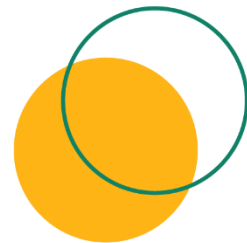




Balancing Growth with Green



# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



Sharad Karia  
Albuhera, Farm Road, Northwood, HA6 2NZ

December 2025

# Project Information

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

Sharad Karia ('the client') is seeking consent for a proposed development at Albuhera, Farm Road, Northwood, HA6 2NZ thereafter referred to as the 'potential development site'), which is within the Hillingdon Borough Council (HBC).

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing buildings and the construction of new residential dwellings. Existing and proposed plans are provided in Appendix A.

ACP Consultants Ltd. was instructed by the client to produce a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal to accompany the planning application to the HBC for consent to undertake the proposed works. Relevant planning policy and legislation can be found in Appendix C.

A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal has been prepared to assess the site's feasibility for this proposed development and identify need for any further consideration.

Local Authorities are tasked with determining new development and local planning applications against a wide range of social, economic, and environmental criteria. The purpose of this report is to assess whether the development proposal is compliant with the relevant local policies in terms of ecological impact as a result of the proposed development.

This assessment has been carried out in accordance with good practice guidelines, including the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and applicable local supplementary guidance.

The remainder of this report is presented in the following order:

- Section 2: Methodology;
- Section 3: Baseline Ecological Conditions;
- Section 4: Results and Evaluation;
- Section 5: Discussion and Recommendations;
- Section 6: Conclusions.

## 1.2 Objectives

- To survey and determine the ecological value of the site according to the UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)
- To identify how protected species are / may be using the site in order to assess its functionality to the local populations;
- To consider impacts to all habitats immediately adjacent to the site;
- To consider potential impacts to local statutory and non-statutory site either within 2km or for European level designations, a buffer deemed as appropriate by the relevant Planning Authority; and
- To assess the suitability of the proposed development site in terms of existing ecological factors.

## 2 Methodology

To achieve the objectives outlined in Section 1.2, a desktop study was completed followed by a site visit undertaken by Brydie Stacey and Aidan Tse.

### 2.1 Desktop Study

The desk study was undertaken by referring to the following data sources:

- Defra (2025). Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)

### 2.2 UKHab Site Survey

On the 22nd of August 2025, the field survey was completed at the site in order to obtain detailed baseline information regarding the habitats and possibility of protected species present.

The assessment identifies sites, habitats, species and other ecological features that are of value based on factors such as legal protection, statutory or local site designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Based upon this, recommendations for further, more detailed surveys are made as appropriate to confirm presence / absence of a protected species.

A UKHab Survey involved identifying and mapping the dominant habitat types within the site boundary. The survey and identification of habitats was undertaken in accordance with the UKHab Ltd (2023) methodology. UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (<https://www.ukhab.org>).

During the survey, a note was made of any field signs indicating the presence of protected species and the location of these signs was mapped. A record was also made of any other animal species identified within the site or adjacent areas during the survey. The results of the habitat survey are shown on UKHab Map, Appendix A.

### 2.3 Limitations

The results of the survey and assessment work undertaken by ACP Consultants Ltd. are representative at the time of surveying.

This document does not contain a comprehensive list of botanical species on site. Only plant species characteristics of each habitat and incidental observations of notable plant species were recorded. In addition, many plant species are only evident at certain times of year and so some plant species may have gone undetected.

Any third party and external data sources used may vary due to the quality and scale, the supporting information used to define locations/boundaries and sensitivity of the data itself. ACP Consultants Ltd. cannot take responsibility for the accuracy of external data sources and as such discrepancies and inaccuracies may occur.

Access to some areas of dense, overgrown scrub (see Figures 4.9–4.12) was restricted due to vegetation density and health and safety considerations. As a result, a detailed assessment of these habitats could not be undertaken. Observations were limited to accessible boundaries, and habitat classification is therefore indicative only. This represents a constraint to the completeness of the survey and should be considered in interpreting the findings, particularly if these areas are subject to future development or management proposals.

## 3 Existing Baseline

### 3.1 Overview

The following section sets out the existing conditions in relation to ecology for the proposed development. Relevant ecological information is available from several sources including local, regional, and national ecological reports and websites. For the purpose of this assessment, some data has been obtained from Defra provided geographical sources<sup>1</sup>.

### 3.2 Site Location

Data obtained from Defra shows the proposed development is not located on any type of protected land. Within a 5km radius of the site, there are five Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Ruislip Woods (1.6km south), Croxley Common Moor (2.2km north), Old Park Wood (3.2km west), Harefield Pit (3.7km west) and Mid Colne Valley (4.2km west). There were no Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within 5km of the proposed development. These sites are not expected to be impacted by the proposed development.

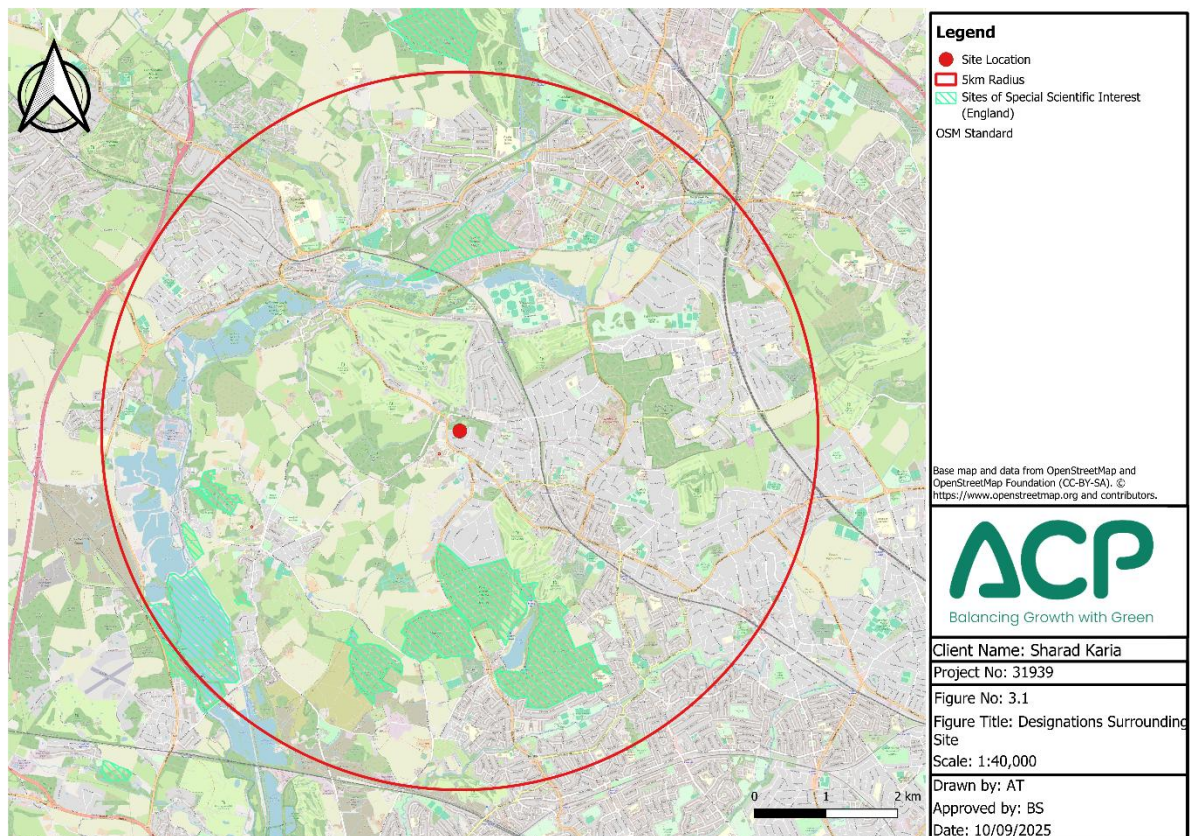


Figure 3.1 - Designations surrounding potential development site (Source: Defra)

<sup>1</sup>Figure 3.1 Area surrounding potential development site (Source: Defra).  
Defra (2025). Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)



### 3.3 Existing Baseline Conditions from Desktop Study

The site is situated in Northwood. The site is immediately adjacent to residential buildings and associated gardens to the east and west. Mount Vernon and Bishops Wood Hospital along with a few golf courses are located west and southwest of the site. There are 61 parcels of Woodland within 2km radius. 55 Broadleaved (0.02km north), 3 conifer (0.9km west), 2 mixed mainly broadleaved (1.3km west) and 1 mixed mainly conifer (1.1km northeast).

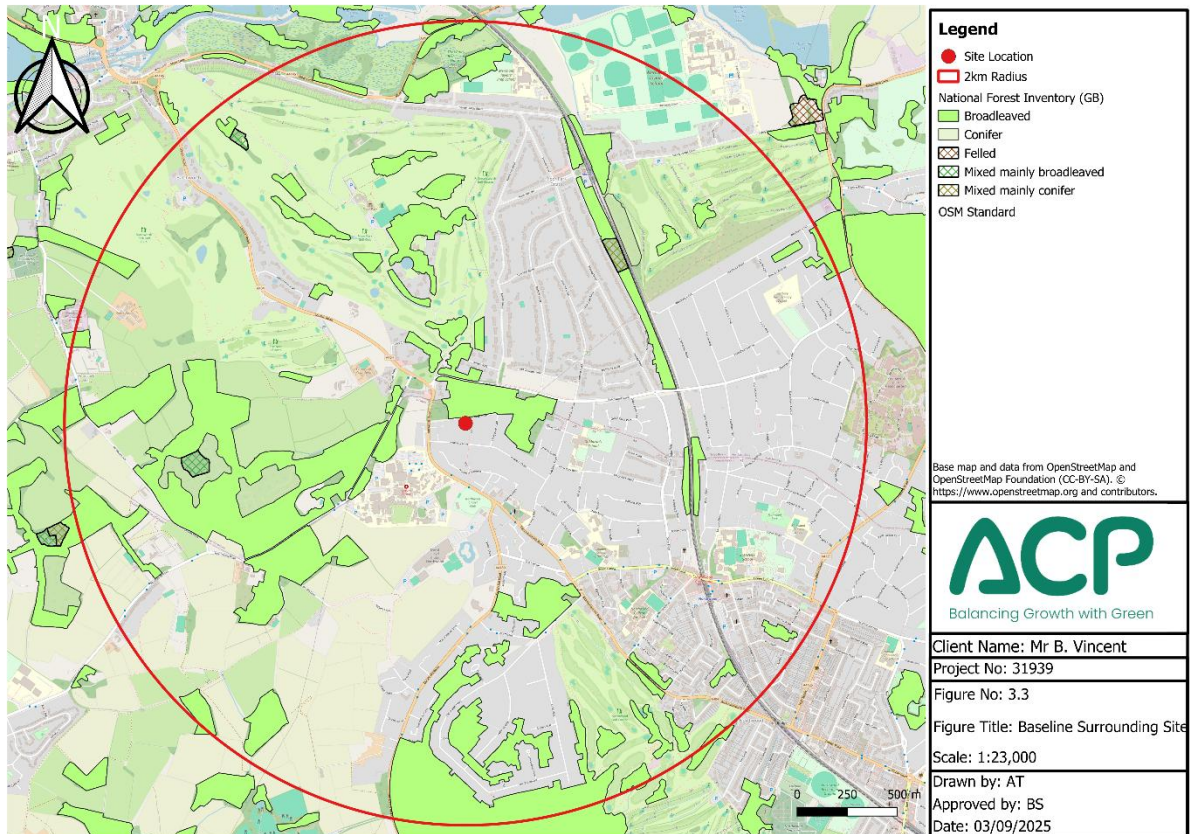


Figure 3.2 - Area surrounding potential development site (Source: Defra)



### 3.3.1 Protected Species

Figure 3.3 shows that there have been recordings of protected species present within 2km of the potential development site. There were 13 Granted European Protected Species Applications for bats (12) and amphibians (1) within 2km, with the closest being 0.42km north and 0.8km north respectively.

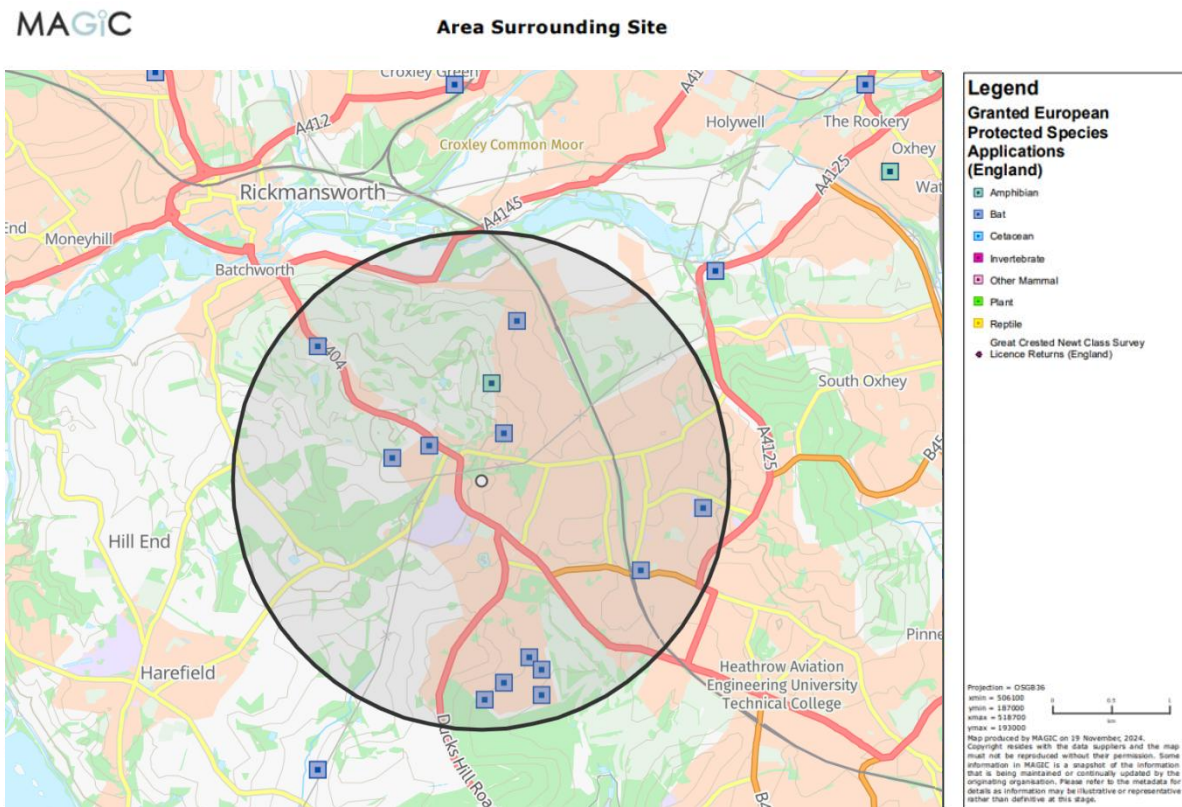


Figure 3.3 - Protected Species within 2km of the potential development site (Source: Defra)

### 3.4 Habitats on site

The habitats on site should be read alongside the UKHab Map (Figure 1, Appendix A). The site comprises Developed Land, Sealed Surface (u1b), Buildings (u1b5), Vegetated Garden (u828), and Trees (u200).

### 3.5 Protected Species

No presence or evidence of protected species was recorded during the survey. However, existing trees and buildings on-site could be suitable habitats for roosting bats and nesting birds. Whilst scrub and leaf litter may provide habitat for reptiles, the urban context of the site and limited degree of connectivity to other suitable habitats means reptile presence is unlikely. There were also no ponds or waterbodies present within 250 metres, meaning that Great Crested Newt presence is also not considered to be a constraint.



Figure 3.4 – Potential roosting habitat for bats (ACP, 2025).

### 3.6 Baseline Summary

Based on the data obtained from Defra and the UKHab survey, the proposed development is not anticipated to negatively affect any Special Sites of Scientific Interest. Protected species potentially could be present on site.

## 4 Results and Evaluation

### 4.1 Survey Conditions

Table 1: Summary of conditions during survey

Abiotic Factor	Survey 1
Survey type	PEA
Date completed	22.08.25
Precipitation	0
Weather Conditions	Dry

### 4.2 UKHab Survey

The site comprises Developed Land, Sealed Surface (u1b), Buildings (u1b5), Vegetated Garden (u828) and Trees (200).

Habitat types detailed below are listed in order of the UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (<https://www.ukhab.org>). The species list provided in this report reflect only those taxa observed during the survey.

#### 4.2.1 Developed Land, Sealed Surface (u1b) and Buildings (u1b5)

Figures 4.1 to 4.4 illustrate the existing areas of developed land on-site. This includes two outbuildings, a residential building, alongside associated areas of hardstanding ground (such as patios and access pathways). It is worth noting that some aspects of outbuildings were not fully visible, and that internal inspections were beyond the scope of this report.



Figures 4.1 and 4.2 – u1b5 (ACP 2025)

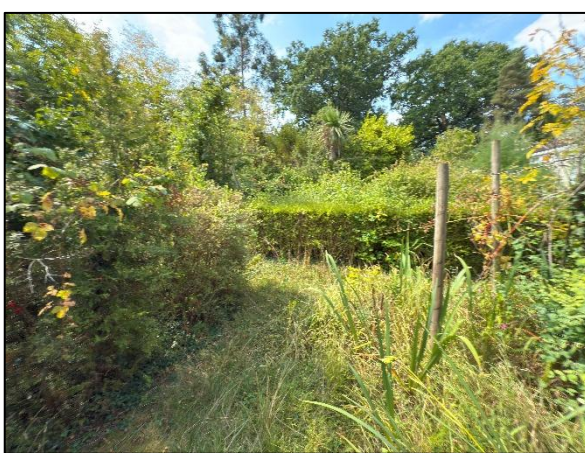
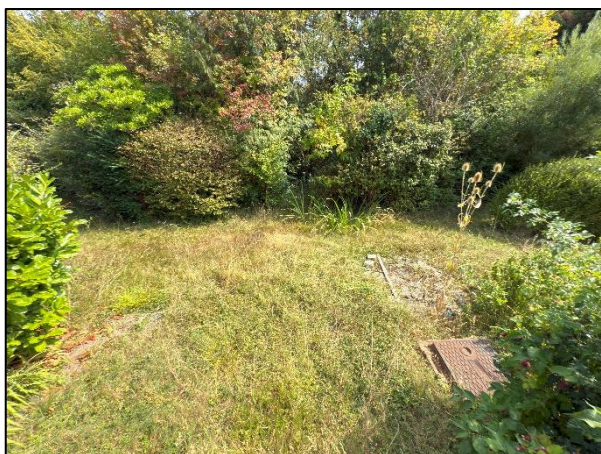




Figures 4.3 and 4.4 – u1b (ACP, 2025)

#### 4.2.2 Vegetated Garden (u828)

Figures 4.5-4.8 Show large areas of vegetated garden which make up a large portion of the site. Areas of vegetated garden comprised regularly mown lawn of low species diversity, with mixed shrubs including a range of ornamental species.



Figures 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 - u828 (ACP, 2025)



### 4.2.3 Trees (u200)

Many trees were observed to be present on-site (Figures 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11). Both native deciduous and coniferous trees were present.



Figures 4.9. 4.10 and 4.11 – u200 (ACP, 2025)



### 4.3 Protected Species

Species/Group	Desk Study Record	Potential Habitat	Other Relevant Factors	Potential Constraint?
Bats	12 Granted European Protected Species Applications for bats are present within the 2km radius, with the closest being 0.42km North.	Trees and buildings on site could provide suitable habitat for roosting bats.	No signs of bats were found on site.	Possible
Badger	No records found within the search parameters	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of badger were found on site.	No
Reptiles	No records found within the search parameters	Limited connectivity and an urban landscape prevents the likelihood of reptiles on site.	No signs of reptiles were found on site.	No
Great Crested Newt (GCN) and Amphibians	No records found within the search parameters	No suitable habitat on site as well as no waterbodies present within 250m of the proposed site.	No signs of Great Crested newts were found on site.	No
Water Vole	No records found within the search parameters	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of water vole were found on site.	No
Otter	No records found within the search parameters	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of otter were found on site.	No
Birds	No records found within the search parameters	Existing trees and scrub could provide suitable habitat for nesting birds.	No signs of nesting birds were found on site.	Possible
Dormice	No records found within the search parameters	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of Dormice were found on site.	No

## 5 Discussions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Potential Constraints

The following habitats and species have been identified as possible constraints to the proposed development:

- General nesting birds
- Bats

### 5.2 Further Surveys and Mitigation

#### 5.2.1 Further Surveys

Due to the nature of proposals (the demolition of existing outbuildings) and the presence of Granted European Protected Species Applications for bats within 2km of the site (Figure 3.3), there is a potential that proposed works may negatively impact bats or their roosts. As outlined in Section 4.2.1, potential bat roosting features were identified in existing buildings that are due to be modified as part of the proposed works. A Preliminary Roost Assessment (ACP, 2025) has been carried out and should be read in conjunction with this report.

It is recommended that the site is surveyed for nesting birds prior to any modifications or works. If such trees are to be modified, it is recommended that these should be surveyed for nesting birds prior to removal. It is worth noting that surveying for nesting birds is only required if building alterations or vegetation clearance takes place within the breeding season (March – August inclusive).

These additional ecological surveys and any subsequent mitigation strategies may be secured through a planning condition. It should be noted that all ecological assessments and recommendations presented are based on conditions observed during the site visit and represent a snapshot in time.

#### 5.2.2 Habitat Protection

It should be noted that external lighting could affect nocturnal species such as bats, therefore, a sensitive lighting scheme is recommended.

During construction and operation of the site, all relevant waste components should be stored securely with a waste management strategy in place to prevent spills and leaks into the wider environment.

In order to minimise the risk of harm to animals using the site it is recommended that preventative measures are in place during construction. These precautions are:

- Keep all fuel and other harmful substances in a locked area;
- Ensure any spillages are treated;
- Mammal ladders (such as a plank) or earth ramps to be placed in any open excavations at the end of each day;
- Cap off any open pipes at the end of each day; and
- Cover any open holes or install mammal ladders or earth ramps in any open excavations at the end of each day to prevent animals from becoming trapped.

## 6 Conclusions

This report provides an assessment of the following potential key impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed development at Albuhera, Farm Road, Northwood, HA6 2NZ. The aims were to:

- To survey and determine the ecological value of the site according to the UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (<https://www.ukhab.org>);
- To consider impacts to all habitats immediately adjacent to the site;
- To identify how protected species are / may be using the site in order to assess its functionality to the local populations;
- To consider potential impacts to local statutory and non-statutory site either within 2km or for European level designations, a buffer deemed as appropriate by the relevant Planning Authority; and
- To assess the suitability of the proposed development site in terms of existing ecological factors.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a UKHab survey of possible ecological affects has been undertaken for the proposed development. It has been recommended further surveys linked to vegetation clearance, bats and nesting birds be carried out.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the proposed development is not considered to conflict with any national, regional or local planning policies and will not have any significant or adverse impacts on protected species and their habitats, providing that no site work takes place without the surveys detailed in sections 5.1-5.2 being completed and if necessary, mitigation measures being implemented before construction.

## Appendices

**Appendix A: UKHab Map**

**Appendix B: Existing and Proposed Site Plans**

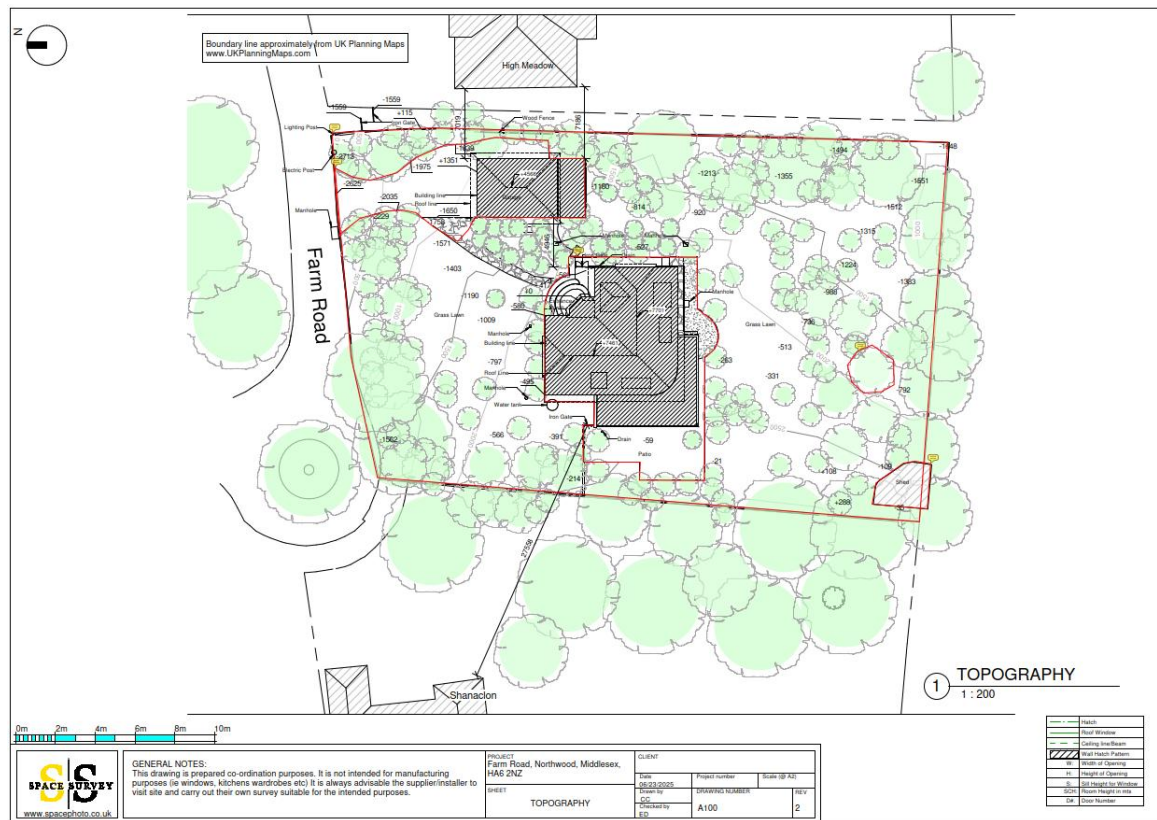
**Appendix C: Planning Policy & Legislation**

## Appendix A: UKHab Map

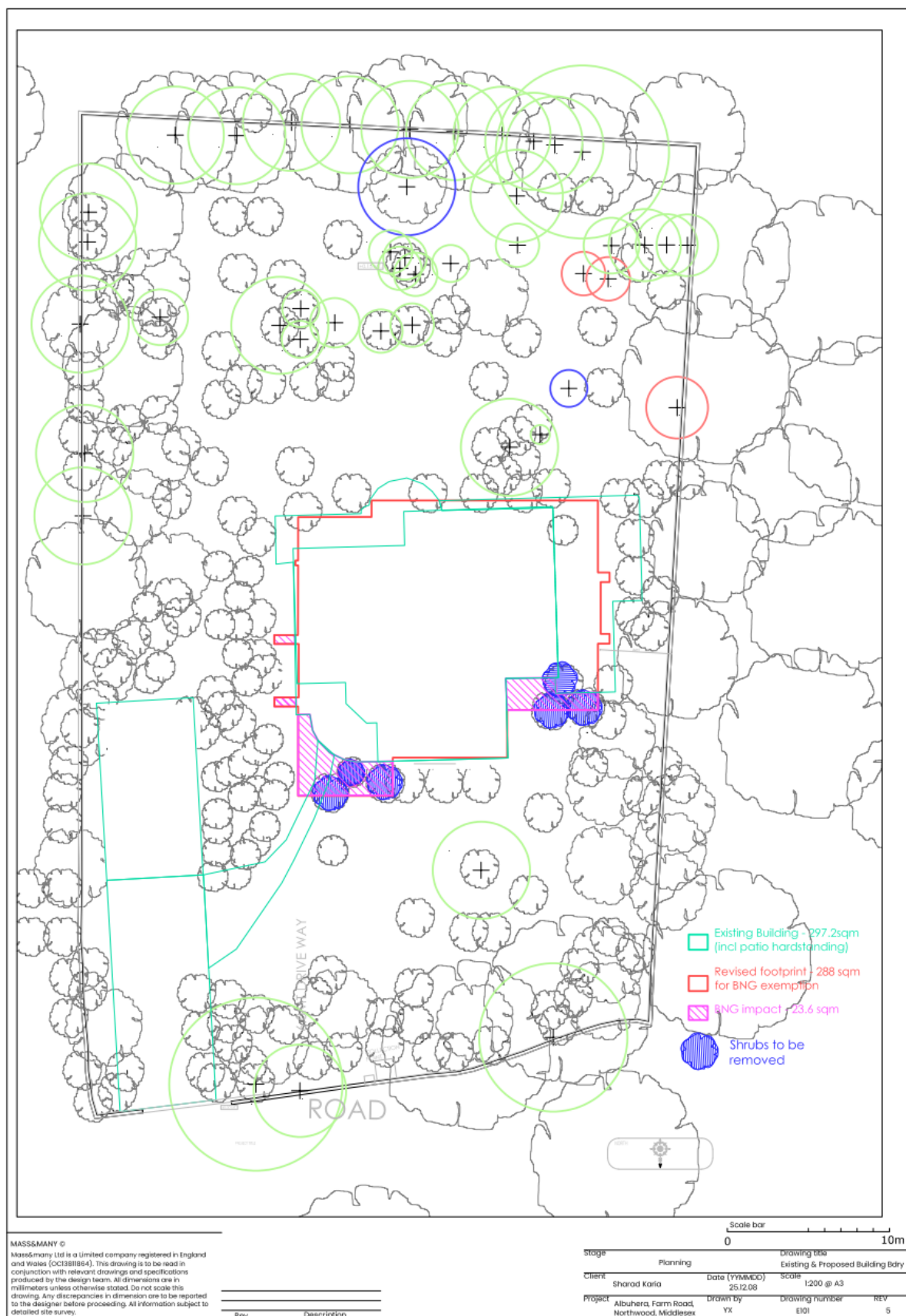




## Appendix B: Existing and Proposed Site Plans



### Existing Plans (Source: Client, 2025)



Existing Plans (Source: Client, 2025)

## Appendix C: Planning Policy & Legislation

This section summarises the relevant National and Local legislative and policy background, statutory and non-statutory guidelines relevant to the potential commercial development.

### National Policy

#### National Planning Policy (December 2024)

The principal national planning policy guidance with respect to the potential development is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The most recent update of the NPPF was published in December 2024 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This guidance sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. Three dimensions to sustainable development have been identified in the NPPF: economic, social, and environmental.

The NPPF Section 187 states that:

*"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

*a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*

*b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*

*c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*

*d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*

*e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*

*f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."*

Section 188 states that:

*"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."*

Section 189 states that:

*"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads<sup>63</sup>. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."*

Section 190 states that:

*“When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development<sup>64</sup> other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

Section 192 states that:

*“To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:*

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and*
- b) 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.”*

Section 193 states that:

*“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”*

Section 194 states that:

*“The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.”*



### 6.1.1 Relevant National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2016)

NPPG is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

The guidance note on 'Natural Environment' explains key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements. This has been referred to when preparing this report. It states that:

*"Planning authorities need to consider the potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, and the scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts when considering site allocations or planning applications. Guidance on the law affecting Habitats Sites, protected species and SSSIs.*

*Natural England has issued standing advice on protected species. A protected species mitigation licence from Natural England may be required before any work can start."*

The PPG also states that:

*"Information on biodiversity and geodiversity impacts and opportunities needs to inform all stages of development (including site selection and design, pre-application consultation and the application itself). An ecological survey will be necessary in advance of a planning application if the type and location of development could have a significant impact on biodiversity and existing information is lacking or inadequate. Pre-application discussions can help to scope whether this is the case and, if so, the survey work required.*

*Even where an Environmental Impact Assessment is not needed, it might still be appropriate to undertake an ecological survey, for example, where protected species may be present or where biodiverse habitats may be lost.*

*As with other supporting information, local planning authorities should require ecological surveys only where clearly justified. Assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity. Further guidance on information requirements is set out in making an application."*

Biodiversity net gain is mentioned in the PPG and states that:

*"The National Planning Policy Framework encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought through planning policies and decisions. Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures. It may help local authorities to meet their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006."*

## Species and Habitats Legislation

### The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidates all various amendments made to The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994, in respect of England and Wales. The 1994 Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive 1992 (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) into national law.

Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive list (respectively) habitats and species for which member states are required to establish and monitor SACs. The EC Birds Directive provides a similar network of sites (SPAs) for all rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex I and all regularly occurring migratory species, with particular focus on wetlands of international importance.

Together with SACs, SPAs form a network of pan-European protected areas known as 'NATURA 2000' sites.



The Habitats Regulations also make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade on the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, cut, uproot, destroy or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 4.

This legislation was amended in January 2021: The main changes to the 2017 Regulations are:

- “the creation of a national site network within the UK territory comprising the protected sites already designated under the Nature Directives, and any further sites designated under these Regulations
- the establishment of management objectives for the national site network (the ‘network objectives’)
- a duty for appropriate authorities to manage and where necessary adapt the national site network as a whole to achieve the network objectives
- an amended process for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- arrangements for reporting on the implementation of the Regulations, given that the UK no longer provides reports to the European Commission
- arrangements replacing the European Commission’s functions with regard to the imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) test where a plan or project affects a priority habitat or species
- arrangements for amending the schedules to the Regulations and the annexes to the Nature Directives that apply to the UK.”

### **The Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979)**

The Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979) aims to ensure conservation and protection of all wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats (listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention), to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to afford special protection to the most vulnerable or threatened species (including migratory species).

### **The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)**

The WCA is the primary UK mechanism for statutory site designation (Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSIs]) and the protection of individual species listed under Schedule 1,2,5 and 8 of the Act, each subject to varying levels of protection.

### **The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**

This legislation strengthens the provision of the 1981 WCA (as amended), both in respect of statutory sites such as SSSIs and protected species. It also places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities and other public bodies to further conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their functions, thus providing a statutory basis to the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process, which began in 1994. Section 74 of the Act lists the habitat types and species of principal importance in England. The UK Biodiversity action Plan has now been superseded by the ‘UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework’ (July 2012), however, many of the species and habitats in the UK and local BAPs have not been updated and are still considered relevant to date.

A Bill to amend the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to extend the right of public access to the countryside, including to woodlands, the Green Belt, waters and more grasslands; and for connected purposes is currently in second reading in the House of Commons (November 2022).