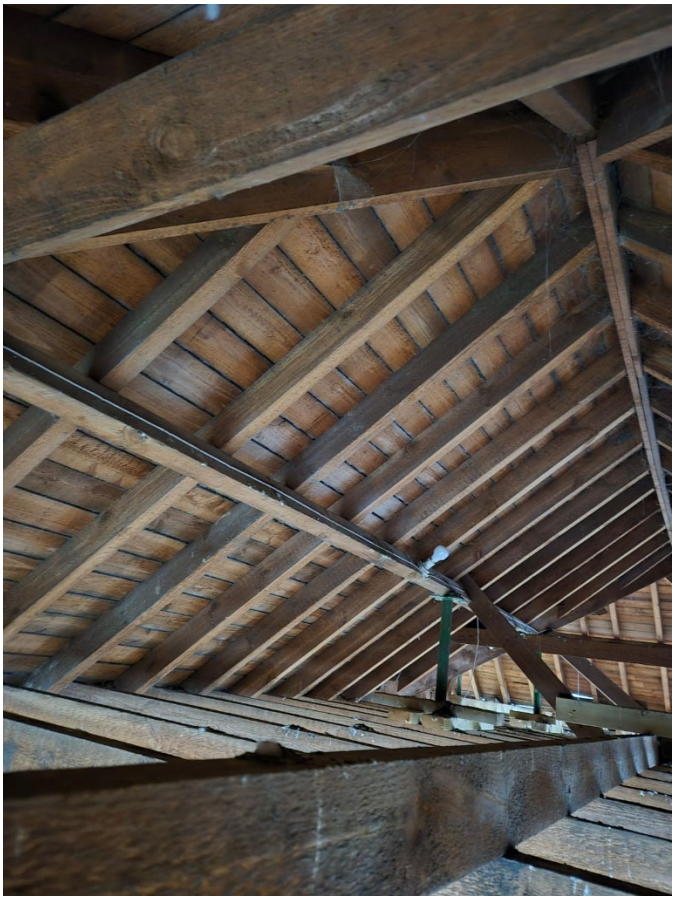


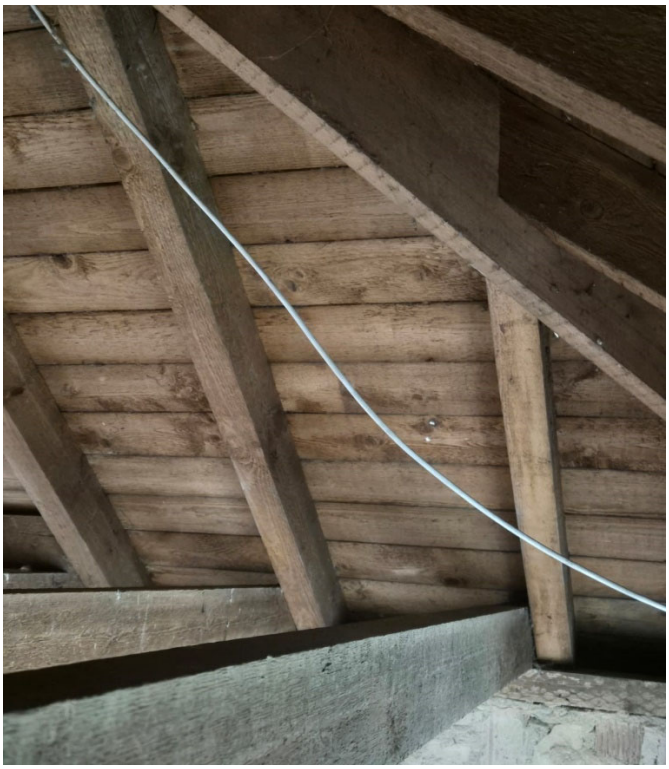


Interior - Roof and Loft:

The roof structure is a traditional closed couple roof consisting of timber rafters, purlins, ridge board, ceiling joists and horizontal binders.

A careful investigation of the entire loft space was conducted, there were many cobwebs within the loft void and on the date of the survey no evidence of bat roosting was seen. No bat droppings were found in any of the loft void.





6. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

6.1 Although as a householder application this development may be exempt from the national requirement to provide a mandatory BNG of 10% for the reasons set out in the introduction, the building owner has elected to provide BNG by the following means:

6.2 Plant an additional 11.5 m of hedge to the Northwest boundary of the site.

7. Bibliography:

- British Trust for Ornithology (2016) www.bto.org/about-birds/nnbw/putting-up-a-nest-box
- BS 42020, Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development (2013) http://www.eoebiodiversity.org/pdfs/BS42020.pdf
- BS 42020, Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development (2013) http://www.bsigroup.com/LocalFiles/en-GB/biodiversity/BS-42020-Smart-Guide.pdf
- Cheffings, C. and Farrell, L. (eds.) (2005) The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester. http://www.cieem.net/data/files/Publications/EcIA_Guidelines_Terrestrial_Freshwater_and_Coastal_Jan_2016.pdf
- CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Institute of Ecology https://www.cieem.net/data/files/Publications/Guidelines_for_Preliminary_Ecological_Appraisal_Jan2018_1.pdf Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London. https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/bat-surveys-for-professional-ecologists-good-practice-guidelines-3rd-edition
- Garland & Markham (2008) Is important bat foraging and commuting habitat legally protected? http://biodiversitybydesign.co.uk/cmsAdmin/uploads/protection-for-bat-habitat-sep-2007.pdf
- Google Earth (2021) accessed on 28/09/2021.
- Gregory R.D., et al (2009). Birds of Conservation Concern 3: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u12/bocc3.pdf
- HMSO: Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended 01.04.1996) http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1377
- HMSO: The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents
- HMSO: Countryside & Rights of Way Act (2000) http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1378

- HMSO: Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act (2006) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents
- HMSO: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made
- JNCC (2004) Bat Workers Manual, 3rd Edition. http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2861
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey a technique for environmental audit. http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/PDF/pub10_handbookforphase1habitatsurvey.pdf
- MAGIC database (2021) http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx accessed on 28/09/2021.
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.
- National Planning Policy Framework, 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix 1

Ecological Factor	Survey assessment conclusions (with justification)	Foreseen impacts	Recommendations	Enhancements The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (July 2021)
Designated Sites	The site is not subject to any designation, and there are no designated sites nearby with the potential to be affected by the proposed development.	None	No further surveys required.	N/A
Notable habitats and plants	There are no Priority habitats close to the site, within the zone of influence of the proposed works.	None	No further surveys required.	Part of the site could be left to grow naturally as a wildflower bed and natural hedgerow. The grass should be cut and raked once a year, preventing the build-up of thatch and nutrients.
Invertebrates	The site is likely to host common arable assemblage invertebrates.	The proposed development is not of a sufficient scale to have an impact on notable invertebrates.	No further surveys required.	Planting a greater diversity of flowering plants within garden areas/across the site will increase the diversity of insects, which will attract birds and foraging bats. Planting night-scented species such as Jasmine, Evening Primrose, Honeysuckle and Lavender in any proposed garden areas.
Non-native invasive species	No non-native invasive species recorded on site.	None	No further surveys required.	Replace non-native species with native fruit and flower bearing species.
Bats	The interior and the roof void of 25 St. Martin's Approach provided no evidence no evidence of bat droppings was found within the loft space, there were intact cobwebs between the principal roof rafters at high level in all areas of the roof voids, indicating no recent flying activity.	None	No further surveys required.	By planning condition to provide bat boxes integrated into the rear elevation.
Birds	The site provides a small area of habitat, in the form of dense shrub along the boundaries on the western and eastern elevations of the site.	Active nests could be destroyed during the development.	A close inspection of the building and scrub should be undertaken immediately prior to the commencement of works. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.	Install two bird boxes on the rear elevation of the house. "Vivara Pro Woodstone House Martin" nest. These nests should be sited underneath the eaves on exterior walls, at a minimum height of 2m above the ground.

Ecological Factor	Survey assessment conclusions (with justification)	Foreseen impacts	Recommendations	Enhancements The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (July 2021)
Reptiles	The site provides a small area of reptile habitat, in the form of dense shrub along the boundaries on the southwestern and the Northwestern boundaries of the site.	The proposed development could result in the loss of habitat for common reptiles. Any reptiles present during the works could be injured or killed.	No further surveys required but a precautionary approach is required to minimise the risk of killing or injuring reptiles. Site clearance works will be carried out under a precautionary method of working. The development area should be kept largely clear of vegetation in order to make it unattractive to reptiles. This clearance should be to ground level and be carried out in two stages, the latest stage undertaken at least 2 days prior to topsoil removal or other works to allow any reptiles present to move away. The first cut should be at about 15cm from the ground (the current state of the site) and the second (between 1 and 3 days later) close to the ground, thereby preventing injury to reptiles during clearance. The vegetation should then be maintained at a very short level (less than 5 cm) even if there are delays in development. Likewise, compost heaps or vegetation, log or rubble piles should be moved by hand prior to commencement of any work. A buffer around the boundaries and reptiles fencing to ensure any reptiles are restricted from accessing the site during development is recommended.	Creating more log, brash and rock piles along the site boundaries will create hibernacula and refugia for common reptiles. These should be positioned on areas of the site boundaries where reptiles could pass freely through. Waste materials created during the development e.g. log piles, brash, rocks etc, can be used to create hibernacula and refugia for common reptiles. These should be positioned on the site boundaries below the existing hedgerow which will be retained.
Amphibians	No suitable habitat on site for amphibians.	The proposed development is anticipated to have no impacts on common amphibians and GCN.	No further surveys required. A Reasonable Avoidance Measures approach is recommended for the site during the construction process. Contractors will adopt the following practices to safeguard common amphibians and GCN during the works: • Any materials will be stored on pallets on areas away from the vegetation ,to the site boundary. • Arisings from the development will be safely disposed of into a skip at all times to prevent common amphibians and GCN from using the rubble piles for hibernation. If a great crested newt is found at any stage of the development, works must stop.	Creating log, brash and rock piles along the site boundaries will create hibernacula and refugia for amphibians. Areas of rough grassland and other vegetation should be maintained along site boundaries.

Other Terrestrial Mammals	Survey assessment conclusions (with justification)	Foreseen impacts	Recommendations	Enhancements The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (July 2021)
Badgers	No suitable habitat.	None	No further surveys required.	N/A
Water Vole	No suitable habitat.	None	No further surveys required.	N/A
Otter	No suitable habitat.	None	No further surveys required.	N/A
Hazel Dormouse	No suitable habitat.	None	No further surveys required.	N/A
Hedgehog	The site provides suitable habitat for hedgehogs.	The proposed development will not result in the loss of habitat for hedgehogs. Any hedgehogs present during the works could be injured or killed.	No further surveys are required. However, the following recommendations are given to mitigate against potential harm to hedgehogs during the development works. • Any trenches dug should either be covered at night or have a rough sawn plank placed in them to act as a ramp for any wildlife which may fall in. • Security lighting to be directed away from the undergrowth. Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.	Gaps should be created in new boundary fences to provide commuting routes through the developed site for hedgehogs. Hedgehog houses should be incorporated into the developed site positioned in shady areas of the new gardens. Avoid the use of slug pellets, as hedgehogs can be killed when they consume slugs that have been exposed to them.
Foxes	The site provides suitable foraging habitat for foxes	The proposed development could have an impact on foraging foxes.	No further surveys are required.	Keep the centre of any lawn short so foxes can forage.