Manor Lodge
Rickmansworth Road
Northwood
HA6 2QT

Ecological Assessment

Luscinia Ecology
On behalf of
Merchant Land Investments Limited

Document Properties

Reference	Revision	Date	Author	Reviewer
LUS24163 EA	Draft	06/01/2025	Greg Nightingale	Greg Nightingale
LUS24163 EA	Submission	24/03/2025	Greg Nightingale	Greg Nightingale

Contents

Chapter 1: Summary

1.1 This report will be submitted alongside a planning application for the *"Demolition of existing house and construction of three pairs of semi-detached houses and associated alterations to access points, car and cycle parking and proposed hard and soft landscaping"* at Manor Lodge, Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, HA6 2QT. This report sets out an Ecological Assessment of the Proposed Development at the Site.

1.2 A data search and ecological surveys have been completed to determine the Proposed Development's impact, inform the Proposed Development's iterative design, (including implementation of the Mitigation Hierarchy), and to ensure the required ecological mitigation and compensation is embedded into the Proposed Development's design, or can be delivered via suitably worded planning conditions.

1.3 The Proposed Development will not result in impacts to the statutory and non-statutory protected sites in the local area.

1.4 The Proposed Development's avoids the loss of habitats of ecological importance as the Site is of low to negligible importance. The removal of hardstanding, garden, bramble scrub, introduced shrubs, and a small number of trees is not considered significant.

1.5 New landscaping and structural planting are proposed, and this includes new gardens, new native tree planting, new native shrub planting, and sedum rooves. These measures will maintain similar levels of greenspace within the Site, along with overall species and structural diversity at the Site. The greenspace and new tree planting will maintain opportunities for wildlife, as well as maintaining the overall permeability of the Site for wildlife. The overall impact on habitats from the Proposed Development will be at least neutral.

1.6 The mitigation, compensation, and enhancement, associated with the Proposed Development is as follows:

- A bat mitigation strategy as set out in this report.
- Avoidance and retention of habitats.
- Native tree planting to compensate for tree losses.
- Measures to protect badgers, bat flight-paths and foraging habitat, nesting birds, hedgehogs, and reptiles.
- Measures to enhance the Site for bats and birds.

1.7 The Applicant is aware of, and has committed to, all the mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures set out within this report.

1.8 Based on the results from the survey, context of the Site, and overall low ecological importance of the Site, this report is valid for a period of 18 months (i.e., the 17/06/2026).

Chapter 2: Introduction

2.1 A planning application for the *"Demolition of existing house and construction of three pairs of semi-detached houses and associated alterations to access points, car and cycle parking and proposed hard and soft landscaping"* at Manor Lodge, Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, HA6 2QT will be submitted soon. This report sets out an Ecological Assessment of the Proposed Development at the Site.

Site Description

2.2 The aerial image of the Site shows the Site consists of a residential plot, including a residential property, garage, and a curtilage of hardstanding and gardens (**Figure 1**). The Site is approximately 0.2 ha in size and located at National Grid Reference: TQ 08814 91173. The plot is accessed from Rickmansworth Road to the west. The surrounding landscape comprises dense development to the north and east and a golf course to the south and west. The golf course includes, and connects to, various areas of deciduous woodland, including a large area of ancient and semi-natural woodland 700m to the south of the Site.

Figure 1. Aerial image of the Site - red line shows the Site boundary[1]

Proposed Development

2.3 A planning application for the demolition of the existing buildings and replacement with six residential units, with associated access and landscaping will be submitted soon (referred to as the 'Proposed Development' throughout this report). Access will be via

[1] Image used under licence: ©2023 Google; Accessed: 06/01/2025.

a track, which leads to Rickmansworth Road to the west. The Proposed Development will result in the removal of the habitats within the Site and placement with buildings, hardstanding, and gardens. **Figure 2** shows the Proposed Development.

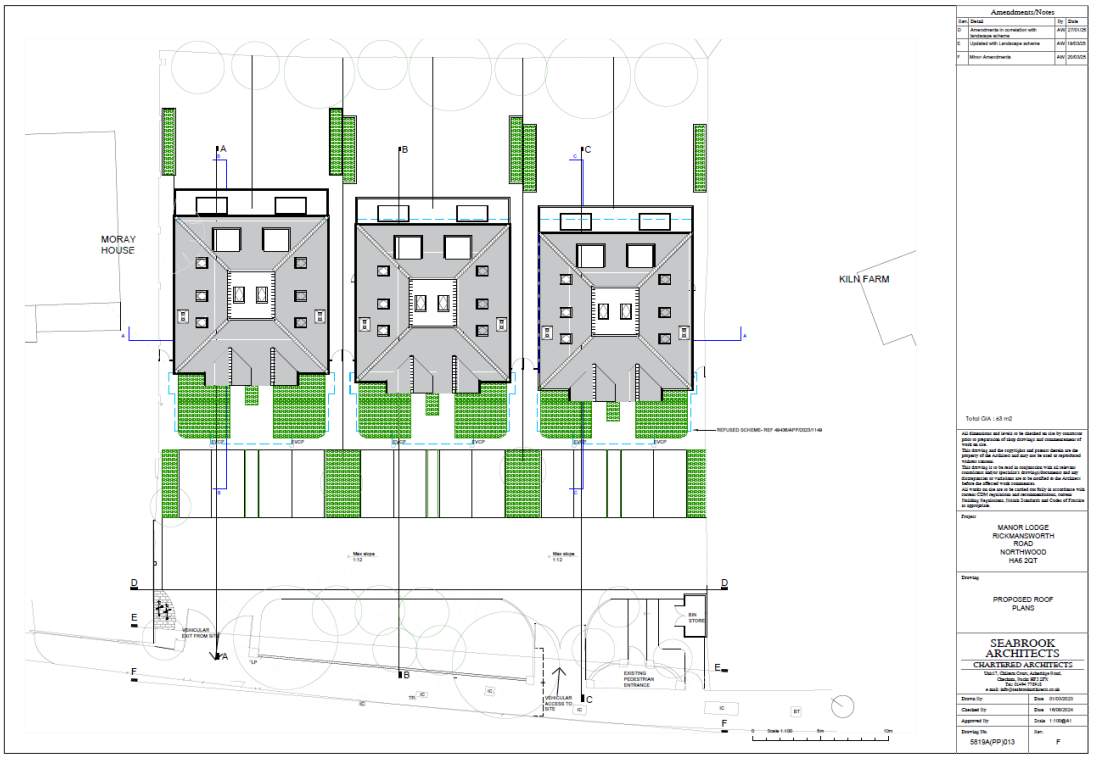


Figure 2. The Proposed Development

Purpose of this report

2.4 The purpose of this Ecological Assessment (EA) is to provide sufficient information for the Local Planning Authority to fully assess and understand the ecological outcomes of the Proposed Development. The key objectives of this EA are to:

- Outline the planning, legal, and landscape context of the Site.
- Ascertain the ecological importance of the Site by identifying and assessing the main habitats and plant communities within the Site and determining the presence/likely absence of protected species within the Site.
- Characterise and assess the ecological impacts/likely ecological impacts of the Proposed Development on the ecological importance of the Site.
- Follow the Mitigation Hierarchy to:
    - Demonstrate how the design of the Proposed Development has been shaped and revised since inception to minimise ecological impacts/likely ecological impacts (avoidance).
    - Demonstrate the Proposed Development's commitment to mitigation, compensation, offsetting, and enhancement in relation to protected and priority habitats and protected, priority and notable species.

- Outline the requirements for future monitoring of ecological receptors, impacted/likely impacted by the Proposed Development.

Chapter 3: Method

3.1 This report was written with regard to the CIEEM Guidelines on: Ecological Report Writing[2], Preliminary Ecological Appraisal[3], and Ecological Impact Assessment[4], as well as the British Standard on the Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development Biodiversity[5] and Writing Effective Ecological Reports[6].

Zone of Influence

3.2 The ecological impacts / likely ecological impacts of the Proposed Development will be largely confined to the construction zone within the Site itself and would include the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of habitats, along with ecological impacts (e.g., killing and injury) on protected, priority and notable species, including the loss of ecological functions such as (commuting, hibernation, breeding opportunities). In addition, consideration has been given to the following potential impacts, which may spread beyond the Site:

- Disruption to species and habitats within receiving range of dust, light, noise and pollution during demolition, construction, and occupation of the Proposed Development.
- Disturbance to habitats/species within walking/driving distance of the new residents of the Proposed Development once the Proposed Development is completed.

3.3 The surveys of the Site and search buffers used within the data search are sufficient to capture the full extent of the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the Proposed Development.

Data Search

3.4 A review of existing ecological knowledge of the Site and its surrounding area was undertaken on 30/12/24. The data search included the following:

- A 5km radius around the Site for statutory designated nature conservation sites[7].
- A 1km radius around the Site for granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL), great crested newt class survey licence returns, and great crested newt pond surveys 2017 - 2019[7].

[2] CIEEM (2015). *Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
[3] CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd Edition*. Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
[4] CIEEM (2018). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, and Coastal and Marine.* Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
[5] BSI (2013). BS 42020:2013: *Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development*. British Standards Institution, Bristol.
[6] Dean M. (2021). *Writing Effective Ecological Reports: A Guide to Principles and Practice*. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.
[7] Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) maps For England and Wales. *Available online at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm*

- A 1km data search from Greenspace Information for Greater London (GIGL) for protected and notable species and non-statutory sites[8].
- A 1km review of the habitats within the local landscape, habitat designations, and their suitability to support protected and notable species using aerial imagery[9].
- Ecological surveys and assessments submitted in relation to a similar scheme at the Site (49436/APP/2023/1149, Hillingdon Council)[10].

Field Surveys

3.5 The following surveys were undertaken at the Site:

- Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey[11]
- Bats: Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)[12]
- Bats: Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)[12]
- Bats: Bat Emergence Surveys (10/05/23, Greg Nightingale, Mungo Nash, and Richard Steele)[12]
- Consideration of suitability for protected and notable species
- Incidental observations (All dates on Site)

3.6 The surveys were completed on 17/12/2024 by Greg Nightingale unless otherwise stated. A detailed method for each of the surveys listed above is presented within that **Appendix A**.

Assessing Ecological Importance

3.7 The assessment of the importance of sites, habitats and species are made in line with good practice guidelines[4]. These guidelines provide consistency in the approach to evaluating the importance of the ecological features within a site and the effects or impacts the Proposed Development will have on them.

3.8 Firstly, the Site's habitats and species are assessed using a framework which assigns a level of geographical importance to ecological features. This framework incorporates a wide range of legislation and governmental guidance in assessing each feature's importance.

3.9 Next, the effects/likely effects of the Proposed Development are predicted, considering different stages and activities within the development process. These effects/likely effects are then assessed for their significance, based upon the importance of the Site, habitat or species being assessed. The assessment of the significance of an

[8] Greenspace Information for Greater London (GIGL), received 03/01/2025.
[9] Google Earth. *Available online at: https://earth.google.com/web/*
[10] Arbtech (2023). *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment: Manor Lodge, Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, HA6 2QT: Final.* Arbtech, Chester.
[11] UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0*. UKHab Ltd, Stockport.
[12] Collins, J. (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

effect/likely effect is considered before and after the proposed mitigation to give an overall indication of significance.

3.10 The importance of specific ecological receptors (sites, habitats, or species) is assigned according to their level of importance using the following terms:

- International
- National
- Regional
- County
- Local
- Site

Assessing Ecological Significance

3.11 The following factors are considered when assessing the significance of ecological impacts and effects: extent, magnitude, duration, reversibility, timing and frequency and cumulative effects.

3.12 An effect is considered significant if it either supports or undermines biodiversity conservation objectives for 'important ecological features' or for biodiversity in general. Conservation objectives may be specific (e.g., for a designated site) or broad (e.g., national/local nature conservation policy) or more wide-ranging (enhancement of biodiversity). Effects can be considered significant at a wide range of scales from international to local. Non-significant effects (referred to as 'negligible') are those changes which do not cause an effect (adverse or positive) on the conservation objectives for 'important ecological features' or for biodiversity in general.

3.13 Significant ecological effects are qualified with reference to an appropriate geographic scale. However, the scale of significance of an effect may not be the same as the geographic context in which the feature is considered important.

3.14 In determining if an effect is ecologically significant, the following is considered:

- For designated sites, the effect of the Proposed Development on the conservation objectives of the designated site and the conservation status of species or habitats for which the Site is designated is assessed.
- For ecosystems, the effect of the Proposed Development on ecosystem structure and function is assessed.
- For habitats and species, the effect of the Proposed Development on the conservation status is assessed as well as the effects of impacts on individual habitats and species.

Contributor information

3.15 The surveys and assessments were designed and led by Greg Nightingale. The EA was written by Greg Nightingale. Technical review of this assessment was undertaken by Greg Nightingale. **Table 1** outlines the relevant experience of the assessment contributor.

Contributor	Experience
Greg Nightingale BSc (Hons) MCIEEM	Greg is the Director of Luscinia Ecology (A CIEEM Registered Practice) with over 11 years of experience in ecology and environmental management in the private sector. Greg has worked extensively within the planning system, undertaking protected species surveys, habitat surveys and Ecological Impact Assessments as well as providing advice on habitat management and mitigation and enhancement design. He has a comprehensive understanding of environmental policy and the current and emerging challenges facing the environment and how these challenges are managed within the planning sector. Through an understanding of good practice, planning policy, the ecology of protected habitats and species, and environmental impact pathways, Greg provides robust ecological advice that is cognisant of wider planning and legal requirements. He is experienced in UKHabs Classification system and the Phase 1 Habitat classification. He has designed, undertaken, and reported on numerous habitat and protected species surveys (including Badger Surveys, Bat Emergence/Re-entry Surveys, Bat Activity Surveys, and Hazel Dormouse Surveys), including bespoke survey design and the implementation of numerous protected species mitigation strategies. Greg is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). He holds a level two Bat Licence, a level one Great Crested Newt Licence, and a NPTC (CS38) Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue qualification. In addition, he has been named on badger mitigation licences and has completed courses in barn owls, botany, breeding birds, and hazel dormouse.
Mungo Nash BSc (Hons)	Mungo has five years of private consultancy experience. He has been involved in Biodiversity Net Gain since 2019 and was a lead author on the Defra 3.1 metric guidelines. He has undertaken five seasons of bat emergence / re-entry surveys and is a competent botanist. In his current role, he has recently finished preparing the survey and assessment guidelines for the current national Biodiversity Net Gain assessment process. This role includes directly working with all contributors of the Defra 4.0 Metric guidelines to deliver a joined up and collective approach to Biodiversity Net Gain in England.
Richard Steele	Richard is an Assistant Bat Surveyor, who has been trained in bat emergence and re-entry surveys by a level 2 bat licenced surveyor. He has been undertaking emergence/re-entry bat surveys since 2022. During the survey, he worked in line with close guidance and direction from the Luscinia Ecology Team and was supported by a Canon XA60 infra-red camera and a Nightfox Red Infra-red camera.

Table 1. Contributor experience

Assumptions, Clarifications, and Limitations

Assumptions

3.16 None.

Clarifications

3.17 None.

Limitations

3.18 The limitations associated with the survey work, data analysis, and reporting are set out within **Table 2**, along with an analysis of the effect of the limitation on the validity and robustness of the decision making within this report.

Limitation	Analysis of effect
The desk study does not produce a comprehensive list of plants and animals as this is limited by factors that influence their presence (e.g., activity and dormancy periods), along with varied recording effort across the landscape.	The species records of the desk study reflect survey effort and therefore the data returned from each request is variable across the UK. As a result, the data search data has not been used to rule out the presence of protected species and habitats within and adjacent to the Site.
Measurements within this report are approximate – The mapping of baseline habitats and Proposed Development plans has relied upon the georeferencing of plans provided by the client.	The mapping of baseline habitats and Proposed Development plans has relied upon the georeferencing of plans provided by the project team. The process of georeferencing and mapping of polygon habitats at a fine scale may result in minor deviations from actual and proposed measurements. This has been controlled for *via* the use of advanced digitising tools and given the scale of the proposals any deviations in spatial areas or point locations are sufficiently minor to be inconsequential and will be subsumed within precautionary rounding.
The survey was undertaken in Winter, which is outside the optimum survey season for botanical surveys.	Although the survey was undertaken in Winter, the evaluation and habitat descriptions (and hence the impacts and their significance), are considered to be accurate for the following reasons: • Given the type of vegetation and habitats present, the valuation of the intrinsic interest is considered unlikely to change. • Access was possible to all areas of the Site and the vegetation was clearly visible. • Data was available from a previous assessment at the Site. Overall, the effect on the evaluation and habitat descriptions (and hence the impacts and their significance) was considered negligible.

The lofts of **B1** could not be accessed during the Preliminary Roost Assessment due to the presence of, or the potential presence of, asbestos, as confirmed by warning tape.	Certificates had been provided that the structure was asbestos free. However, it was not deemed necessary to enter the loft and the surveyor be subjected to *any* exposure. **B1** has previously been subject to an internal Preliminary Roost Assessment by an Ecologist who is an accredited agent on a class 2 bat licence. No evidence of bats was recorded within **B1** during this survey. The structure has also been subject to a single bat emergence survey. It was confirmed that **B1** has remained in a similar condition between these surveys and the recent survey on 17/12/24.
The central roof valley ends (the centre of the valley had two connected dormers, which closed the valley) and northeast tiling could not be viewed during the bat emergence survey due to the construction/design and positioning of the building in relation to the Site boundaries.	To overcome this constraint three surveyors were used, in combination with four infra-red cameras. This meant that both 'exits' of the roof valley, as well as the ridge lines could be viewed simultaneously and recorded. In addition, this meant surveyors could focus on the valley ends and ridge lines, with the understanding all areas were being recorded. Surveyors were also in radio contact and able to cross reference bat movements. This approach overcame the constraint. In addition, Appendix 3b: PRA Survey Plan of the previous ecological assessment sets out that there were no suitable features for bats along the northeast tiling. This limitation was overcome and has no effect on the outcome of the surveys.

Table 2. Summary of limitations and their effect

Chapter 4: Results and Assessment

Data Search

The Local Landscape Context

4.1 The surrounding landscape comprises dense development to the north and east and a golf course to the south and west. The golf course includes, and connects to, various areas of deciduous woodland, including a large area of ancient and semi-natural woodland 700m to the south of the Site. These features form the key green infrastructure within the local landscape. The key blue infrastructure includes a small watercourse approximately 40m to the north and another small watercourse approximately 90m to the west.

Statutory Designated Sites

4.2 Statutory designated sites are the most significant ecological receptors and include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and RAMSAR sites, which are all of **International Importance**, and Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs), which are of **National Importance**.

4.3 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are notified under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended) by local authorities and are of **Local Importance**. They are intended for public appreciation and enjoyment of wildlife. The LNR designation does not afford special protection; however, LNRs are protected under legislation and planning policy.

4.4 The statutory designated sites within returned by the desk study are shown in **Table 3**[13].

[13] Any SSSIs solely designated for their Earth Heritage are not shown within this table.

Site Name	Reason for designation	Distance and direction
Ruislip Woods SSSI	The area is designated for its lowland broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and lowland acid grassland.	0.7km south
Croxley Common Moor SSSI	The area is designated for its lowland acid grassland interest.	3.4km north
Old Park Wood SSSI	The area is designated for its lowland broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland.	3.8km west
Mid Colne Valley SSSI	The area is designated for its lowland calcareous grassland and standing open water and canals.	4.4km west
Batchworth Heath LNR	The area supports heathland, an ancient pond, and rich wildlife.	1.4km north
Oxhey Woods LNR	The area supports a range of habitats which make it one of the most important woodlands in the county.	1.9km northeast
The Withey Beds LNR	The area supports a former willow coppice and is one of the few remaining wetlands in Hertfordshire. Habitats include: wet woodland, marsh, drier grassland and open ditches as well as the River Colne.	2.8km north
Prestwick Road Meadows LNR	The area supports a seasonal pond that attracts frogs *Rana temporaria* and herons *Ardea cinerea* in the Spring.	3km northeast
Ruislip LNR	The area supports a species-rich association of willow *Salix spp.* carr, tall fen and swamp communities. Additional diversity is provided by the juxtaposition of the woodland with areas of acidic grassland, neutral grassland and open heath.	3.2km southeast
Croxley Common Moor LNR	The area supports open moorland and ancient woodland with hazel *Corylus avellana* coppice.	3.4km north
Rickmansworth Aquadrome LNR	The area supports lakes, grassland and woodland.	4km northwest
Lairage Land LNR	The area supports rough grassland, plantation woodland and scrub, the river Colne, riparian habitats, and reedbed.	4.1km north
Stockers Lake LNR	The area supports one of the oldest gravel pits in the Colne Valley. The lake supports wintering ducks and over sixty recorded species of breeding birds.	4.2k northwest
Frays Valley LNR	The wildlife-rich Frays River passes through the Frays Farm Meadows SSSI. The area is known to support: harvest mouse *Micromys minutus*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, and water vole *Arvicola amphibius*.	4.9km southwest

Table 3. Summary of statutory designated sites returned by the desk study

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

4.5 In the Greater London Authority, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are designated[14]. There are three tiers of sites:

- Sites of Metropolitan importance

[14] Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) and Locally Important Geological Sites (LIGS) designated for their Geodiversity are not shown within this table.

- Sites of borough Importance (Borough I and Borough II)
- Sites of Local Importance

4.6 SINCs are of Local Importance. The non-statutory designated sites within returned by the desk study are shown in **Table 4**.

Site Name	Reason for designation	Distance and direction
Ruislip Woods and Poor's Field SNCI (Metropolitan grade)	The area supports acid grassland, ancient woodland, heathland, a pond/lake, and reed bed. The avifauna of the site is diverse, with breeding sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*, tawny owl *Strix aluco* and occasionally woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* and wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. The site is one of London's most important sites for specially-protected bats (with at least nine species recorded) and reptiles.	0.7km south
Haste Hill Gold Course, Northwood Golf Course and Northwood Park SNCI (Borough Grade I)	The area supports acid grassland, amenity grassland, bare ground, coniferous woodland, hedge, roughland, running water, scattered trees, scrub, secondary woodland, semi-improved neutral grassland, wet grassland, and wet woodland/carr. The area is also important for reptiles.	0.48km south
Gravel; Pit, Northwood SNCI (Borough Grade II)	The area supports amenity grassland, ruderal, scrub, secondary woodland, and semi-improved neutral grassland.	0.26km northwest
Northwood Railway Cutting SNCI (Borough Grade II)	The area supports scattered trees, scrub, and semi-improved neutral grassland.	0.49km northeast
Fields and Hedgerows South of Mount Vernon Hospital SNCI (Borough Grade II)	The area supports hedge, a pond/lake, roughland, ruderal, scattered trees, and semi-improved neutral grassland.	0.97km northwest

Table 4. Summary of non-statutory designated sites returned by the desk study

Protected and Notable Species

4.7 The relevant protected species records from the data search are incorporated into the Protected and Notable Species section, below.

Habitat Survey

4.8 The Site supported the following habitats:

- **Heathland and shrub**: Bramble scrub
- **Hedgerow**: Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- **Individual Tree**: Urban tree
- **Urban**: Developed land; sealed surface
- **Urban**: Developed land; unsealed surface

- **Urban**: Introduced shrub
- **Urban**: Vegetated garden

4.9 All the habitats and features described are shown on the Extended UK Habitat Classification Plan at **Appendix B**.

Heathland and shrub: Bramble scrub

4.10 There was a small area of low-lying bramble *Rubus fruticosus* scrub to the rear of the main building, to the rear of the garage building (**Photographs 1 and 2**), and in the northern corner of the Site. The area had developed due to the disused of garden boundaries. The **bramble scrub** was of **Negligible Importance**.

Photograph 1. Bramble scrub behind B1

Photograph 2. Bramble scrub behind B2

Hedgerow: Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

4.11 A common yew *Taxus baccata* hedgerow was present along the frontage of the Site, behind a tree line. The hedge had previously been well maintained. The **ornamental hedgerow** was of **Negligible Importance**.

Individual Tree: Urban tree

4.12 There were five trees within the Site. The details of the trees and their Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) are set out in **Table 5**[15]. The **trees** were of **Site Importance**.

[15] The technical data and labels of the trees are taken from the Proposed Developments Tree Survey.

Tree	Description, including Diameter at Breast Height
T1 (**Photograph 3**)	A plum *Prunus domestica* towards the northern corner of the Site. The tree had a 190 DBH, with a full canopy that oversailed vegetation.
T2 (**Photograph 4**)	A common pear *Pyrus communis* towards the western corner of the Site, behind **B2**. The tree had a 200 DBH, with a with a full canopy that oversailed vegetation.
T3 (**Photograph 5**)	A common beech *Fagus sylvatica* at the southern corner of the Site. The tree has a 160 DBH, with a with a full canopy that oversailed vegetation.
T4 (**Photograph 5**)	A common beech at the southern corner of the Site. The tree has a 160 DBH, with a with a full canopy that oversailed vegetation.
T12 (**Photograph 6**)	A plum towards the western corner of the Site, behind **B2**. The tree had a DBH of 80, with a with a full canopy that oversailed vegetation.

Table 5. Trees within the Site

Photograph 3. T1

Photograph 4. T2

Photograph 5. T3 and T4

Photograph 6. T12

Urban: Developed land; sealed surface

Buildings

4.13 There were two buildings within the Site: the main structure (**B1**) and the garage (**B2**).

4.14 **B1** was a brick built two-and-a-half storey structure with a double-ridge roof clad in clay roof and ridge tiles (**Photographs 7 – 10**). There was a single stored half-hipped extension on the southern elevation. Three brick chimneys were present. The structure was partially rendered, the doors and windows were wooden framed and boarded. Wooden soffits were present. Brick cavity walls were expected to be present. Various loft spaces were present but were not accessed due to signage (**Photograph 11**). The four interconnected loft spaces were accessed and described within the previous ecological assessment. In summary the loft spaces were sarkin lined, tightly sealed with no light ingress, partially boarded, ridge lines and support beams were dusted and cobwebbed, and were each approximately: 3m tall by 4m wide by 4m long.

Photograph 7. B1, south-westerly elevation (front)

Photograph 8. B1, north-westerly elevation (side)

Photograph 9. B1, north-westerly elevation (side) and north-easterly elevation (rear)

Photograph 10. B1, north-easterly elevation (rear), and south-easterly elevation (side)

Photograph 11. B1, loft access with signage (ASBESTOS DETECTED HERE KEEP OUT)

4.15 **B2** was a timber and block garage, with a hipped roof which had no tiles present (**Photographs 12 and 13**). A single storey wooden extension was present on the southwest elevation, which included the wooden entrance door into the structure. Various windows and skylights were present. The floor was concrete. No loft voids or brick cavity walls were present (**Photograph 14**).

Photograph 12. B2, south-westerly elevation (front)

Photograph 13. B2, south-westerly elevation (front) and south-easterly elevation (side)

Photograph 14. B2, internal

4.16 The **buildings** were of **Negligible Importance**. The importance of the buildings in relation to bats and birds is discussed within the Protected and Notable Species section below.

Hardstanding

4.17 Hardstanding, in the form of concrete and paving was present within the Site (**Photograph 15**). The areas formed the entrance to the Site and the curtilage to the buildings. The **hardstanding** was of **Negligible Importance**.

Photograph 15. An area of paving (to the side of B1)

Urban: Developed land; unsealed surface

4.18 Areas of unsealed surface, comprising a gravel driveway and track were present with the Site (**Photograph 16**). These areas had become moss covered and partially overgrown and encroached by garden and lawn. The **unsealed surface** was of **Negligible Importance**.

Photograph 16. Unsealed surface, moss covered

Urban: Introduced shrubs

4.19 The Site supports a former garden. The boundaries have not been maintained. The southwestern boundary supports a line of conifer trees, formed of Monterey cypress *Cupressus macrocarpa* and Lawson cypress *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* (**Photograph 17**). The north-westerly boundary is formed of coralberry *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus* (**Photograph 18**). There were also scattered individuals of introduced shrubs across the Site. In addition, *cotoneaster horizontalis* was recorded within the Site in two locations (**Photograph 19**; approximately within the centre of the Site). *Cotoneaster horizontalis* is a Schedule 9 species and is therefore legally controlled. The **introduced shrub** was of **Negligible Importance**.

Photograph 17. Line of trees (introduced shrub)

Photograph 18. Coralberry (background of image)

Photograph 19. Cotoneaster horizontalis

Urban: Vegetated garden

4.20 The majority of the Site was a vegetated garden, which had been left unmanaged. Former lawns had become overgrown (**Photograph 20**), boundaries had encroached into the Site (as described above), and paving and gravel had become partially colonised (as described above). The grassland appeared unmanaged for a number of years, and had a varied sward height and dense, consistent ground cover. Various waste materials had been stored in the southern corner of the Site (**Photograph 21**).

4.21 Species recorded in the area included: annual meadow grass *Poa annua*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, common vetch *Vicia sativa*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale agg*., fescue sp. *Festuca sp*., herb robert *Geranium robertianum*, ivy *hedera helix*, a moss species, perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* (dominant), smooth meadow grass *Poa pratensis*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. The previous ecological assessment of the Site also recorded speedwell spp., cranesbill spp., wallflower spp., fleabane spp. ragweed, and fiddle dock *Rumex pulcher*. Additional species which had recently established within the garden as saplings included: ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, beech, bramble, English oak *Quercus robur*, hazel, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, and silver birch *Betula pendula*.

4.22 The **vegetated garden** was of **Negligible Importance**.

Photograph 20. Former lawn

Photograph 21. Waste materials

Offsite habitats

4.23 An ornamental hedge was present offsite, adjacent to the southeastern boundary (**Photograph 21**).

Photograph 22. Offsite ornamental hedge

Protected and Notable Species

4.24 Based upon the nature, location, and characteristics of the Site and adjoining landscape, the suitability of the Site to support the following species/species groups is outlined below:

- Amphibians, including great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*
- Badgers *Meles meles*
- Bats
- Birds
- Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*
- Reptiles

4.25 If a species or species group is not listed above, then it has been entirely scoped out of this assessment based upon the nature, location, and characteristics of the Site and adjoining landscape.

Amphibians

4.26 There were no granted great crested newt EPSLs, no positive great crested newt pond surveys (2017 – 2019), or great crested newt class survey licence returns within 1km of the Site. GIGL did not return any records of amphibians. The previous assessment set out that great crested newts and other amphibians were unlikely to be on Site.

4.27 A review of aerial photography and OS Mapping confirmed that there no ponds within 250m of the Site and that there was one pond within 500m of the Site (**P1**). **P1** was located approximately 430m to the northwest, within an area of open space termed 'the gravel pits' which is connected to a golf course located to the southwest of the Site. The pond was separated from the Site by an 'A' road (Rickmansworth Road). In addition, a small pond/ditch approximately 40m to the west, was shown on online mapping but did not appear to be present based upon a review of aerial mapping.

4.28 There were no breeding opportunities for amphibians within or adjacent to the Site. In addition, there are no ponds, watercourses, or ditches within 250m of the Site. Furthermore, the Site is not located within the commuting pathway between a network ponds. The habitats within the Site are of low suitability for amphibians during their terrestrial phases. The likelihood of amphibians being present within the local landscape or within the Site is negligible.

4.29 The **amphibian interest** was of **Negligible Importance** and amphibians will not be discussed further within this report.

Badgers

4.30 GIGL returned one badger record. The record was from 2015. The location was not provided. The previous ecological assessment did not record any evidence of badger activity within the Site and reasoned the species was highly unlikely to be on Site.

4.31 There was no direct evidence of badgers (setts, hairs, prints, latrines, etc.) within the Site. The wider 30m adjacent to the Site was also searched where access was possible. No evidence of badgers was found within these areas. There were no mammal paths leading into or from the Site. It is expected that badgers are present within the wider landscape, likely within the woodland to the east, and therefore badgers could enter the Site in the future. Given the Site is predominantly buildings, hardstanding, and low-lying garden areas, it is considered unlikely that a badger sett would be established within the Site.

4.32 The **badger interest** was of **Site Importance** as a precaution.

Bats

Data search

4.33 There were five granted EPSL for bats within 1km of the Site, these related to the following:

- Three allowed the destruction of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipstrellus* resting place.
- One allowed the destruction of breeding and/or resting places of brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and common pipistrelle
- One allowed the destruction of resting places of brown long-eared and Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*

4.34 The previous ecological assessment of the Site set out the following:

- No evidence of bats was found within **B1** or **B2**.
- **B1** was of **Low Suitability** to support a bat roost and recommended a single bat emergence or re-entry survey was undertaken.
- No assessment of the suitability of **B2** in relation to roosting bats and no requirement to survey **B2**. Therefore, it is presumed that **B2** was assessed to be of **No (None) Suitability** to support a bat roost.
- None of the trees had suitability to support bat roosts.

4.35 GIGL returned eight records of four bat species, including: brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*, and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. None of the records were within 500m of the Site. One of the Leisler's bat records was confidential and presumably this related to a roost.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

4.36 There were two buildings within the Site (**B1 and B2**) as described above. No evidence of bats was found within either structure. Access into the loft spaces of **B1** was not possible (see the limitations section above). An assessment of the suitability of each of the buildings to support a bat roost is set out below and within **Table 6**. **B1** was assessed to be of **Low Suitability** due to the presence of Potential Roost Features, for example:

- Missing tiles on the main roof (**Photographs 23 and 24**)
- Lifted lead flashing (**Photographs 24 and 25**)
- Broken and lifted tiles on the single-storey extension (**Photographs 25 – 27**)

Building	Suitability of Materials	Loft space	Cavity walls	Evidence of bats	Suitability
B1	Moderate	Present	Present	No	Low
B2	Poor	Absent	Absent	No	No (None)

Table 6. Suitability of the buildings within the Site to support bat roosts

Photograph 23. B1, Missing tile

Photograph 24. B1, missing tile and lifted lead flashing

Photograph 25. B1 single-storey extension, missing tile and lifted lead flashing

Photograph 26. B1 single-storey extension, broken tile

Photograph 27. B1 single-storey extension, broken tile and missing tile

Bat Emergence Survey

4.37 One Emergence Survey was undertaken of **B1**. **Table 7** and **Appendix C** set out the results of the Emergence Survey. **The surveys confirmed that bat roosts were absent from B1.** Extracts of the night vision camera footage at the start and end of the survey are shown in **Figures 3 – 10**.

Date	Survey Type	Survey Times	Temp °C	Cloud Okta	Rain	Wind *B
10/05/23	Dusk / Emergence	20:24 – 22:09 Sunset: 20:39	16.1 – 12.9	8 – 8	Light rain during the day	1 – 0
No emergence. Activity was limited to common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle, with the majority of the activity being of soprano pipistrelle. The bats were foraging over the Site and open space to the north of the Site.						

Table 7. Emergence survey results

Figure 3. Position 1: Survey Start, viewing from northwest corner of the building (Canon XA60, operated by Rich Steele)

Figure 4. Position 1: Survey end, viewing from northwest corner of the building (Canon XA60, operated by Rich Steele)

Figure 5. Position 2: Survey Start, viewing from northwest corner of the building (Nightfox Red, operated by Rich Steele)

Figure 6. Position 2: Survey end, viewing from northwest corner of the building (Nightfox Red, operated by Rich Steele)

Figure 7. Position 3: Survey start viewing from southwest corner of the building (Nightfox Red, operated by Mungo Nash)

Figure 8. Position 3: Survey end viewing from southwest corner of the building (Nightfox Red, operated by Mungo Nash)

Figure 9. Position 4: Survey start, viewing from southeast corner of the building (Nightfox Red, operated by Greg Nightingale)

Figure 10. Position 4: Survey end, viewing from southeast corner of the building (Nightfox Red, operated by Greg Nightingale)

Ground Level Tree Assessment

4.38 There were a number of trees within the Site (as described above). All of the **trees** within the Site had **No (None) Suitability** to support bat roosts. This was due to their size, age, health, and physical lack of Potential Roost Features (PRFs).

Flight-paths and Foraging Habitat

4.39 The Site supports a simple habitat structure formed of manmade habitats and/or poor-quality habitats, with limited connectivity. The wider landscape is residential, aside from the golf course which is located on the other side of Rickmansworth Road. The key green infrastructure within the local landscape, does not include the Site.

4.40 Given the Site includes a garden, and is linked to a network of gardens, the Site broadly meets the criteria in relation to Moderate Suitability (Linked back gardens). The **habitat within the Site** was assessed to be of **Moderate Suitability for bat flight paths and foraging habitat.**

Nesting birds

4.41 GIGL returned 102 records of 24 bird species, including: black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, common tern *Sterna hirundo*, crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*, cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, gadwall *Mareca strepera*, greenfinch *Chloris chloris*, grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, house martin *Delichon urbicum*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, lesser redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*, lesser spotted woodpecker *Dryobates minor*, little egret *Egretta garzetta*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, pochard *Aythya ferina*, red kite *Milvus milvus*, redwing *Turdus iliacus*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, swift *Apus apus*, tawny owl, and woodcock.

4.42 The previous ecological assessment set out that the vegetation within the Site had suitability to support nesting birds. The Site supported areas of vegetation suitable for nesting birds in the form of introduced shrub, bramble scrub, a hedgerow, and scattered trees. **B1** also supported features that may be used by nesting birds including open wooden soffits (**Photograph 28**). The door of **B2** was open and a window was broken, these features will allow birds to enter **B2** and possibly use **B2** to nest. The **nesting bird interest** was of **Site Importance**.

Photograph 28. Open wooden soffit of B1

Hedgehog

4.43 GIGL returned six records of hedgehog. The closest was located 360m to the east.

4.44 It is expected that hedgehogs could be present within the local area and may occasionally enter the Site to commute, forage, and rest. The bramble and dense areas of introduced scrub were considered to provide sufficient cover for hedgehogs to use to hibernate.

4.45 The **hedgehog interest** was of **Site Importance**.

Reptiles

4.46 GIGL did not return any records of reptiles. The citations for Ruislip Woods and Poor's Field SNCI and Haste Hill Gold Course, Northwood Golf Course and Northwood Park SNCI mention the presence of reptiles. The previous ecological assessment set out that the Site had low suitability to support reptiles.

4.47 The Site itself was predominantly formed of habitats which would have until recently been unsuitable for reptiles. However, the garden habitats have been left unmanaged and some low suitability for reptiles is now present in the form of bramble edge habitats, grassland, and refugia. It is not expected that reptile could readily access the Site from adjacent areas as it is expected that many of the adjacent properties do not contain gardens which support populations of reptiles.

4.48 The **reptile interest** was of **Site Importance** as a precaution.

Results Conclusion

4.49 A summary of the results in presented in **Table 8**. Where further consideration is required, this is addressed and resolved in the following chapters of this report.

Ecological Feature	Ecological Importance / Suitability*	Further consideration required?
Ruislip Woods SSSI	National	Yes
Croxley Common Moor SSSI		
Old Park Wood SSSI		
Mid Colne Valley SSSI		
Batchworth Heath LNR	Local	
Oxhey Woods LNR		
The Withey Beds LNR		
Prestwick Road Meadows LNR		
Ruislip LNR		
Croxley Common Moor LNR		
Rickmansworth Aquadrome LNR		
Lairage Land LNR		
Stockers Lake LNR		
Frays Valley LNR		
Ruislip Woods and Poor's Field SNCI (Metropolitan grade)		
Haste Hill Gold Course, Northwood Golf Course and Northwood Park SNCI (Borough Grade I)		
Gravel; Pit, Northwood SNCI (Borough Grade II)		
Northwood Railway Cutting SNCI (Borough Grade II)		
Fields and Hedgerows South of Mount Vernon Hospital SNCI (Borough Grade II)		
Bramble scrub	Negligible	No
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow		
Urban tree	Site	Yes
Developed land; sealed surface	Negligible	No
Developed land; unsealed surface		
Introduced shrub		
Vegetated garden		
Amphibians	Negligible	No
Badgers	Site	Yes
Bats: Structures: **B1**	Likely absent	No
Bats: Structures: **B2**	No (None)*	
Bats: Trees		
Bats: flight-paths and foraging habitat	Moderate*	Yes
Birds	Site	
Hedgehog		
Reptiles		

Table 8. Summary of Results

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 The report follows the mitigation hierarchy. The avoidance measures and the embedded mitigation are set out. Followed by additional mitigation measures to minimise impacts further and then compensation/offsetting to address any remaining impacts. Lastly, ecological enhancements are provided.

5.2 The following discussion and assessment have been provided to ensure full compliance with legislation and both local and national planning policy set out in **Appendix D**.

5.3 This report is valid provided the plans shown in **Figure 2** do not change.

5.4 All details set out in this Chapter are deliverable with the Proposed Development and have been approved by the Applicant.

Embedded Mitigation

5.5 Using the design principles and layout within **Figure 2**, this section considers the embedded mitigation associated with the Proposed Development. The selection of the Site for Proposed Development has inherently avoided impacts on ecology and biodiversity as the Site comprises a previously developed area, comprising buildings, hardstanding, and poor-quality habitats. The Proposed Development will remove a small number of trees, retaining the majority, and will retain the key green infrastructure within, and adjacent to, the Site.

Effects of the Proposed Development

5.6 Using the design principles and layout within **Figure 2**, this section concerns an assessment of ecological effects resulting from the Proposed Development. The following effects have been identified:

- The demolition of **B1** and **B2**.
- The removal of hardstanding, garden, bramble scrub, introduced shrubs, and a small number of trees.
- Potential to kill and/or injure badgers, birds, hedgehogs, and reptiles during the construction of the Proposed Development.
- There will be increases in light spill during construction and occupation, which may disrupt and/or modify the behaviour of wildlife including bat flight-paths and foraging habitat.
- There will be pollution during construction in the form of dust, noise, chemical, and litter.
- There will be an increase in residential units, leading to increases in recreation and human-related effects in the local area.

Site Wide Mitigation

5.7 Care will be taken during clearance/groundworks to ensure wildlife is not harmed. In the event a protected species is found when an ecologist is not in attendance, works will stop, and an ecologist will be contacted.

5.8 The construction phase is likely to be limited given the small scale of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will implement standard and well-rehearsed pollution control measures throughout construction. Given the scope of the development, the following actions will be implemented during construction:

- Take measures to minimise and prevent erosion and run-off, including minimising adjacent land disturbance.
- Control dust through fine water sprays used to dampen down the Site.
- Screen the edge of the Construction Zone by placing a fine mesh screening close to any dust sources.
- Cover skips and trucks loaded with construction materials and continually damp down with low levels of water.
- Cover piles of building materials like cement, sand and other fine materials and powders, regularly inspect for spillages, and locate them where they will not be washed into waterways or drainage areas.
- Use non-toxic paints, solvents and other hazardous materials wherever possible.
- Segregate, tightly cover, and monitor toxic substances to prevent spills and possible site contamination.
- Cover up and protect all drains within and adjacent to the construction footprint.
- Collect, control, and avoid wastewater generated from construction activities, screen, discharge the clean water, and dispose of remaining sludge according to environmental regulations.
- No burning of materials.
- Reduce noise pollution through careful handling of materials; modern, quiet power tools, equipment and generators; and low impact technologies.

5.9 Lighting during construction and occupation has the potential to disrupt / modify the behaviour of wildlife. A Sensitive Lighting Strategy will be implemented. This strategy will include consideration of the following principles:

- Lighting within the Site will be reduced as far as practicable.
- Luminaires will be positioned and directed away from ecological receptors.
- Column heights will be reduced as far as practicably possible to reduce light spill along with the consideration of low-level bollard lighting.
- White light will be avoided, and warm colours preferably used. Preferable colours are 3000°k to 2700°k (where feasible) with peak wavelengths greater than 550nm.

- 0% upward light output and no tilting of the light head.
- Use vegetation, fencing and walls as a light buffers.
- Motion sensors for security lighting.
- For street lighting, the consideration of part night lighting and dimming (the latter viable with LED's only).
- As a last resort, the incorporation of shields, baffles and cowls fitted to the luminaires.

Designated Sites

Statutory Designated Sites

5.10 The statutory sites are spatially isolated from the Proposed Development as to avoid impacts in relation to habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, habitat degradation, noise, light, dust, and pollution. This is supported by the SSSI Impact Risk Zone[16] that the Site lies within, which is not indicating that a development of this scale and nature in this area would result in likely impacts on internationally or nationally protected Sites. Statutorily designated sites are not discussed further within this report.

Non-statutory

5.11 The non-statutory sites are spatially isolated from the Proposed Development as to avoid impacts in relation to habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, habitat degradation, noise, light, dust, and pollution. The non-statutory sites are not discussed further within this report.

Habitats

5.12 The Proposed Development's avoids the loss of habitats of ecological importance as the Site is of low to negligible importance. The removal of hardstanding, garden, bramble scrub, introduced shrubs, and a small number of trees is not considered significant.

5.13 New landscaping and structural planting are proposed, and this includes new gardens, new native tree planting, new native shrub planting, and sedum rooves. These measures will maintain similar levels of greenspace within the Site, along with overall species and structural diversity at the Site. The greenspace and new tree planting will maintain opportunities for wildlife, as well as maintaining the overall permeability of the Site for wildlife. The overall impact on habitats from the Proposed Development will be at least neutral.

[16] The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) are for local planning authorities (LPAs) to determine if a proposed development is likely to affect a terrestrial SSSI and when to consult Natural England.

Protected and Notable Species

Badgers

5.14 There is a low risk of badgers entering the Site during construction. To avoid impacts on badgers during construction, the following precautionary measures will be implemented:

- A toolbox talk will be given to contractors prior to works commencing and as part of the induction process for new teams entering the construction site. The toolbox talk will include details on:
  - The known presence of badgers in the area.
  - The protected status of badgers.
  - What to look for when working in areas known to support badgers.
  - The agreed safe working practices in relation to badgers.
  - What to do when unsure or in the event that a badger or large hole / excavations is discovered on Site.
  - The contact details of the Ecologist in the event a badger or possible badger sett is discovered within/adjacent to the Site.
- Any excavations (e.g., trenches / pits) will be covered when works are not taking place to ensure that they do not fill with water and to prevent wildlife, including badgers, from becoming trapped within the excavation.
- If any excavations must be left open overnight, then they will be provided with a means of escape should a badger or any other wildlife enter. This could simply be in the form of a roughened plank of wood placed in the excavation as a ramp to the surface.
- Any temporary exposed pipes will be capped to prevent badgers gaining access during the night.
- Any excavations and pipes will be inspected each morning to ensure no badgers have become trapped overnight. If a badger becomes trapped, then it is likely to attempt to dig itself into the side of the excavation and form a temporary sett. If trapped badger is encountered, the advice of an ecologist will be sought.
- The storage of topsoil or other 'soft' building materials within the clearance/construction site will be given careful consideration. Badgers could readily adopt such mounds as setts. To avoid the adoption of any mounds by badgers, mounds will be kept to a minimum and any essential mounds subject to daily inspections.
- The storage of any chemicals within the clearance/construction site will be contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming badgers.

5.15 With the above mitigation, the risk of harm to badgers will be mitigated and the overall residual impact neutral.

Bats

Roosts

5.16 **B1** was subject to a bat emergence survey on 10/05/23. This survey is likely to be two years old at the point of commencement. The survey will be repeated prior to commencement and the advice of an ecologist followed in the event that the results of the survey change the required mitigation for the Proposed Development. This should be secured as a planning condition.

Flight-paths and foraging habitat

5.17 The Site was assessed to be of Moderate Suitability in relation to bat flight-paths and foraging habitat.

5.18 The Proposed Development will not significantly alter the landscape or modify / sever habitats of importance to bat flight-paths or foraging habitat. It is highly likely that the replacement of the existing habitats within the Site with hardstanding and a garden will result in an undetectable change in the use of the Site by the local bat assemblage.

5.19 As set out above, a Sensitive Lighting Strategy will be implemented during construction and occupation. In addition, it is expected that any new light sources from the Proposed Development will be minor, low-level, similar to existing light sources, and will not significantly illuminate adjacent habitats.

5.20 In line with the limited predicted degree of risk and proportionality principle[17], no bat activity surveys were undertaken. This was reasoned as follows:

- The Site and Proposed Development were small in scale with a limited ZOI.
- The Site contained a simple habitat structure / connectivity (adjacent to suitable habitats only).
- Impacts (modification, fragmentation, and severance) on commuting and foraging habitats were avoided by embedded mitigation.
- The Proposed Development will introduce new structural planting and increase canopy cover over time.

5.21 With the above mitigation, there will be a negligible impact on bat flight-paths and foraging habitat, with the overall residual impact neutral.

Nesting birds

5.22 There is a low risk that nesting birds and their young could be harmed during the demolition of **B1** and **B2** and the removal of vegetation.

5.23 The demolition of **B1** and **B2** and removal of vegetation should ideally be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (which is generally taken to be March – August inclusive). Should it prove necessary to demolish **B1** and **B2** and remove vegetation

[17] See sections 8.2.7, 2.2.2 and 2.2.5 of the Bat Survey Guidelines, reference 12.

during the bird nesting season, then the area will be checked in advance for the presence of bird nests by a suitably competent person[18]. If there is no evidence of breeding birds the work will be completed within 48 hours of inspection. If any active nests are identified, clearance will cease, and an appropriate buffer zone must be established around the nest in discussions with an ecologist (usually 5m). The buffer must remain intact until it has been confirmed that the young have fledged, and the nest is no longer in use.

5.24 The removal of these nesting opportunities is not expected to have any lasting effect on the bird populations in the local area. Nevertheless, to compensate:

- 3 x Vivara pro WoodStone 32mm nest boxes will be installed within the Site onto retained trees at heights of 2m and facing north or east.

5.25 With the above mitigation and compensation, the risk of harm to nesting birds and their young will be mitigated and the overall residual impact on nesting birds will be neutral.

Hedgehog

5.26 There is the low risk that hedgehog may enter the Site during construction and be killed/injured.

5.27 The above measures in relation to badger will protect commuting and foraging hedgehogs. Vegetation will be removed outside of winter to avoid disturbing and/or harming hibernating hedgehogs.

5.28 Garden habitats will include features to allow the movement of hedgehogs and other wildlife between gardens by either raising close board fencing above the ground or by cutting small 13cm x 13cm holes cut in the fencing gravel boards allowing continued access.

5.29 Hedgehogs will continue to be able to access habitats within and adjacent to the Site to commute, forage, and rest.

5.30 With the above mitigation, the risk of harm to hedgehogs will be mitigated and the overall residual impact on hedgehogs will be neutral.

Reptiles

5.31 There is the low risk that reptile may be present within the Site or enter the Site during construction and be killed/injured.

5.32 Reasonable avoidance measures will be implemented during the clearance of the grassland, bramble scrub, and introduced shrub. These areas will be cut using hand tools using a two-cut regime (first cut 15cm, a wait of 24hours, second cut down to ground level). In addition, any rubble and waste materials will be dismantled by hand. In the unlikely event that a reptile is discovered within the Site, works will stop in the

[18] Given the low risk, limited extent of removal, and ease at which nests can be seen and identified within buildings, a competent person will be able to assess for the presence of bird nests prior to demolition.

vicinity of the reptile and an ecologist will be contacted to advise. Reptiles will not be handled by the construction team.

5.33 With the above mitigation, the risk of harm to reptiles will be mitigated and the overall residual impact on reptiles will be neutral.

Assessment Conclusion

5.34 A summary of the assessment outcomes is presented in **Table 9**.

Ecological Feature	Ecological Importance / Suitability*	Assessment outcome
Ruislip Woods SSSI	National	No Impact / Impact Avoided
Croxley Common Moor SSSI		
Old Park Wood SSSI		
Mid Colne Valley SSSI		
Batchworth Heath LNR	Local	
Oxhey Woods LNR		
The Withey Beds LNR		
Prestwick Road Meadows LNR		
Ruislip LNR		
Croxley Common Moor LNR		
Rickmansworth Aquadrome LNR		
Lairage Land LNR		
Stockers Lake LNR		
Frays Valley LNR		
Ruislip Woods and Poor's Field SNCI (Metropolitan grade)		
Haste Hill Gold Course, Northwood Golf Course and Northwood Park SNCI (Borough Grade I)		
Gravel; Pit, Northwood SNCI (Borough Grade II)		
Northwood Railway Cutting SNCI (Borough Grade II)		
Fields and Hedgerows South of Mount Vernon Hospital SNCI (Borough Grade II)		
Urban tree	Site	Tree removals will be compensated via new native tree planting.
Badgers	Site	Avoidance, Mitigation, and compensation has been set out within this report. There will be no impact on these species / species groups.
Bats: flight-paths and foraging habitat	Moderate*	
Birds	Site	
Hedgehog	Site	
Reptiles	Site	

Table 9. Summary of assessment outcomes

5.35 Based on the results from the survey, context of the Site, and overall low ecological importance of the Site, this report is valid for a period of 18 months (i.e., the 17/06/2026). This is reasoned in line with good practice guidelines[19].

[19] CIEEM (2019). *Advice Note: On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*. Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Enhancement

5.36 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages development to provide gains in biodiversity. The following ecological and biodiversity enhancements will be provided within the Site:

- Schwegler 1FR bat tubes (or similar woodcrete / WoodStone® alternative) will be installed into the external walls of two of the new residential units. The features will be installed at heights of at least 4m, facing south or west, located at the edges or gable tops of the structures, and away from sources of artificial light. The boxes will be integrated into the structures to limit the likelihood of their removal in the future.
- Bird nest boxes (Schwegler 1MR or any Vivara pro Woodstone nest boxes) will be incorporated onto the external walls of four new buildings, thereby increasing nesting opportunities for birds within the Proposed Development. The bird boxes will be installed in or near area of suitable habitat at least 3m above ground level. The boxes will have greater potential for use if sited as high up as possible.
- A group of three sparrow nest boxes (e.g., 1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace) will be incorporated onto the external walls of a new building, thereby increasing nesting opportunities for birds within the Proposed Development. The bird boxes should be installed in a group, at least 3m above ground level and situated under eaves or sheltered areas of buildings.

Appendix A: Survey Methods

Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey

A. 1 The Site was surveyed using the UK Habitat Classification Survey method. The method classified the Site into areas of similar botanical community types with a representative sample of those species present at the time of the survey being described. The vegetation present was clearly visible and allowed an accurate assessment to be made. Any subsequent visits to the Site were used as an opportunity to update the results and classifications of the UK Habitat Survey.

A. 2 The survey was 'Extended' to look for evidence of protected and notable species of flora or fauna[20] and to assess the suitability of the Site to support these flora or fauna. In the context of this report, rare, protected, and notable species of flora or fauna were those considered to meet any of the following criteria:

- Species protected by UK or European legislation.
- UK Post 2010 UK Biodiversity Framework priority species or Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) species.
- Nationally rare or nationally scarce species.
- Species of Conservation Concern (e.g., JNCC Red List, RSPB/BTO Red or Amber Lists).

A. 3 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, makes it an offence to release or allow to escape into the wild any animal, plant, or micro-organism not ordinarily resident in the UK (as listed in Schedule 9 of the Act). Plant species listed in Schedule 9 were searched for during the survey. However, many invasive species can be cryptic and therefore this survey does not provide a guarantee that an invasive species is not present and shouldn't be relied upon to rule out absence of an invasive species[21].

A. 4 An Extended UK Habitat Plan was produced (**Appendix B**), incorporating Target Notes (**TNs**) used to highlight features of ecological interest.

Badgers

A. 5 The Site was systematically surveyed for evidence of badgers, in the form of:

- Setts - comprising either single isolated holes or a series of holes, which may be link to each other underground.
- Faeces - badgers deposit faeces in characteristic excavated pits, concentrations of which (latrine sites) are typically found at home range boundaries, field boundaries and around setts.

[20] Suitability was determined using respective good practice guidance for each species/species group.
[21] Invasive species can be cryptic and can rapidly spread from adjacent land. Luscinia Ecology cannot be held liable for invasive species found within the Site after the date of the UK Habitat Survey.

- Paths - worn paths used by badger, often linked to setts or foraging grounds.
- Scratching posts - typically at the base of tree trunks.
- Snuffle holes - scrapes where badgers have searched for food.
- Day nests - bundles of grass and other vegetation where badgers may sleep above ground.
- Hairs - usually found outside setts or caught under fencing.

Bat Surveys

Preliminary Roost Assessment

A. 6 The structures within the Site were subject to a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) following good practice guidelines. This is an external and internal inspection survey, the purpose of which is to search for bats/evidence of bats and assess the likelihood of bats being present and the need for further survey and/or mitigation.

A. 7 Prior to the external inspection, each structures' age, design, location, construction materials, state of repair, and current use, were assessed. These were then related to the likelihood of a bat roost being present, along with consideration of which species of bat are most likely to use the building. The external inspection included searching for the following features to determine if suitable exit/entry points were present:

- Holes, gaps, cracks, and damage to masonry/walls.
- Lifted, missing, slipped, and damaged tiles, including tiles at the ridge, hip and across the roof.
- Lifted, slipped and missing areas of hanging tiles, weatherboarding, and cladding.
- Gaps/holes/damaged to soffits and facias.
- Lifted flashing around air vents, chimneys, roof joints.
- Interfaces of different materials and roof designs, where construction and/or damage can cause gaps.

A. 8 If suitable exit/entry points were observed during the external inspection, the following evidence of roosting bats was carefully searched for on the exterior of the building:

- Droppings (down the wall, on the floor, caught in spiderwebs, on windowsills).
- Staining and/or clean/smoothed areas, indicative of exit/entry.
- Feeding remains, including moth/butterfly wings and beetle wing casings.

A. 9 Prior to the internal inspection, the roof/loft design, likely levels of disturbance, and any likely recent changes to the roof/loft were assessed. These were then related to the likelihood of a bat roost being present, along with consideration of which species of bat are most likely to use the roof/loft space. The internal inspection included searching for the following evidence of roosting bats within the roof/loft space:

- Roosting bats within crevices or free hanging.
- Bat corpses (on the floor, in uncovered water tanks or other containers).
- Bat droppings, including beneath likely roosting areas.
- Feeding remains, including moth/butterfly wings and beetle wing casings.
- Scratch marks, staining and/or clean/smoothed areas, indicative of regular use.
- Bat-fly Nycteribiid spp. pupal cases.
- Gaps within the structure of the building, including:
    - Light ingress in the roof indicating access points to the outside.
    - Between the roof lining and roof covering.
    - Within the structure of walls and suitable access points to cavity or rubble-filled walls.
    - Around the structure of chimneys or within disused chimney.
    - Around lintels.
- Evidence beneath roof insulation, which indicates use by bats before the insulation was installed.
- Clean swept floors, which may indicate evidence has been removed.

A. 10 The following equipment was used for the Preliminary Roost Assessment:

- Elevation and baseline drawings of the building or structure.
- Binoculars (Pentax Papilio II 6.5 x 21 Close focusing).
- Powerful torch to illuminate dark corners from the ground.
- A ladder.
- Camera to record evidence.

A. 11 The assessment of the suitability of the buildings within the Site was assessed against Table 4.1 of the Bat Survey Guidelines. A redacted version of the table is set out in **Table 8** below, with additional information as noted.

Potential Suitability	Description of roosting habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g., maternity, or classic cool/stable hibernation site.
Confirmed*	Evidence of bats has been confirmed within the structure. A temporal scale of recent use can also be applied based upon the type of evidence found and its condition. If a roost is found it may be assigned to the following: • Confirmed, active. • Confirmed, likely active. • Confirmed, unknown if active.
*This is an addition to Table 4.1 within the Bat Survey Guidelines but is based upon assertions and reasoning within the Bat Survey Guidelines.	

Table 10. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement – redacted and with additions

Ground Level Tree Assessment

A. 12 The trees within the Site were subject to a Ground Level Assessment (GLTA) following good practice guidelines. This is an external and internal inspection survey, the purpose of which is to search for bats/evidence of bats and assess the likelihood of bats being present and the need for further survey and/or mitigation.

A. 13 The features suitable to support bat roosts were searched for on the trees with reference to the Bat Tree Habitat Key[22]. These features are as follows:

- Longitudinal splits.

[22] Andrews H. (2018). *Bat Roosts in Trees - A Guide to Identification and Assessment for Tree-care and Ecology professionals: Bat Tree Habitat Key*. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.

- Crevices.
- Rot-hollows.
- Transverse cracks.
- Loose bark.
- Ivy.

A. 14 The following equipment was used for the Ground Level Assessment:

- Binoculars (Pentax Papilio II 6.5 x 21 Close focusing).
- Powerful torch to illuminate dark features from the ground.
- A ladder.
- Camera to record evidence.

A. 15 The assessment of the suitability of the trees within the Site was assessed against Table 4.1 of the Bat Survey Guidelines. The table is set out in **Table 6** below.

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Table 11. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Flight-path and Foraging Habitat Assessment

A. 16 The assessment of the suitability of the bat flight-paths and foraging habitat of the Site was determined using Table 4.1 of the Bat Survey Guidelines. A redacted version of the table is set out in **Table 7** below.

Potential suitability	Description of flight-path and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e., no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-paths or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland, or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses, and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Table 12. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement – redacted.

Emergence Surveys

A. 17 The Bat Emergence Survey was undertaken during the appropriate survey season (May – September, with September being sub-optimal). The emergence survey commenced approximately 15 minutes before sunset and continued for approximately 1.5 hours after sunset. Surveyors were positioned to ensure complete coverage of the building. Surveyors were equipped with Anabat Scout Active Bat Detectors.

A. 18 Surveyors were supported by Canon XA60 camera (tripod mounted) or Nightfox Red HD Infrared Night Vision Goggles (tripod mounted), all coupled to Infra floodlights. A total of four night vision cameras were deployed, this enabled all elevations to be simultaneously recorded, including all eaves, ridgelines, and adjacent habitats.

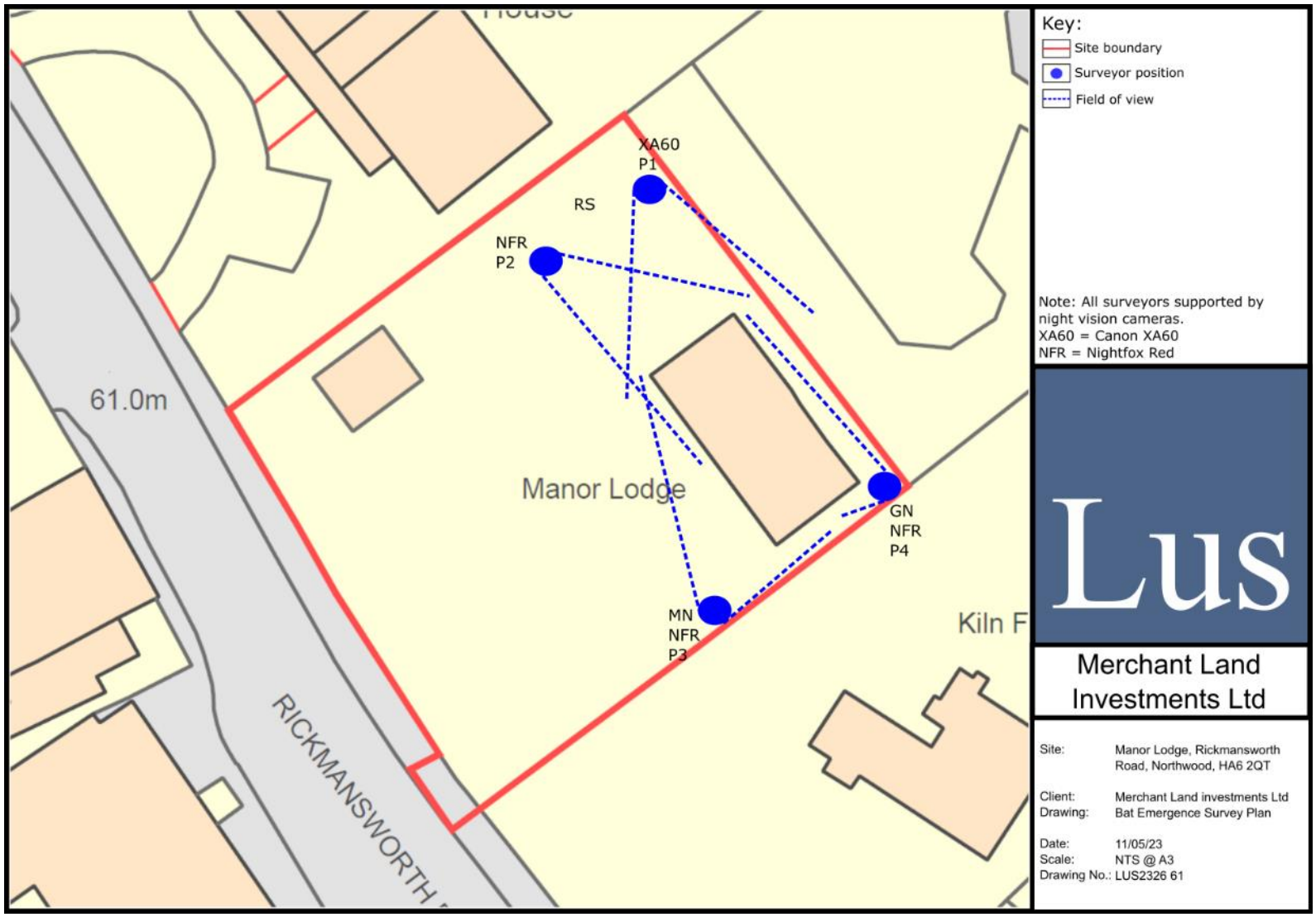
A. 19 All bat activity was recorded, including roost access points (where present), species, timings, direction of flight, behaviour, and use of landscape features.

A. 20 All bat data was converted from WAV to Zero Crossing files and analysed using the software programme Analook. A series of Analook Scans utilising species/genus filtered were carried out and the results of each scan were reviewed and approved by Greg Nightingale. Bat passes were assigned to the lowest tax group possible (genera/species), whilst maintaining a high level of certainty. Where bat calls were indistinguishable between two similar species it was assumed that both species were present, unless an overriding factor would clearly demonstrate that a species is highly unlikely to be present within the Site. This approach to call analysis ensured a robust assessment.

A. 21 Infra-red cameras recorded video and sound in real time. The video data was viewed to cross reference surveyor observations. Video data was played back using VLC Media player. Video analysis was carried out by Greg Nightingale.

Appendix B: UK Habitat Classification Plan

Appendix C: Emergence Survey Plan



Appendix D: Legislation and Planning Policy

D. 1 The following local policy, national planning policy and legislation relating to nature conservation and biodiversity status, are considered of relevance to the current proposal.

Planning and Biodiversity

D. 2 Local Authorities have a requirement to consider biodiversity conservation issues when determining planning applications.

D. 3 The following ecological and environmental policies from the Hillingdon Council Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies are of relevance to the Site:

- Policy EM1: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
- Policy EM3: Blue Ribbon Network
- Policy EM7: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Policy EM8: Land, Water, Air and Noise

D. 4 The following ecological and environmental policies from the Hillingdon Council Local Plan: Part 2 Development Management Policies are of relevance to the Site:

- DMHB 14: Trees and Landscaping
- DMEI 1: Living Walls and Roofs and Onsite Vegetation
- DMEI 7: Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement

D. 5 Chapter 15, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[23] includes the following:

> *"187 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;*

[23] MHCLG (2025). National Planning Policy Framework. February 2025. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.

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.

188. 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 Framework65; 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.

…

Habitats and biodiversity

192. 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 biodiversity68; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation69; 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.

193. 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 reasons70 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.

194. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;

b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites71; and

c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

195. 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."

Legislation and biodiversity

D. 6 Certain species of animals and plants found in the wild in the UK are legally protected from being harmed or disturbed. These species are listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) or are named as European Protected Species (EPS) in The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (as amended). These two main pieces of legislation have been consulted when writing this report and are therefore described in detail within this section.

D. 7 Other relevant legislation and policy documents that have been consulted include:

- Protection of Badgers Act (1992)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997
- Biodiversity Action Plans, both UK-wide (UKBAP), Local plans (LBAPs) and similar nature partnership plans.

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

D. 8 The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended; WCA) is the primary legislation for England and Wales for the protection of flora, fauna and the countryside. Part I within the Act outlines the protection of wildlife.

D. 9 Most offences are now covered under The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (as amended), but some 'intentional' acts are still covered under the WCA, such as obstructing access to a bat roost.

D. 10 The provisions relating to animals in the WCA only apply to 'wild animals'; these are defined as those that are living wild or were living wild before being captured or killed. It does not apply to captive bred animals being held in captivity.

D. 11 There are 'defences' provided by the WCA. These are cases where acts that would otherwise be prohibited by the legislation are permitted, such as the incidental result of a lawful operation which could not be reasonable avoided, or actions within the living areas of a dwelling house.

D. 12 Certain prohibited actions under the WCA may be undertaken under licence by the proper authority. For example, scientific study that requires capturing or disturbing protected animals can be allowed by obtaining a licence.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act

D. 13 The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, which supersedes UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) priority habitats and species, provides the 'broad enabling structure for action across the UK', which in England is interpreted into Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services; however, some authorities do still refer to BAPs. Protecting habitats and species listed on Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 is an outcome of this strategy. The lists of priority habitats and species in England required under S41 were published by Natural England in May 2014. These measures are given due acknowledgement where relevant.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (as amended)

D. 14 The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (as amended; The Regulations), which are the principal means by which the EC Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales update the legislation and consolidate all the many amendments which have been made since they were first made in 1994.

D. 15 The Regulations provide for the:

- Protection of European Protected Species (EPS; animals and plants listed in Annex IV Habitats Directive which are resident in the wild in Great Britain), including: bats, hazel dormice, great crested newts, otters, sand lizard, and smooth snake.

- Designation and protection of domestic and European Sites (e.g., Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protected Areas (SPA).
- Adaptation of planning controls for the protection of such sites and species.

D. 16 Public bodies (including the Local Planning Authority) have a duty to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in exercising their function (e.g., when determining a planning application).

D. 17 There is no defence that an act was the incidental and unavoidable result of a lawful activity.

D. 18 It is possible for actions which would otherwise be an offence under The Regulations to be undertaken under licence issued by the proper authority. For example, where an EPS has been identified and the development risks deliberately affecting an EPS, then a 'development licence' may be required.

Species Protection

D. 19 The following protected species information is relevant to this report. Legislation is only discussed in relation to planning and development; other offences may exist.

Amphibians

D. 20 Common frog, common toad, common newt, and palmate newt receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it illegal to sell or trade them.

D. 21 The great crested newt and Natterjack toad are EPS and fully protected under The Regulations, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure, kill, or disturb either species.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure/place used for shelter or protection.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.

Badger

D. 22 Badgers are protected in the UK under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under the act it is an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess, or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or attempt to do so
- To intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett (this includes disturbing Badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it).

D. 23 The legislation aims to protect the species from persecution, rather than being a response to an unfavourable conservation status, as the species is in fact common over most of Britain; it is not intended to prevent properly authorised development.

Bats

D. 24 All British bats are classed as EPS and therefore receive protection under The Regulations, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure, or capture a bat.
- Deliberately disturb bats.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

D. 25 In addition, all British bats are also listed under Schedule 5 of the WCA, which contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection.
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

D. 26 If proposed development work is likely to destroy or disturb bats or their roosts, then a licence will need to be obtained from Natural England, which would be subject to appropriate measures to safeguard bats.

Birds

D. 27 In the UK, the provisions of the Birds Directive are implemented through the WCA and The Regulations. All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected, and it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure, or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage, or destroy the nest of any such bird whilst it is in use or being built.
- Take or destroying an egg of any such wild bird.

D. 28 The law covers all species of wild birds including common, pest or opportunistic species. Special protection against disturbance during the breeding season is also afforded to those species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act.

Hedgehog

D. 29 Hedgehog are protected under sections of the schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) making it an offence to:

- It illegal to kill or capture hedgehogs unless they are suffering or need to be rehabilitated then released back into the wild.

Reptiles

D. 30 Adders, slow worms, grass snakes and common lizards are protected against killing and injuring under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation makes it illegal to intentionally kill or injure a common reptile.

D. 31 Smooth snakes and sand lizards are European Protected Species under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This makes it illegal to carry out the following activities:

- Deliberately or recklessly disturb, capture or kill these animals.
- Deliberately or recklessly take or destroy eggs of these animals.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such a wild animal.
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead animal, or any part of, or anything derived from such a wild animal.