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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey Site:

Land Adjacent to 4 Gresham Road, Uxbridge, London, UB10 0HT

Client:

W H Dotesio-Eyers

Survey Date:

29th October 2024

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the London Borough of Hillingdon. The proposal is described as:

Unsubmitted – but understood to comprise the redevelopment of the site to provision a detached dwelling with 2no. flats and their associated parking, refuse, and garden areas.

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.**

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.**

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

The site survey was undertaken by Michelle Huang, BS, MRes DIC (Accredited Agent under Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2019-41480-CLS-CLS).					
Date of Survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (m/s)	Rain
29/10/2024	14.2	77.6	100	0.4	None

Ecological Survey Factor **Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations**	**Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within its relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.** **See habitat map in *Appendix 1*, location plan in *Appendix 2*, proposal plan in *Appendix 3*, and photos in *Appendix 4.***
Habitats and Plants Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).	
Summary of Survey Findings	The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ0737583318 and has an area of approximately 0.04ha. The site is characterized by a vacant plot with a detached outbuilding garage structure, a patch of bramble scrub, small sections of privet hedges (including removed sections), and ruderals/ephemerals. The site is surrounded by residential dwellings and their associated vegetated gardens to all aspects in the immediate vicinity. The site is situated within the densely built-up area of Hillingdon, with the similarly urbanized Uxbridge to the west. Further east/northeast of the site contains large arable fields, pockets of woodland copses, and water features such as streams and ponds.

	Urban: Built-up Areas and Garden – with Ruderals/Ephemerals [u1 81] – Figures 1-3 The vacant site is dominated by patches of ruderals/ephemerals scattered throughout the site, between various debris and disused materials. Species composition comprise frequent willowherbs (*Epilobium* spp.) and common mallow, abundant herb Robert, occasional bramble (not associated with the parcel of bramble scrub), and rare ryegrass, meadow grass (*Poa* sp.), hawksbeard sp. (*Crepis* sp.), and self-set saplings of maple, oak, and hazel. The site was likely previously used as a fly tipping ground, as debris and disused materials were frequently scattered throughout the site, providing artificial refugia for smaller species. A small burrow (~20cm wide x 15cm tall) emitting strong fox scents was found on site; it was determined to likely be a fox den. **Condition Assessment** (assessed using the 'Urban' habitat type condition assessment sheet): passes 3 of 3 criteria and meets additional requirements within criterion C therefore achieves **GOOD** condition. A. Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area. **PASS** B. The habitat parcel contains different plant species that flower at different times of the year. **PASS** C. Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area. *NB. to achieve good condition, there must be a complete absence of invasive species.* **PASS**

	Heathland and Shrub: Bramble Scrub [h3d] – Figure 4 Located centrally on the site is a patch of bramble-dominated scrub which is less than 5m in height with continuous (>75% cover). Bramble scrub is not subject to condition assessments. **Heathland and Shrub: Non-Native and Ornamental Hedgerow [h2b] – Figures 7-11** Two sections of mono-species privet hedges are present on site, with H1 lining the southern periphery of the site and H2 likely being a boundary hedge with the neighbouring dwelling, immediately northeast of B1. H1 and H2 are both approximately 3m tall by 1m wide, with H1 spanning approximately 13m long and H2 spanning approximately 3m long. Evidence of presence of a since-removed privet hedge was found (Figures 10-11) on site, running in parallel with H1. Stumps were arranged in a linear fashion, with multiple privet stumps beginning to regenerate naturally. Whilst height of this hedge is difficult to estimate, it likely was approximately 1m in width and 8m in length. Non-native and ornamental hedges are pre-determined to be of **POOR** condition. **Urban: Developed Land, Sealed Surface [u1b6]** **Urban: Developed Land, Sealed Surface (Building) [u1b5] – Figures 12-15** Sealed surfaces associated with the site include a paved access path along the eastern periphery of the site's boundaries as well as the footprint of the existing outbuilding B1. B1 is the only permanent built structure on site; it is further detailed in the bat appraisal section below. Sealed surfaces are not subject to condition assessments.

Foreseen Impacts	Habitats on site comprise ruderals/ephemerals, bramble scrub, ornamental hedges, and sealed surfaces. Such habitats are common and widespread and have low ecological value. There are no notable habitats (i.e. protected or notable plant species) within the site but 4no. priority habitats (all belonging to the woodland class) are present within 2km of the site, the closest being deciduous woodlands/woodpasture and parkland located ~400m north of the site. No impacts to any notable habitats are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such habitats as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers.
Recommendations	Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. Off-site habitats such as trees in neighbouring gardens should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012). A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report may be required to discern the change in biodiversity value of the site as a result of the proposed development. The following habitat creation/enhancement measures should be incorporated: ❖ Planting of flowering/fruiting native trees, shrubs, and hedgerows.
Locality and Designated Sites	
Summary of Survey Findings	The site is not subject to any designation.

	There is 1no. statutory designated site within a 2km radius – the Yeading Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – which is located ~1550m northeast of the site. Habitats present within this LNR include a small meadow, river bank, and coppiced woodlands. Notable species present include bluebells in the spring, broad leaved helleborine orchid, kingfisher along the Yeading Brook, and the continental wasp spider (*Argiope bruennichi*). Non-statutory sites within a 1km radius were retrieved from Greenspace Information for Greater London's Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINCs) Open Data (GiGL, 2022). There are 3no. non-statutory sites within 2km of the site: ❖ Hillingdon Court Park SINC (~400m north of the site): the park contains a good range of trees, from young to some very old. Around the edges and scattered across the park are native trees and shrubs including beech, silver birch, hornbeam and holly, and non-native species including sycamore, Turkey oak, red oak and rhododendron. Large pedunculate oaks with a ground flora of bramble, Timothy, cock's-foot and broad-leaved dock dominate an open clump of trees in the park. The park's mature trees provide roosting sites for over 100 starlings, a declining species. Some ditches and a damp corner near the bowling green support locally abundant redshank and brooklime with lesser amounts of cuckooflower, hard and soft rushes, watercress and marsh bedstraw, the latter two species being locally scarce. A small wood to the south of Court Drive is dominated by English oak, with English elm and sycamore, over hazel, hawthorn, holly and elder. The ground flora comprises mainly bramble, with common nettle, hogweed and ivy. ❖ Home Covent and Lowdham Field SINC (~700m east of the site): Home Covert, Lowdham Field and Pole Hill Open Space together make up this large, mixed-habitat site. Features include the woodland

	of Home Covert and grassland to the south of this in Lowdham Field. A significant network of hedgerows and seasonally wet ditches separate fields of amenity grassland at Pole Hill, outside of this site. Home Covert in the northwest of the site is dominated by oak, including a number of large trees, with abundant hazel. Although there is extensive bramble, the woodland floor is generally rather bare due to erosive footfall. Soft rush and great willowherb grow in seasonally wet ditches beside the paths. Purple hairstreak butterflies may be seen at the woodland edges. Lowdham Field contains moderately rich grassland, with common grasses including meadow foxtail, timothy, tufted hair-grass and red fescue. There is also significant scrub invasion here, principally of bramble. ❖ Uxbridge and Hillingdon Cemeteries SINC (~900m southwest of the site): the flower-rich grassland is dominated by red fescue and features mouse-ear hawkweed, burnet saxifrage, germander speedwell and yarrow. Patches of taller grasses and flowers provide variation. The gravestones and walls are well vegetated with lichens and bryophytes, and are worthy of a further survey. The scattered trees are both native and introduced species. They include yew, holly, common lime, monkey puzzle and other conifers. The woodland is mainly of pedunculate oak, ash and sycamore, over elder and rhododendron. Birds seen regularly in the cemetery include green woodpecker.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts to designated sites are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such sites (where known) as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers.
Recommendations	N/A
Invasive / Non-native species	
Summary of Survey Findings	No problematic invasive and non-native species recorded on site.

Foreseen Impacts	N/A
Recommendations	Remain vigilant.
Bats	
Summary of Survey Findings	A review of the MAGIC database revealed no granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) within a 2km radius for bats. Ruderals/ephemerals, bramble scrub, and the linear hedges on site provide suitable albeit limited habitats for foraging and commuting bats. These could also be used by bats dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site and commuting around the area. However, the site is unlikely to represent a significant foraging or commuting resource for bats in the context of the wider landscape. Habitats in the wider landscape, such as woodland copses, hedge-lined arable fields, and golf courses provide more ideal habitats for foraging and commuting bats. **B1** (Figures 12-15) is a cinderblock-built, single storey detached outbuilding garage with a gently sloping roof constructed of corrugated asbestos. It has a large metal door and two metal-framed windows which provide ample light ingress into its interiors. It is a disused, empty structure internally with concrete floors and the corrugated asbestos roof is unlined internally. There are no soffits, bargeboards, chimneys, loft spaces, nor basements within B1. **B1 has negligible value for roosting bats** due to a lack of suitable roosting features.
Foreseen Impacts	B1 has negligible value for roosting bats due to a lack of potential roost features. No impacts to roosting bats are anticipated from the proposed demolition of B1.

	The proposed development will result in the loss of all ruderals/ephemerals and bramble scrub and the majority of the extant hedges on site but given the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats. The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats or the retained building without mitigation. This may disturb commuting bats.
Recommendations	In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the demolition of B1, all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice. A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted within the proposed development. This will be designed in accordance with Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2023). Enhancement opportunities for bats include: ❖ The installation of 2no. bat boxes, ideally integrated into the new building, will provide additional roosting habitats for bats. Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light. The bat boxes will be a specification suitable for crevice-dwelling species such as the Integrated Eco Crevice Bat Box (WildCare) or a similar alternative brand. ❖ Planting of native tree, shrub, and hedgerows, potentially incorporating night-scented flowers, to increase foraging opportunities.

Birds	
Summary of Survey Findings	No evidence of nesting birds was found on site during the surveys; however, birds could use the extant privet hedges H1 and H2 for nesting purposes. No habitat for schedule 1 birds was observed.
Foreseen Impacts	The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.
Recommendations	Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any active nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged. Enhancement opportunities for birds include: ❖ Installation of 2no. bird boxes at the site – preferably 2no. integrated swift bricks (considered to be universal nest bricks for small bird species) within the fabric of the building during construction. To be suitable for swifts, they will need to be placed at least 5m above ground level under the eaves of a building. Integrated nesting bricks are preferrable to bird boxes; even if it cannot fulfil the height requirement for swifts, it will still be suitable for other passerine species. If the building material does not allow for integrated nesting bricks, 2no. nest boxes mounted on the exterior of the building or on retained trees will also be acceptable. Nest bricks/boxes should be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain, and strong sunlight, and should be placed on an open aspect with no trees or large shrubs potentially obstructing flight paths.

Herpetofauna	
Summary of Survey Findings	There are no ponds on site, and no suitable breeding habitats within 500m of the site. Habitats on site are largely unsuitable for great crested newts due to their low ecological value and lack of connectivity to water features; notably, they are typically found within terrestrial habitats of up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al., 2001). A review of the MAGIC database returned 4no. granted EPSLs, all of which granted the damage and destruction of resting places for great crested newts. The four EPSLs are in two clusters of two EPSLs each, with one cluster ~800m south of the site and the other ~1600m northwest of the site. There is no connectivity for great crested newts between the known EPSLs and the site as they are separated by various urban infrastructure. Given the wider context of the surrounding habitat and the fidelity of great crested newts to ponds and the lack of connectivity of the site from such suitable breeding ponds, they are unlikely to be on site. Common amphibian and reptile species, on the other hand, have a wider terrestrial range in terms of movements and dispersal and are not as bound to ponds or water courses as great crested newts. Ruderals/ephemerals, bramble, hedges, coupled with various debris which could act as refugia on site provide suitable albeit limited habitats for foraging and sheltering common amphibian and reptiles.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on great crested newts, as a result of the proposed development as this species is unlikely to be on site. All ruderals/ephemerals and bramble scrub and the majority of the extant hedges H1 and H2 will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local common amphibian and reptile populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat

	locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of common amphibians or reptiles, if present and crossing the construction zone.
Recommendations	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians and reptiles during construction, including the following measures: ❖ A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the denser/taller hedges, bramble scrub, and ruderals/ephemerals will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any animals to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area. ❖ Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent common amphibians or reptiles from utilising these areas. ❖ Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. ❖ Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. ❖ If any common amphibians or reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. ❖ In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

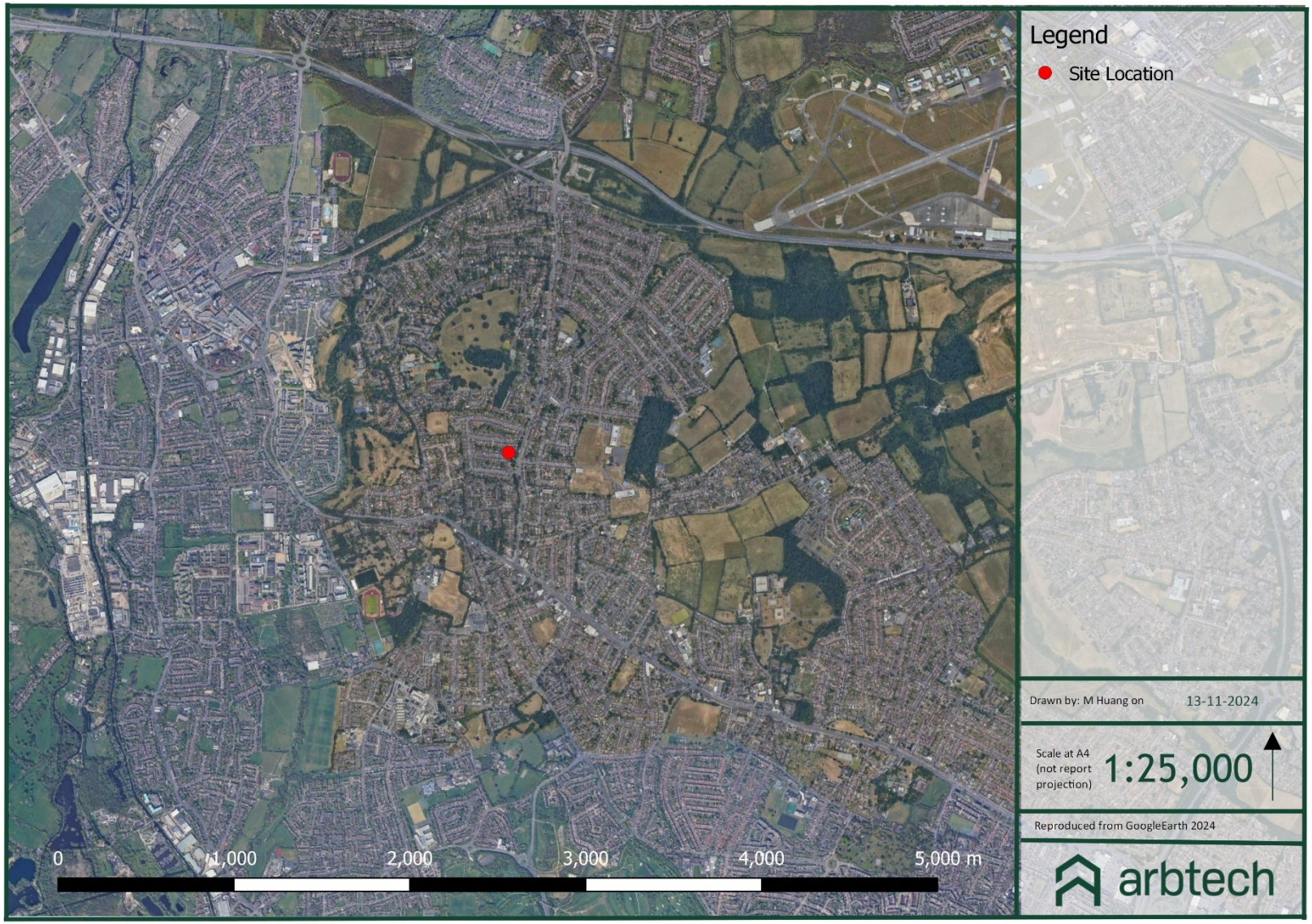
	Grasslands of longer sward height, compost heaps, or log piles will provide additional suitable habitats for herpetofauna.
Badger	
Summary of Survey Findings	No evidence of badgers was found on site or suspected within 30m of the survey boundary. The small burrow on site was determined to be a fox den due to pungent fox scents emanating from the burrow. The site lacks suitable foraging and commuting habitats and has no opportunities for sett-excavation. In addition, the site is enclosed by intact fences with no indication of damage, thus preventing ingress by badgers. Furthermore, badgers are creatures of habit and no established mammal trails, evidence of latrines, or setts were found on or around the site. As such, the presence of badgers has been discounted.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on badgers as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	N/A
Hazel Dormouse	
Summary of Survey Findings	No EPSLs were returned by MAGIC within a 2km radius. The site features no habitats which might provide opportunities for hazel dormouse, such as established woodland or mature, native hedgerows as it is based in an urban setting. Given the wider context of the surrounding habitats, hazel dormice are unlikely to be present on site.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	N/A
Riparian Animals	
Summary of Survey Findings	There are no watercourses on or connected to the site.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations	N/A
Invertebrates	
Summary of Survey Findings	Ruderals/ephemerals, bramble, and hedges are able to support an assemblage of common invertebrate species. The site is unlikely to support notable invertebrate species.
Foreseen Impacts	All ruderals/ephemerals and bramble scrub and the majority of the extant hedges H1 and H2 will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally.
Recommendations	Enhancement opportunities for invertebrates include: ❖ Installation of insect hotels and incorporation of bee bricks into the fabric of the buildings during construction. ❖ Planting of native, pollinator-friendly (i.e. flowering and fruiting) species.
Other e.g. hedgehog	
Summary of Survey Findings	Hedgehogs are extremely mobile and highly adapted to urban landscapes. There is limited suitability for foraging, commuting, and sheltering hedgehogs on site within the site through the presence of bramble scrub and various refugia and their presence during works cannot be discounted.
Foreseen Impacts	All ruderals/ephemerals and bramble scrub and the majority of the extant hedges H1 and H2 will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present and crossing the construction zone.
Recommendations	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

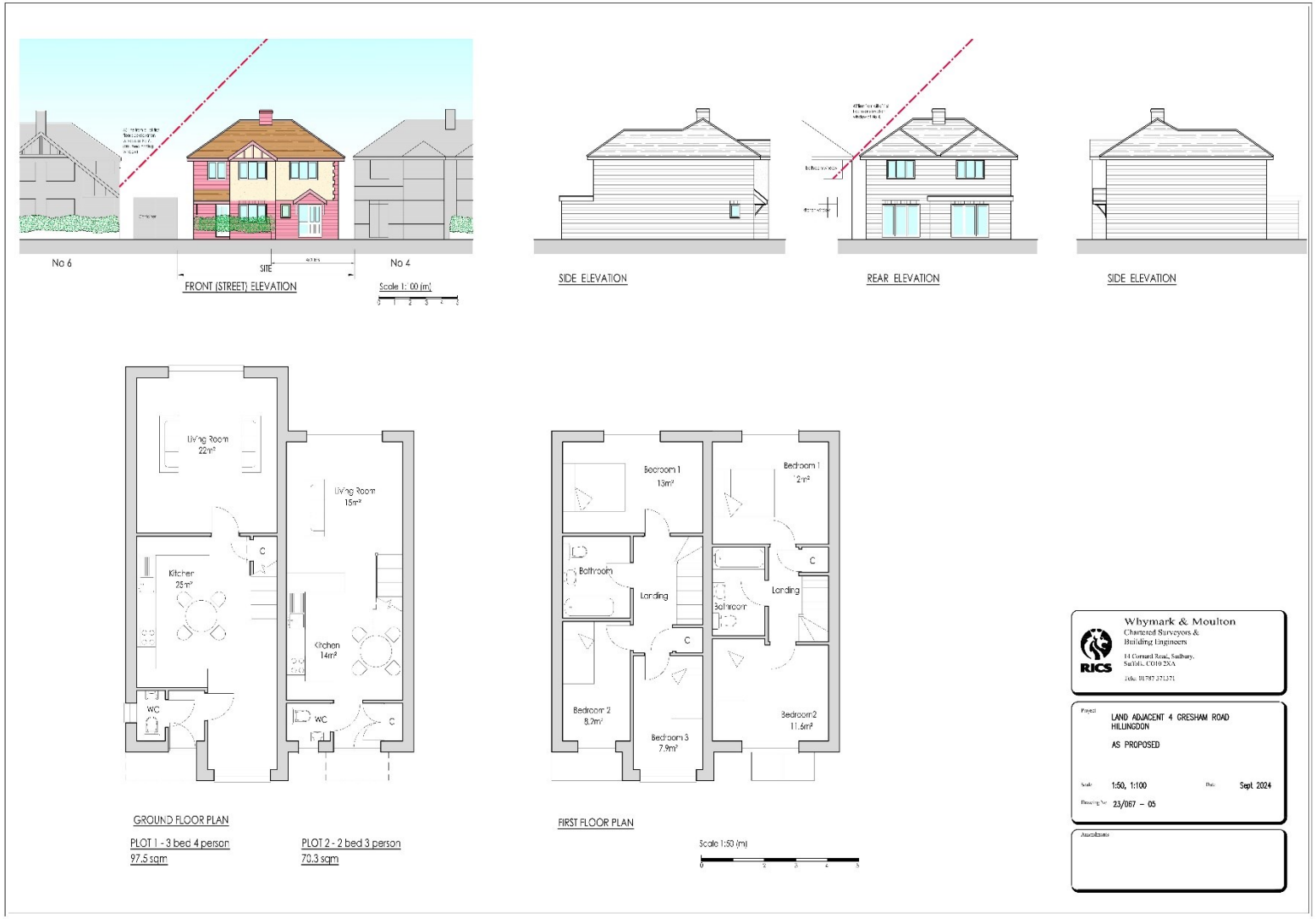
	❖ A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the denser/taller hedges, bramble scrub, and ruderals/ephemerals will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any animals to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter hedgehogs from the working area. ❖ Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. ❖ The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. ❖ Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. ❖ If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. Enhancement opportunities for hedgehogs include: ❖ Installation of gaps under boundary fences to allow hedgehogs to pass through the site. ❖ Planting of fruit-bearing trees, shrubs, and hedgerows.

Appendix 1: Survey/Habitat Map

Appendix 2: Location Map



Appendix 3: Proposed Plan



Appendix 4: Photos

Figures 1 (opposite), 2 (bottom left), and 3 (bottom right).

Overview of the site, showcasing patchy ruderals/ephemerals scattered throughout debris and disused materials.

Figure 1 taken from the southern periphery of the red line boundary facing north; Figure 2 taken from the northern periphery of the red line boundary facing south; Figure 3 taken from immediately south of B1 facing north.

Figures 4 (opposite), 5 (bottom left), and 6 (bottom right).

Parcel of bramble scrub centrally located in the vacant plot and other target notes (refugia and a small burrow hole) of the site.

Figures 7 (opposite), 8 (bottom left), and 9 (bottom right).

Existing areas of privet hedges, with Figure 7 depicting H2 and Figures 8-9 depicting H1.

Figures 10 (top) and 11 (bottom).

Removed privet hedge H3.

Figures 12 (top left), 13 (top right), 14 (bottom left), and 15 (bottom right).
Exterior and interior of B1.

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Version Control			
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Final	1.0	Michelle Huang (BS, MRes DIC); Consultant Ecologist	13/11/2024