Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

for

The Barn Hotel, West End Road, Ruislip

January 2023

Status: For planning

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	Report Author:	Reviewed by:	Approved by:
Author:	Emily Costello MCIEEM	Nick Sibbett CEcol CEnv MCIEEM CMLI	Nick Sibbett CEcol CEnv MCIEEM CMLI
Job title:	Senior Ecologist	Associate Director	Associate Director

Client Details	
Client:	Chase New Homes
Client Address:	8 Parkway | Welwyn Garden City | Hertfordshire | AL8 6HG

Contact Details

The Landscape Partnership Ltd

Greenwood House | 15a St Cuthberts Street | Bedford | MK40 3JG **Tel**: 01234 261315

92 St Faith's Lane | Norwich | NR1 4NE **Tel**: 01603 230777

The Granary | Sun Wharf | Deben Road | Woodbridge | IP12 1AZ **Tel**: 01394 380509

Ensign House (E&F) | Tavern Quay | Sweden Gate | Surrey Quays | London | SE16 7TX **Tel**: 020 3092 4141

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Registered Office:
Greenwood House
15a St Cuthberts Street
Bedford
MK40 3JG

Registered in England No 2709001

Quality Standards

This report is certified BS 42020:2013 'Biodiversity – code of practice for planning and development' compliant and has been prepared in accordance with The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Technical Guidance Series '*Ecological Report Writing*' and Code of Professional Conduct.

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Non-technical summary

The Landscape Partnership was commissioned by Chase New Homes to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal comprising a desk study, Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment of ponds and an assessment of the potential of site features to support bats, together with an assessment of impacts at The Barn Hotel, West End Road, Ruislip.

The objectives of the appraisal were to identify the habitats and species present or potentially present and evaluate their importance, assess the impact of the development proposal and describe any measures necessary to avoid impacts, reduce impacts or compensate for impacts so that there is no net harm to ecological features.

The survey involved classifying and recording habitat types and features of ecological interest and identified the potential for protected species to be present by assessing habitat suitability for those species. The survey was undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced personnel.

The site comprises several buildings that are associated within the existing hotel. Hardstanding roads, car parking areas and footpath were present across the site with areas of amenity grassland and introduced shrubs. Th site was bounded by hedgerow, fences and walls. Collectively the habitats within the proposed development site are assessed as being of value at the **Parish** level.

Based on the habitat types present, it is considered that the site has potential to support the following protected species or groups of species: breeding birds and bats.

The proposed development is for residential purposes with a mixture of houses and flats proposed. It is proposed to demolish all existing buildings, with the exception of the farm house, oak room and leaning barn. These existing buildings that are being retained and will be refurbished. The existing site access is proposed for retention.

In the absence of mitigation, the proposed development could give rise to the following impacts: potential destruction of birds' nests and bat roosts, which would give rise to a **Minor Adverse** impact upon habitats and breeding birds and an **Unknown** impact upon bats. Mitigation has been proposed, including removal of vegetation outside the nesting bird season or following a nest check. This mitigation would reduce the impacts of the development proposals upon the habitats and species present, to give rise to an overall **Neutral** impact, subject to the outcome of recommended surveys.

Further survey is recommended in respect of **bats**, in order to understand the impact of the proposals upon these habitats.

A number of **ecological enhancements** have been proposed, which would improve the quality of the site for native flora and fauna, including habitat piles, hedgehog tunnels, bat boxes, bird boxes and native planting. Delivery of these enhancements would lead to an overall **Neutral-Minor Beneficial** impact**,** subject to the outcome of recommended surveys.

Calculations of Biodiversity Net Gain are required in the Council's Local Plan and remain to be completed.

1 Introduction

1.1 Commission

1.1.1 The Landscape Partnership was commissioned by Chase New Homes to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), comprising a desk study, Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment of ponds and an assessment of the potential of site features to support bats, together with an assessment of impacts.

1.2 Legislation and policy background

1.2.1 There is a range of protection given to sites and species. Sites may be designated for local, national, European or global importance for nature conservation. Species may be protected by European-scale legislation or varying levels of national regulation.

1.2.2 The Local Planning Authority has a policy to protect features of nature conservation value within its Local Plan. Other regulators have policies relating to the consents issued by them.

1.2.3 Further information is given in Appendix 1.

1.2.4 Assessment was undertaken against current legislation and planning policy, and in accordance with standard guidance. Further information is given in Section 2 and Appendix 2.

1.3 Site location and context

1.3.1 The site is located to the south of Ruislip. Access is from West End Road to the west. The site consists of several buildings that are associated within the existing hotel. Hardstanding roads, car parking areas and footpath were present across the site with areas of amenity grassland. The site was demarcated by hedgerow along the western site boundary and fences and wall along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries.

1.3.2 A railway line and its corridor are adjacent to the northern site boundary. Residential areas of Ruislip immediately surrounded the site. Yeading Brook was located approximately 1.3km south-east of the site.

1.3.3 The Ordnance Survey Grid Reference for the approximate centre of the proposed development site is TQ 0947 8692. The location of the site is shown in Appendix 3. A plan showing the site is provided at Figure 01.

1.4 Acknowledgements

Permissions to gain access to land

1.4.1 Permission to gain access to the land for survey is gratefully acknowledged.

Surveyor Competencies

Survey(s) undertaken	Surveyor(s)	Experience (years)	Licences Held
Phase 1 habitat survey Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Survey Bats: Preliminary Roost Assessment: Trees & Buildings	Emily Costello MCIEEM	8+	Great crested newt Class Licence CL08 (Level 1) Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Level 2) FISC Level 3

Other contributors

1.4.2 We acknowledge the input of:

- Greenspace Information for Greater London for provision of data.

1.5 Description of the project

1.5.1 The proposed development is for residential purposes with a mixture of houses and flats proposed. It is proposed to demolish all existing buildings, with the exception of the farm house, oak room and leaning barn. These existing buildings that are being retained will be refurbished. The existing site access is proposed for retention.

1.5.2 The development proposals are shown in Appendix 3.

1.6 Objectives of this appraisal

1.6.1 The purpose of this appraisal is to inform a planning application for the proposed development, as described above. Detailed objectives are to:

- identify the habitats and species present or potentially present and evaluate their importance;
- identify any ecological constraints to development;
- assess the impact of the development proposal;
- identify any opportunities available for integrating ecological features within the development;
- describe any measures necessary to avoid impacts, reduce impacts or compensate for impacts so that there is no net harm to ecological features;
- propose ecological enhancements;
- identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA).

1.7 Previous ecological studies

1.7.1 There are no known previous ecological studies of the site.

1.8 Duration of appraisal validity

1.8.1 The assessment, conclusions and recommendations in this appraisal are based on the studies undertaken, as set out in this report, and the stated limitations. This appraisal is based on the project as described and any changes to the project would need the appraisal to be reviewed. Unless otherwise stated, the assessment, conclusions and recommendations given assume that the site habitats will continue to be used for their current purpose without significant changes until development takes place. However, changes in use or management may occur between the time of the survey and proposals being implemented. Ecological features may change naturally at any time; for example, species may be lost from existing sites or colonise new areas. Our knowledge of the ecology of the site enables us to provide an estimate of the duration of the validity of the surveys carried out and hence the applicability of this appraisal, so that any future need for review and update of this appraisal, or the surveys described within it, and the date by which such updates would become necessary, can be identified.

1.8.2 The table below sets out a guide to duration of validity of each element of each information source. If the proposed development is delayed beyond the stated timescale, updated surveys or further investigations may be required. Provided a planning application is made and validated prior to the end of the period stated below there would not normally be a requirement for further update survey except as indicated in Section 4.6.

Information source	Date undertaken	Guideline duration of validity from date undertaken	Notes
Desk study	19th December 2022	2 years	Further data may become available.

Information source	Date undertaken	Guideline duration of validity from date undertaken	Notes
Phase 1 habitat survey	5th January 2023	2 years	The habitats on site may change especially if management changes.
Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index survey	5th January 2023	2 years	Pond condition and suitably for great crested newts may change especially if management of nearby habitats changes.
Preliminary bat roost inspection: Trees	5th January 2023	2 years	Storm damage, tree felling or other factors can change bat roost potential of trees.
Preliminary bat roost inspection: Buildings	5th January 2023	2 years	Storm damage, maintenance, neglect or other factors can change bat roost potential of buildings.

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk study methodology

2.1.1 Greenspace Information for Greater London was asked to provide records of protected, rare and/or priority species and details of statutory and non-statutory designated sites, within a 1km radius of the centre of the site at TQ 09467 86920. The data were received on 19th December 2022.

2.1.2 The Magic website[1] was used to identify European sites within a 5km radius and national sites within a 1km radius. The Magic website was accessed on 16th December 2022.

2.1.3 Aerial photographs and OS maps were used to gain initial information about the site and the surrounding area. This gives an indication of the types of habitat and species likely to be present and the setting of the site within the landscape.

2.1.4 Water bodies within 250m of the site were identified from the relevant 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map sheet, to establish the need for protected species scoping surveys, such as great crested newt Habitat Suitability Index surveys. Consideration was also given to the green infrastructure of the local area.

2.1.5 The potential for protected, rare and/or priority species to be present on site has been considered in this assessment, taking into account the nature of the site and the habitat requirements of the species in question. Absence of records does not constitute absence of a species. Habitats on the site may be suitable for supporting other protected species that have not previously been recorded within the search area. Conversely, presence of a protected species in the search area does not imply its presence on-site. Records of alien species, non-localised records (e.g. tetrad records) and records dated before 1995 have not been described in detail but are taken into account when considering likely species presence or absence.

2.1.6 The data supplied by the Records Centre were considered in the assessment of potential impacts below.

Limitations to desk study methodology

2.1.7 There were no significant limitations to the desktop study.

2.1.8 In accordance with BS42020 and advice from most Local Biological Record Centres, species lists are not appended to this report but are available to the Local Planning Authority on request.

2.1.9 Availability of records will vary in different locations, as many depend on the presence of local experts and survey effort within the local area. An absence of a record does not necessarily indicate the absence of that species.

2.1.10 Greenspace Information Greater London provided its data subject to terms and conditions. The data provided must not be distributed or published for an external or public audience, for example within the appendix of a report. Local Planning Authorities may request a copy of the data from GiGL either through their Service Level Agreement or as a data search. Consequently, the methodology does not provide results which we can reproduce in this report.

2.2 Phase 1 habitat survey methodology

2.2.1 The standard Phase 1 (baseline) habitat survey methodology[2] was followed. Phase 1 habitat survey is a standardised system for surveying, classifying and mapping wildlife habitats, including urban areas. All habitats present and areas or features of ecological interest within such habitats were recorded and mapped. The survey methodology facilitates a rapid assessment of habitats and it is not necessary to identify every plant species on site. Where given, scientific names of plant species follow Stace ed. 4[3].

[1] MAGIC: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx.
[2] JNCC (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a Technique for Environmental Audit.* Reprinted by JNCC, Peterborough.
[3] Stace, C (2019) *New Flora of the British Isles*. C&M Floristics. 4th Edition.

2.2.2 The survey visit was also used to identify potential for protected, rare and/or priority species, for example bats, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, to occur on, or in the vicinity of, the proposed development site. Although the survey methodology is not intended for species survey, any protected, rare and/or priority species which were seen during the survey were noted.

2.2.3 The survey was undertaken on 5th January 2023 and the weather conditions were overcast with drizzle, a light breeze (Beaufort 2) and a temperature of 10°C.

Limitations to Phase 1 habitat survey

2.2.4 A small section of the site was not accessible at the time of the survey.

2.2.5 The Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken outside the main flowering season for many species, including woodland ground flora, as well as being outside the seasons in which some invasive species would be visible, for example those that are annual, or which die back in winter.

2.2.6 There were no other significant limitations to the Phase 1 habitat survey.

2.3 Great crested newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) survey methodology

Rationale

2.3.1 Great crested newts are protected by national legislation and are 'European Protected Species'.

2.3.2 Great crested newts are widespread but scattered at low density in mainland Britain. They breed in ponds and outside the breeding season they use land habitats such as farmland, woods, grasslands, quarries, industrial and 'brown-field' sites. They do not usually occur in flowing water. They hibernate on land, in shelter away from frosts and flooding, in places such as in log piles, under rubble or in hollow tree stumps. If a pond close to a site supports great crested newts, then there is potential for this species to occur on the site itself.

2.3.3 The Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) survey is used to estimate the likelihood of great crested newts being present in a pond and identifies which ponds in a survey area are likely to require great crested newt surveys. A summary of the methodology is given below.

2.3.4 HSI is a geometric mean of ten suitability indices, all of which are factors thought to affect Great Crested Newts. In general, ponds with high HSI scores are more likely to support Great Crested Newts than those with low scores. There is a positive correlation between HSI scores and the numbers of Great Crested Newts observed in ponds. So, in general, high HSI scores are likely to be associated with greater numbers of Great Crested Newts. The system is not sufficiently precise to allow the conclusion that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not do so. It can, however, be useful in prioritising ponds for further survey effort.

Selection of ponds

2.3.5 Natural England's *Method statement template for great crested newt mitigation licence*[4] is used to determine the risk of great crested newts from being harmed by development. The area of the site is measured from OS maps and inputted into the great crested newts rapid risk assessment as part of the NE method statement. This informs the distance of the pond from the development site, whether that be 100m, 250m or 500m, required to identify that an offence to great crested newts is *highly unlikely,* see table below. A large-scale OS map is then inspected to identify any ponds within the buffer distance.

Distance from site (m)	**Maximum area lost or damaged (hectares)**		
	Green: *Offence highly unlikely*	**Amber: *Offence likely***	**Red: *Offence highly likely***
100	Up to 0.01	0.01-0.5	>0.5
250	Up to 0.5	0.5-10	>10

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-crested-newts-apply-for-a-mitigation-licence

Distance from site (m)	Maximum area lost or damaged (hectares)		
	Green: *Offence highly unlikely*	**Amber: *Offence likely***	**Red: *Offence highly likely***
250+	Up to 5	5-10	N/A

2.3.6 Guidance on risk assessment categories

- **'Green', offence highly unlikely**: indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. Therefore, no licence would be required. However, precautions may need to be taken to avoid an offence.
- **'Amber', offence likely**: indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is likely. Design plans for the development may need to be altered (location, layout, methods, durations or timings) to minimise the effect on great crested newts and if the scheme still results in a likely offence a licence may be required to carry out the works.
- **'Red', offence highly likely:** indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly likely. Design plans for the development should be altered (location, layout, methods, durations or timings) to minimise the effect on great crested newts and if the scheme still results in a likely offence a licence may be required to carry out the works.

2.3.7 The rapid risk assessment is a simplistic assessment and provides a general overview of a situation. The following factors should be considered when using the rapid risk assessment; population size, terrestrial habitat quality, presence of dispersal barriers, timing and duration of works, detailed layout of development in relation to places newts may use for shelter and dispersal routes. The following factors could increase the risk of committing an offence: large population size, high pond density, good terrestrial habitat, low pre-existing habitat fragmentation, large development footprint, and long construction period. The following factors could decrease the risk: small population size, low pond density, poor terrestrial habitat, substantial pre-existing dispersal barriers, small development footprint and short construction period.

2.3.8 The area of the site is approximately 1ha, therefore any waterbodies within 250m of a breeding pond for great crested newt would cause an *Amber: Offence likely* impact. Any waterbodies over 250m from the site boundary would cause a *Green: Offence highly unlikely* impact.

Methodology

2.3.9 The standard Habitat Suitably Index (HSI) methodology[5] was followed. Two water bodies were identified during the site visit within the site boundary and no further ponds were found on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map within an approximate 250m radius of the site. The two onsite water bodies were HSI survey.

2.3.10 The following measurements were made or estimated on site:

- pond area, to nearest 50m^2;
- estimate of the number of years in every ten when the pond would dry up in summer;
- water quality, estimated by observation of invertebrates present;
- percentage of pond edge (up to 1m from the shore) which is shaded, e.g. by trees;
- presence/absence of, and impact from, waterfowl;
- presence/absence and density of fish populations;
- quality of surrounding terrestrial habitat;
- percentage of the pond covered by aquatic macrophytes (plant species).

[5] ARG UK (2010) *ARG UK Advice note no. 5. Great crested newt habitat suitability index,* Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom.

2.3.11 Two map-based estimates were made following the field survey

- The area of the UK within which the pond is situated
- The number of ponds within a 1km radius (including any ponds seen on the site visit but which are absent from 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey mapping and excluding any mapped ponds found to be absent during the site visit (see above)).

2.3.12 Pond suitability for great crested newts was defined using a categorical scale, as follows.

<0.5	**poor**: very unlikely to contain great crested newts.
0.5 – 0.59	**below average**: unlikely to contain great crested newts.
0.6 – 0.69	**average**: might contain great crested newts.
0.7 – 0.79	**good**: might contain great crested newts.
> 0.8	**excellent**: most likely to contain great crested newts.

2.3.13 The survey was undertaken during the same visit as the Phase 1 Habitat survey.

Limitations to HSI survey

2.3.14 There were no significant limitations to the survey.

2.3.15 Whilst the HSI assessment is particularly useful in terms of quantifying and subsequently comparing pond conditions within the local area, the assessment is not without limitations, which should be taken into consideration. The HSI score is designed to provide a general overview which quantifies favourable conditions that are commonly associated with the species. The assessment alone should not therefore be used to determine, at least with any confidence, whether or not further surveys should be undertaken.

2.3.16 In practice, there are many different variables which dictate the likelihood of presence or absence. For example, the methodology takes into account neither known records of the species in the vicinity nor habitat connectivity. The surveyor's own personal experience should therefore always be used in combination with the HSI scores to determine which ponds should be included within the next stage of survey.

2.3.17 The estimation of macrophyte cover should be in the period from March to the end of September. The survey was carried out outside this period, so might have resulted in macrophyte cover being slightly underestimated.

2.4 Preliminary bat roost assessment methodology: Trees

Rationale

2.4.1 Bats are European Protected Species. Many roosts are within trees, and the protection given to roosts means that their presence or absence in trees on the proposed development site needs to be understood.

Methodology

2.4.2 The standard Preliminary Ground Level Roost Assessment (PRA) methodology for trees[6] was followed. This aims to determine the actual or potential presence of bats, by inspecting for potential roost features from the ground, and determines any need for further survey and/or mitigation.

2.4.3 Trees within the proposed development area, which are likely to be removed for the development, were inspected for the presence of features which may be suitable for use by roosting bats, with particular attention given to older and mature trees. A thorough inspection was undertaken, looking for features and signs indicative of bat roosts:

- woodpecker holes;
- rot holes;
- hazard beams;
- other vertical or horizontal cracks and splits, such as frost cracks in stems or branches;
- partially detached bark plates;

[6] Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: good practice guidelines*, Third Edition, Bat Conservation Trust.

- knot holes arising from naturally shed branches, or branches previously pruned back to the branch collar;
- artificial holes (such as cavities that have developed from flush cuts) or cavities created by branches tearing out from parent stems;
- cankers, caused by localised bark death, in which cavities have developed;
- other hollows or cavities including butt-rots at the base of the tree;
- potential cavities in the fork between double trunks ("compression forks"), where the wood has grown around sections of bark ("included bark");
- gaps between overlapping stems or branches;
- partially detached ivy with stem diameters in excess of 50mm;
- bat, bird or dormouse boxes.

2.4.4 Signs of a bat roost, in addition to the visible presence of bats, include:

- bat droppings in or around a potential roost feature (PRF);
- odour coming from a PRF;
- audible bat squeaks at dusk or during the day in warm weather;
- staining below the PRF.

2.4.5 Some signs, such as staining, odour or squeaking, may originate from other species, and staining may arise from wet rot which would preclude bat use. Bats or bat droppings are the only conclusive evidence of bat use, but many bat roosts have no external signs.

2.4.6 A high-power torch (Cluson Clulite) was used to inspect cavities and shaded areas of the branch structure.

2.4.7 The survey of trees included an assessment of their potential to support bat roosts using the following categories.

Category	Description
Negligible	Trees with no potential to support bats
Low	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features, but with none seen from the ground, or where the features seen have only very limited potential to support bats.
Moderate	A tree with one or more potential roost features, that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and surrounding habitat, but are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A tree 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, condition and surrounding habitat.
Confirmed roost	Trees with evidence of bats present.
Unknown	Unable to survey fully, for example because part of the tree is inaccessible.

2.4.8 The assessment was undertaken during the same site visit as the Phase 1 Habitat survey.

Limitations to preliminary bat roost assessment: trees

2.4.9 There were no significant limitations to the survey.

2.5 Preliminary bat roost assessment methodology: Buildings

Rationale

2.5.1 Bat surveys are usually needed for the building types where bats are likely to be present, which include the following types[7].

- Agricultural buildings (e.g. farmhouses, barns and outbuildings) of traditional brick or stone construction and/or with exposed wooden beams.
- Buildings with weatherboarding and/or hanging tiles which are within 200m of woodland or water.
- Pre-1960 detached buildings and structures within 200m of woodland or water.
- Pre-1914 buildings within 400m of woodland or water.

[7] Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: good practice guidelines*, Third Edition, Bat Conservation Trust.

- Pre-1914 buildings with gable ends or slate roofs, regardless of location.
- Buildings located within or immediately adjacent to woodland or immediately adjacent to water.
- Dutch barns or livestock buildings with a single-skin roof and board-and-gap or Yorkshire boarding if, following a preliminary roost assessment, the site appears particularly suited to bats.
- Churches and listed buildings.

2.5.2 This list is a guide and may be varied where professional and local knowledge can be used to justify variations. The building met the following criteria:

- The farmhouse (Building 2) and some parts of the main hotel (Building 1) can be found on OS maps dating back to 1864, with historical records dating these buildings (as part of Sherley's Farm) back to the 1500s. *Criterion met includes; former agricultural buildings; pre-1914 buildings within 400m of woodland and pre-1914 with gable ends regardless of location.*
- Buildings to north (Building 3 and 4) and extensions of main hotel (Building 1) are thought to have been constructed since the 1950s. *Criterion met includes; pre-1960 detached building within 200m of woodland and building with weatherboarding which are within 200m of woodland* and *Buildings with hanging tiles which are within 200m of woodland or water.*
- Deane's Lodge (Building 5) was built in 2006 according to aerial photographs. *Does not meet any criteria above.*

2.5.3 The majority of the buildings within the site met some of the above criteria due to their age and so were selected for survey.

Methodology

2.5.4 The standard Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) methodology for structures[8] was followed. This aims to determine the actual or potential presence of bats, by inspecting for potential roost features, and determines any need for further survey and/or mitigation. In many situations, it is not possible to inspect all locations where bats may be present and an absence of bat evidence is not adequate evidence that bats are not present.

2.5.5 Building 1, 2, 3 and 4 were inspected internally (where accessible) and externally, see table below for detailed information. Building 5 was only inspected externally. A search was made for direct evidence of bat presence. A systematic search pattern was used in order to avoid missing parts of the building or built structure, although some may not have been visible from accessible parts of the building. During the survey, a search was made for live or dead bats, droppings, urine splashes, fur-oil staining and clean, cobweb-free gaps around potential entrance points and crevice roost sites. The sound of bats was listened for. Feeding remains such as moth wings were also searched for, particularly internally. Potential access points and roosting sites were recorded even if there was no direct evidence of use by bats. The inspection was thorough and a consistent search effort was applied to all accessible parts of the buildings. Sometimes bats leave no visible signs of their presence in or outside a building, and rain can remove external signs.

2.5.6 The external search included the following, where these features were present:

- the ground, particularly beneath potential access points;
- any window-sills;
- window panes;
- walls
- behind peeling paint or lifted render;
- hanging tiles;
- weatherboarding;
- eaves;
- soffit boxes;

[8] Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat surveys for professional ecologists: good practice guidelines*, Third Edition, Bat Conservation Trust.

- fascias;
- lead flashing; gaps under felt, including flat roofs;
- under tiles/slates;
- gaps in brickwork or stonework;
- in bat boxes; and
- all other relevant external features.

2.5.7 A high-power torch (Cluson clulite) was used to survey the internal and external parts of the building, so that no evidence of bats was missed because of poor illumination.

2.5.8 The internal search included the following, where these features were present:

- the floor and surfaces of furniture and other objects;
- behind wooden panelling;
- in lintels above doors and windows;
- behind window shutters, curtains and boarded up windows;
- behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork or wallpaper;
- behind lifted plaster;
- inside cupboards;
- in chimneys accessible from fireplaces; and
- all other relevant internal features.

2.5.9 A search of the loft void, where present, included, where these features were present:

- the tops of gable end or dividing walls;
- tops of chimney breasts, ridge and hip beams and other roof beams;
- mortise and tenon joints;
- all beams;
- the junction of roof timbers;
- behind purlins;
- between tiles and the roof lining; and
- under flat felt roofs

2.5.10 The roof void search also paid attention to:

- the floor;
- water tanks;
- stored materials and other surfaces
- under and around the edges of recently laid insulation;

2.5.11 Close inspection of cavities and behind timbers was aided by use of a powerful torch (Cluson clulite). The roof was inspected from ground level only.

2.5.12 The buildings which were inspected for their potential to support roosting bats are summarised in the table below.

Building No.	Name	Survey undertaken?	External survey	Internal survey
1	Main hotel	✓	✓	✓
2	Sherley's Farmhouse	✓	✓	✓
3	Middle annexe	✓	✓	✓
4	Back annexe	✓	✓	✓
5	Deane's Lodge	✓	✓	X

2.5.13 The assessment was undertaken during the same site visit as the Phase 1 Habitat survey.

Limitations to preliminary bat roost assessment: buildings

2.5.14 Building 1 only contained one loft hatch to one void. The remainder of the roof voids were not accessible by surveyors. The roof void that was accessible was inspected.

2.5.15 Building 2 did not contain any loft hatches and therefore none of the roof voids within this building were accessible for surveyors.

2.5.16 Not all the loft hatches in Buildings 3 and 4 were accessible on the day of the survey due to guest rooms being occupied. There was one loft hatch per bedroom, with the loft above divided by into sections above each bedroom by firewalls. One loft hatch in Building 3 was entered and the void inspected. This hatch only provided access to a small proportion of the total roof void, due to partition walls throughout the void. One loft hatch in Building 4 was entered which provided views of the majority of the roof void; however, due to health and safety reasons, this void was only viewed from the hatch.

2.5.17 Building 5 was only externally inspected because it was scoped out of further assessment/survey for bat when it did not meet any BCT criterion for further bat surveys (see Section 2.5.2). Following the external inspection, the building was found to be in good condition (i.e. lack of external roosting features for bats) and it was decided that this building would not benefit from an internal inspection. The survey effort on this building is considered sufficient and the lack of internal inspection was not considered to be a limitation.

2.5.18 There were no other significant limitations to the survey.

2.6 Assessment methodology

2.6.1 The assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Professional Guidance Series[9].

2.6.2 More details of the assessment methodology are provided in Appendix 2, but, in summary, the impact assessment process involves:

- identifying and characterising impacts;
- incorporating measures to avoid and mitigate (reduce) these impacts;
- assessing the significance of any residual effects after mitigation;
- identifying appropriate compensation measures to offset significant residual effects; and
- identifying opportunities for ecological enhancement.

2.6.3 The hierarchical process of avoiding, mitigating and compensating for ecological impacts is explained further below.

2.6.4 In Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) it is only essential to assess and report significant *residual* effects (i.e. those that remain after mitigation measures have been taken into account). However, it is considered good practice for the EcIA to make clear both the potential significant effects without mitigation and the residual significant effects following mitigation, particularly where the mitigation proposed is experimental, unproven or controversial. Alternatively, it should demonstrate the importance of securing the measures proposed through planning conditions or obligations.

2.6.5 Assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development takes into account both on-site impacts and those that may occur to adjacent and more distant ecological features. Impacts can be positive or negative. Negative impacts can include:

- direct loss of wildlife habitats;
- fragmentation and isolation of habitats through loss of connectivity;
- disturbance to species from noise, light or other visual stimuli;
- changes to key habitat features; and
- changes to the local hydrology, water quality, nutrient status and/or air quality.

2.6.6 Negative and positive impacts on ecological features are characterised based on predicted changes as a result of the proposed activities. In order to characterise the impacts on each feature, the following parameters are considered:

- the magnitude of the impact;

[9] CIEEM (2016) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal*, Second Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

- the spatial extent over which the impact would occur;
- the temporal duration of the impact and whether it relates to the construction or operational phase of the development;
- the timing and frequency of the impact; and
- whether the impact is reversible and over what time frame.

2.6.7 Both short-term (i.e. impacts occurring during the site clearance and construction phases) and long-term impacts are considered.

Conservation status

2.6.8 The extent to which the proposed development may have an effect upon ecological features should be determined in the light of its expected influence on the integrity of the site or ecosystem. The integrity of protected sites is considered specifically in the light of the site's conservation objectives. Beyond the boundaries of designated sites with specific nature conservation designations and clear conservation objectives, the concept of 'conservation status' is used. Conservation status should be evaluated for a study area at a defined level of ecological value. The extent of the area used in the assessment relates to the geographical level at which the feature is considered important.

2.6.9 For habitats, conservation status is determined by the sum of the influences acting on the habitats and their typical species that may affect their long-term distribution, structure and functions, as well as the long-term survival of its typical species within a given geographical area. For species, conservation status is determined by the sum of influences acting on the species concerned and inter-relationships that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations within a given geographical area.

Confidence in predictions

2.6.10 It is important to consider the likelihood that a change or activity will occur as predicted and also the degree of confidence in the assessment of the impact on ecological structure and function.

- **Certain** probability estimated at above 95%
- **Probable** probability estimated above 50% but below 95%
- **Possible** probability estimated above 5% but below 50%
- **Unlikely** probability estimated as less than 5%

Cumulative impacts

2.6.11 Consideration is also given to the potential for the development proposal to give rise to significant negative impact in combination with other proposed developments in the local area.

Overall assessment

2.6.12 An overall assessment of value and impact is provided. This is based upon the highest level or value of any of the features or species present, or likely to be present on the site. Similarly, the overall assessment of impact is the impact of greatest significance.

2.7 Mitigation hierarchy

2.7.1 The following principles underpin EcIA and have been followed, where applicable, in this assessment.

- **Avoidance** Seek options that avoid harm to ecological features (for example, by locating the proposed development on an alternative site or safeguarding on-site features within the site layout design).
- **Mitigation** Adverse effects should be avoided or minimised through mitigation measures, either through the design of the project or subsequent measures that can be guaranteed – for example, through a condition or planning obligation.
- **Compensation** Where there are significant residual adverse ecological effects despite the mitigation proposed, these should be offset by appropriate compensatory measures.

- **Enhancement** Seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.

3 Results

3.1 Desk study results

Sites of European importance

3.1.1 There were no sites of European importance in the search area.

Sites of national importance

3.1.2 There were no sites of national importance in the search area.

Sites of local importance

3.1.3 No statutory sites of local importance such as local nature reserves were found within the search area.

3.1.4 There were three Sites of Nature Conservation (SINC) within the 1km search area. A summary sheet provided by Greenspace Information for Greater London can be found in Appendix 4.

3.1.5 Greenspace Information Greater London provided its data subject to terms and conditions. The data provided must not be distributed or published for an external or public audience, for example within the appendix of a report. Local Planning Authorities may request a copy of the data from GiGL either through their Service Level Agreement or as a data search. Consequently, site details are not presented here, although the data were considered in the assessment of potential impacts below.

Protected, rare and/or priority species

3.1.6 A number of species records were returned for the search area. Records for protected, rare and/or priority species from within the search area are summarised below. In accordance with BS42020 and advice from most Local Biological Record Centres, species lists are not appended but are available to the Local Planning Authority on request.

3.1.7 Greenspace Information Greater London provided its data subject to terms and conditions. The data provided must not be distributed or published for an external or public audience, for example within the appendix of a report. Local Planning Authorities may request a copy of the data from GiGL either through their Service Level Agreement or as a data search. Consequently, species information is not presented here, although the data were considered in the assessment of potential impacts below.

3.1.8 A summary sheet provided by Greenspace Information for Greater London can be found in Appendix 4.

3.1.9 The information below has been sourced from Magic Maps.

Amphibians including great crested newts

3.1.10 A search on MAGIC maps for great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* survey licence returns and mitigation licenses[10] revealed that none were found within a 1km radius of the site boundary. A mitigation licence on MAGIC Maps for great crested newts showed one was present approximately 1.2km north-east of the site. A survey licence return revealed that great crested newts were also present 1.1km south-west of the site.

Dormouse

3.1.11 A search on MAGIC maps for dormice mitigation licenses and licence returned[10] revealed that none were found within 1km of the site boundary.

Bats

3.1.12 A search on MAGIC maps for bat mitigation licenses and licence returns[10] revealed that common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bats were present within the local area.

[10] MAGIC: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx. [Date Accessed 16th December 2022]

3.2 Phase 1 habitat survey results

3.2.1 Twelve Phase 1 habitat categories were identified during the Phase 1 habitat survey and are shown on Figure 01. Each habitat is described below.

Management, setting and green infrastructure

3.2.2 The site consists of several buildings that are associated within the existing hotel. Hardstanding roads, car parking areas and footpath were present across the site with areas of amenity grassland. The site was demarcated by hedgerow along the western site boundary and fences and wall along the norther, eastern and southern boundaries.

3.2.3 The hedgerow, amenity grassland and shrubs appeared to be regularly maintained.

3.2.4 A railway line and corridor are adjacent to the northern site boundary. Residential areas of Ruislip immediately surrounded the site. Yeading Brook was located approximately 1.3km south-east of the site.

A2.1 Dense scrub

3.2.5 Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. was present in small areas of the site, particularly along the western site boundary.

A3.1 Scattered trees

3.2.6 Several trees both broadleaved and coniferous were located within the site, predominantly at the site boundaries. Tree species included ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, elm *Ulmus* sp., holly *Ilex aquifolium*, false acacia *Robinia pseudoacacia*, goat willow *Salix caprea*, Norway spruce *Picea abies*, Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*, Lawson cypress *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*.

B6 Semi-improved grassland

3.2.7 An area of grassland towards the western site boundary consisted of grassland that did not appear to be as regularly managed as the amenity grassland. The sward height of this grassland was uniform and was approximately 10-15cm in height. Species within this grassland included red deadnettle *Labium purpureum*, common chickweed *Stellaria media*, speedwell *Veronica* sp. and some encroaching bramble, as well as those recorded within the amenity grassland. Due to cessation of management of this area of grassland, it is likely that this grassland is transitioning from amenity grassland to semi-improved grassland.

C3.1 Tall ruderal vegetation

3.2.8 A small area to the east of Building 4 consisted of ruderal vegetation. This area appeared to be the location of garden waste and ruderal vegetation had begun to establish here. Species included nettle *Urtica dioica*, white deadnettle *Labium album*, broad leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and cleavers *Galium aparine*.

G1 Standing water

3.2.9 Two ornamental ponds were located within the site boundary.

3.2.10 Pond 1, approximately 30m^2, was a koi carp pond with several koi carp present at the time of the survey. This pond was surrounded by introduced shrubs and amenity grassland. There were limited macrophytes within the pond.

3.2.11 Pond 2, approximately 10m^2, was located beneath the second storey of Building 5. This pond was likely created when this building was constructed in 2006. This pond contained several fish. There was no macrophytes within this pond and a water pump was present within the pond.

J1.2 Amenity grassland

3.2.12 The gardens surrounding the buildings consisted of amenity grassland. The grassland in these areas appeared to be regularly mown and had a uniform sward height of 5cm at the time of survey. Species within the grassland include meadow grass *Poa* sp., perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, with daisy *Bellis perennis*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg and yarrow *Achillea millefolium*.

J1.4 Introduced shrubs

3.2.13 Several areas surrounding within the hotel grounds consisted of shrub and flowering beds. Species within these areas consisted of non-native species such as rose *Rosa* sp., pampas grass *Cortaderia selloana* and cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*.

J2.1.2 Native species-poor hedgerow, intact

3.2.14 A hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* hedgerow was located along the western site boundary. This hedgerow appeared to be managed and had a height of approximately 2m and a width of approximately 1m, at the time of the survey. Ivy *Hedera helix* was growing within this hedgerow. Towards the northern end of this hedgerow was a row of immature ash growing through the hedgerow.

3.2.15 A row of Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii* was located to the east of the hawthorn hedgerow and separated a road from amenity areas of the hotel. This row of tree did not appear to have been recently managed, this was thought to be due to the age of these trees.

J2.4 Fence

3.2.16 The majority of the northern, eastern and southern site boundaries were demarcated by fencing. Fence-types include close board fencing, close board panelling and chain link fence with concrete supports. Ivy was growing over the majority of the fences.

J2.5 Wall

3.2.17 A brick wall, approximately 1.5m in height, demarcated part of the northern boundary. Ivy was growing over this wall. Retaining walls were located throughout the site and these were constructed of either brick or concrete. The heights of these retaining walls varied from approximately 0.25m to 1m.

J3.6 Buildings

3.2.18 There were several buildings within the site boundary that were associated with the hotel. Full building descriptions can be found in Section 3.5.

J4 Hardstanding

3.2.19 Car parks, internal roads, courtyards and footpaths around the buildings consisted of hardstanding and were covered in concrete, asphalt, block paving and gravel.

3.3 Great crested newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) survey results

3.3.1 The results of the HSI assessment for each of the ponds surveyed are tabulated below. Pond locations are detailed in Figure 01.

Pond No.	HSI variables										HSI Total
	SI1 - Location	SI2 - Pond area	SI3 - Pond drying	SI4 - Water quality	SI5 - Shade	SI6 - Fowl	SI7 - Fish	SI8 - Ponds	SI9 - Terrestrial habitat	SI10 - Macrophytes	
1	1	0.05	0.9	0.67	1	1	0.01	0.65	0.33	0.35	0.34
2	1	0.05	0.9	0.67	0.4	1	0.01	0.65	0.33	0.3	0.31

3.3.2 A summary of the HSI scores, with the distances from the development site and comments is tabulated below.

Pond No.	HSI Score	HSI category	Distance from development (approx.)	Direction	Comments
1	0.34	Poor	Within	-	Ornamental garden pond with koi carp
2	0.31	Poor	Within	-	Ornamental garden pool with goldfish

3.3.3 Both ponds were categorised as 'Poor' under the assessment. These ponds are therefore considered unsuitable for great crested newts.

3.4 Preliminary bat roost assessment results: Trees

3.4.1 There were no trees within the site boundary that provided roosting opportunities or bats.

3.5 Preliminary bat roost assessment results: Buildings

Plans of the buildings/trees surveyed

3.5.1 The buildings which were surveyed are shown on Figure 01. Plans of these buildings are shown in Figure 02.

Building 1 -Main Hotel

3.5.2 This building was a single storey building that contained function rooms, the main reception and a restaurant and bar. Parts of this building were a part of the original farmstead that were thought to have been building in the 1500s. Since then the building had undergone modern extensions. This building is Grade II listed.

3.5.3 The building was constructed from brickwork with some part of the building containing timber beams that were painted black. The brickwork was in good condition and did not provide roosting opportunities for bats; however, in some locations there were gaps between the timber beams and the brickwork.

3.5.4 The window frames and the doors predominantly consisted of wood. The windows and doors were tightly fitted to the brickwork and no potential roost features were found at these locations.

3.5.5 The building had wooden soffits, that all appeared to be in good condition and did not appear to provide roosting opportunities for bats.

3.5.6 The roof had a complex structure. There were seven separate pitches that that each had a gable end, with the exception of one towards the east of the building which had a hipped roof at its northern elevation. The roof was covered in clay tiles, some of which were missing, lifted or slipped. Three of the pitches were at the eastern elevation and one at the western elevation appeared to have been constructed recently or had been re-roofed recently. The verges at each gable end were in good condition.

3.5.7 The remaining sections of the roof consisted of flat roofs. There were no potential roosting features within the flat roof sections.

3.5.8 An original part of the building had the appearance of a narrow corridor. This was likely historically used as outbuildings. The roof was in the process of being repaired.

3.5.9 There were roof void present within six of the seven pitched roofs. One of the roofs was vaulted, a second pitch was partially vaulted and all but one roof void was accessible to surveyors. The roof void that was accessed was fully inspected. This roof void was internally lined with bitumen underfelt, which was generally in good condition with only a few tears. The wooden rafters, collar ties and struts were in good condition and did not offer roosting opportunities for bats. Metal supports were also present within this roof void. Light ingress was found in two areas of the roof void, both at a central location at the eaves with one on the eastern elevation and one at the western elevation.

3.5.10 No bats or evidence of bats were found at the time of the survey.

3.5.11 This building was assessed as providing high bat roost potential.

Building 2 – Sherley's Farmhouse

3.5.12 This farmhouse was a two storey building that contained guest rooms. This building was a part of the original farmstead and was thought to have been built in the 1500s. The building did not appear to have undergone any major extension works. Sherley's farmhouse is Grade II listed.

3.5.13 The building was constructed from brickwork with some part of the building containing timber beams that were painted black. The brickwork was in good condition and did not provide roosting opportunities for bats; however, in some locations there were gaps between the timber beams and the brickwork.

3.5.14 The window frames and the doors consisted of wood. The windows and doors were tightly fitted to the brickwork and no potential roost features were found at the windows and doors. A windowsill on the southern elevation of the building was rotting and there was a potential for bat use at this location.

3.5.15 The building had wooden soffits, the majority of which appeared to be in good condition and did not appear to provide roosting opportunities for bats. There was a hole in the soffit on the western elevation that provided access for bats and potential roosting opportunities.

3.5.16 Two brick chimneys were present with one on the eastern elevation and one on the northern elevation. These chimneys were in good condition and the lead-flashing at the base of the chimney was in good condition.

3.5.17 The roof consisted of several pitches that were covered in clay tiles. Several roof tiles were lifted or slipping, which provided potential roosting features for bats. The ridge tiles were in good condition. The verges at the gable ends were in good condition.

3.5.18 This farmhouse had a roof void; however, there were no loft hatches for surveyors to access this loft space.

3.5.19 No bats or evidence of bats were found at the time of the survey.

3.5.20 This building was assessed as providing high bat roost potential.

Building 3 – Middle annexe

3.5.21 This building was 'T' shaped and was thought to have been built in the 1950s. This building consisted of two-storeys and contained guest rooms.

3.5.22 This building was constructed from brickwork with wooden cladding on the first floor of the northern and southern elevations. The brickwork was painted white on the northern, eastern and western elevations. The brickwork was in good condition; however, the cladding was slightly lifted in places. This lifted cladding provided potential roosting features for bats.

3.5.23 The window frames were uPVC and doors were wooden, these frames were tightly fitted to the brickwork, as were the lintels above the doors. There were no potential roosting features at the windows and doors.

3.5.24 The wooden soffits did not provide roosting opportunities for bats, although the paint was flaking off.

3.5.25 Three chimneys were present on the northern section of the building. These chimneys were constructed from brickwork that was in good condition and the lead-flashing at the base of the chimney was also in good condition.

3.5.26 The pitched roof was covered in clay tiles, which were generally not tightly fitted, as several tiles were missing, slipped and/or lifted. These features offered roosting opportunities for bats. The verges at the gable ends were in good condition. The ridge tiles were tightly fitted.

3.5.27 A small extension was located at the northern elevation of this building. This extension had an asymmetrical pitched roof that was covered in clay tiles. Several tiles on this roof were also missing, lifted or slipped, which offered bat roosting opportunities.

3.5.28 Five porches were located on the southern and western elevations. These were single storey and had pitched roofs covered in clay tiles. Several tiles on this roof were also missing, lifted or slipped, which offered bat roosting opportunities. Two of the porches on the southern elevation had hanging tiles at the gable end. These hanging tiles appeared to be in good condition and tightly fitted.

3.5.29 There was a roof void within this building, with several loft hatches to access each section of the void. The roof void was divided by brick walls. Only one loft hatch was accessible at the time of the survey due to the majority of the rooms being occupied by guests. The loft void that was accessed was at the northern end of the building. This void was approximately 4m to the apex and was very cobwebby at the apex. The roof was lined with bitumen underfelt that was in good condition. The wooden rafters, collar tie and props were in good condition and did not offer roosting potential for bats. An old birds' nest was located at the gable end of this roof void. Light ingress was seen at the northern gable.

3.5.30 No bats or evidence of bats were found at the time of the survey.

3.5.31 This building was assessed as providing high bat roost potential.

Building 4 – Back annexe

3.5.32 This building was rectangular shaped and was thought to have been built in the 1950s. This building consisted of two-storeys and contained guest rooms.

3.5.33 This building was constructed from brickwork which was in good condition.

3.5.34 The window frames and doors were wooden, these frames were tightly fitted to the brickwork, as were the lintels above the doors. There were no potential roosting features at the windows and doors.

3.5.35 The wooden soffits did not provide roosting opportunities for bats.

3.5.36 The pitched roof was covered in clay tiles, which were tightly fitted on the northern pitch; however, several tiles on the southern pitch were missing, slipped or lifted. These features offered roosting opportunities for bats. The verges at the gable ends were in good condition. The ridge tiles were tightly fitted.

3.5.37 Two porches were present with one located on the northern elevation and one on southern elevation. These were single storey and had pitched roofs covered in clay tiles. Several tiles on this roof were also missing, lifted or slipped, which offered bat roosting opportunities. These porches had hanging tiles at the gable end, which on the northern elevation were slipped and on the southern elevation were in good condition and tightly fitted.

3.5.38 A lean to was located at the western elevation, the lean to had a flat roof. This extension did not provide roosting features for bats.

3.5.39 There was a roof void within this building, one loft hatch appeared to access the majority of the roof void; however, as all guest rooms were not accessible during the survey, this is an assumption. This void was only inspected from the hatch due to health and safety reasons. This roof void did not appear to contain brick walls as Building 3 did. This void was approximately 4m to the apex and was very cobwebby at the apex. The roof was lined with bitumen underfelt that was in good condition. The wooden rafters, collar tie and props were in good condition and did not offer roosting potential for bats.

3.5.40 No bats or evidence of bats were found at the time of the survey.

3.5.41 This building was assessed as providing moderate bat roost potential.

Building 5 – Deane's Lodge

3.5.42 This was a modern building in appearance and was built in 2006. This building was in good condition and no potential roosting features were seen at the time of the survey.

3.5.43 The building was constructed from wooden cladding that was tightly fitted and brick that was rendered. Floor to ceiling glass panes also formed some of the construction of this building.

3.5.44 The window frames were uPVC and the doors were constructed from glass. The doors and windows were tightly fitted to the brickwork and wooden cladding.

3.5.45 There were several pitched roofs within the building that were covered in slate tiles. The slate tiles were tightly fitted and did not offer roosting opportunities for bats. The verges at the gable ends were in good condition.

3.5.46 No bats or evidence of bats were found at the time of the survey.

3.5.47 This building was assessed as providing negligible bat roost potential.

Outbuildings

3.5.48 A wooden shed that was painted black was located towards the south of the site. This was a modern structure, constructed from softwood, with a pitched roof covered in bitumen felt.

3.5.49 A block of garages was located towards the south of the site. These garages were constructed from brickwork with wooden doors. The monopitched roof was covered in bitumen felt and corrugated metal sheeting. Although access points in this garage block was possible for bats, there were no potential roosting features available.

3.5.50 A building denoted as, The Lodge, was located at the southern end of the site. This was an irregularly shaped building that was single storey. This building was constructed from brickwork that was in good condition and had a flat roof. The windows and doors were boarded up. There were no potential roosting features within this building.

3.5.51 These buildings did not provide roosting opportunities for bats.

4 Evaluation of conservation status and impact assessment

4.1 Assessment rationale

4.1.1 The assessment is based on the ecological data presented within this report. Future changes in the wildlife present on site are beyond the scope of this report, unless specifically stated.

4.2 Evaluation of conservation status and assessment of designated sites

4.2.1 The ecological value of the site is considered below and evaluated using the methodology set out in Appendix 2 and in accordance with species legislation and planning policy, as outlined in Appendix 1.

Sites of European importance

4.2.2 There are no sites of European importance within the search area. The impact of the proposed development upon European designated sites is therefore assessed as **Neutral**.

Sites of national importance

4.2.3 There are no sites of national importance in the search area.

4.2.4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones are used to assess the need for the LPA to consult Natural England on planning applications at varying distances from SSSIs. In accordance with the SSSI Impact Risk Zones User Guidance[11] consultation with Natural England would be required for the proposed development site for:

- **Infrastructure:** Pipelines, pylons and overhead cables. Any transport proposal including road, rail and by water (excluding routine maintenance). Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
- **Minerals, Oil & Gas:** Planning applications for quarries, including: new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions (ROMP), extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil & gas exploration/extraction.
- **Air Pollution:** Any industrial/agricultural development that could cause AIR POLLUTION (incl: industrial processes, livestock & poultry units with floorspace > 500m², slurry lagoons & digestate stores > 200m², manure stores > 250t).
- **Combustion:** General combustion processes >20MW energy input. Incl: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/ combustion.
- **Waste:** Landfill. Incl: inert landfill, non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill.
- **Composting:** Any composting proposal with more than 75000 tonnes maximum annual operational throughput. Incl: open windrow composting, in-vessel composting, anaerobic digestion, other waste management.
- **Water Supply:** Large infrastructure such as warehousing / industry where total net additional gross internal floorspace following development is 1,000m² or more.

4.2.5 The proposed development does not fall within these categories and therefore does not require the LPA to consult Natural England.

4.2.6 The impact of the proposed development upon sites of national importance is considered to be **Neutral**, due to the distance of the proposed development from the designated sites, the reasons for the sites' designation and the character of the development within its local context.

Sites of local importance

4.2.7 There were three SINCs found within the search area. These sites are assessed as being of **Medium** importance for wildlife at the **County** scale.

4.2.8 One of these sites is located just over 100m from the site boundary. This site consists of amenity grassland recreational areas that are publicly accessible, with habitats of higher ecological importance (e.g. railway banks) not accessible by the public. The habitats of high ecological

[11] Magic Maps www.magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx

importance are therefore protected from recreational impacts. The other two SINCs are located over 900m from the site and the sites are only publicly accessible along Public Rights of Way, which are limited.

4.2.9 The impact of the proposed development upon sites of local importance is considered to be **Neutral**, due to the distance of the proposed development from the locally important sites, the reasons for the sites' designation and the character of the development within its local context.

4.3 Evaluation of conservation status and assessment of habitats and green infrastructure

Habitats

4.3.1 The habitats within the site were of lower ecological value, such as the grassland, ruderal vegetation and hardstanding. This was due to current management of the grassland, small area and recent establishment of the ruderal vegetation and lack of connectivity of these habitats to suitable habitats within the local area. The introduced shrubs were also considered to be of low ecological value, given that the majority of species were within flowerbeds and did not form dense vegetation suitable for nesting birds. The ponds were considered to be of lower ecological value given they were both densely stock with fish.

4.3.2 The hedgerow and trees were of moderate ecological value, mainly for nesting birds, but their value is reduced given the lack of connectivity of these habitats to suitable habitats within the local area.

4.3.3 The value of the habitats within the site were considered to be **Lower** at the **Parish** scale.

4.3.4 Under current design plans, the hedgerow along the western boundary is proposed for retention and enhancement (strengthened with additional native shrub understorey planting) and the majority of the boundary trees are proposed for retention. Any trees that required removal to facilitate the development should be replaced. It is proposed to remove the ponds within the site and it is recommended that a replacement pond that is wildlife friendly should be incorporated into design proposals. If these measures can be adhered to, the impact of the proposed development is considered to be **Neutral**.

Green infrastructure

4.3.5 The hedgerow along the western boundary provided some valuable green infrastructure; however, it is not suitably connected to habitats within the local area. The wooded habitat beyond the northern boundary that appears on aerial photography is not as dense on the ground and is not directly connected to the hedgerow or other habitats within the site.

4.4 Evaluation of conservation status and assessment of species

Veteran trees

4.4.1 There are no veteran trees present on the site and the value of the proposed development site for these is therefore **Negligible.** The impact of the proposed development upon veteran trees is **Neutral.**

Plants

4.4.2 The character of the habitats recorded at the site and the plant records returned for the local area, suggests that the site has no potential to support protected, rare and/or priority plants. The value of the proposed development site for this group is **Negligible** and the impact of the proposed development is **Neutral.**

Invertebrates

4.4.3 The character of the habitats recorded at the site and the invertebrate records returned for the local area, suggests that the site has no potential to support protected, rare and/or priority invertebrates. The value of the proposed development site for this group is **Negligible** and the impact of the proposed development is **Neutral.**

Amphibians including great crested newts

4.4.4 The site area is approximately 1ha, therefore any waterbodies within 250m of a breeding pond for great crested newt would cause an *Amber: Offence likely* impact. There were two ponds within the site and no further ponds within 250m of the site boundary.

4.4.5 The two ornamental ponds within the site were considered to provided poor suitability for breeding great crested newts when using the Habitat Suitability Index assessment. This was due to the ponds being heavily stocked with fish, the ponds not providing egg-laying material and being surrounded by unsuitable terrestrial habitats. The terrestrial habitats within the site were not considered suitable for great crested newt given the current management of the grassland and isolation of the site from suitable habitats within the local area.

4.4.6 For these reasons, there is no reasonable likelihood of great crested newts being present within the site. The value of the proposed development site for this group is **Negligible** and the impact of the proposed development is **Neutral**.

Reptiles

4.4.7 The habitats within the site were not considered suitable for reptile species. The grassland was kept short and the vegetation within shrub/flower beds was did not provide foraging/commuting opportunities for reptiles. The hedgerow was not suitably connected to suitable habitats within the local area.

4.4.8 The character of the habitats recorded at the site and the reptile records returned for the local area, suggests that the site has no potential to support protected, rare and/or priority reptiles. The value of the proposed development site for this group is **Negligible** and the impact of the proposed development is **Neutral.**

Birds

Breeding birds

4.4.9 The site is likely to be used by common breeding bird species, both for nesting and foraging, with the hedgerow, trees and garden shrub habitats being of greatest value in this respect. It is considered that the value of the site to breeding birds is **Lower** at the **Parish** scale.

4.4.10 Under current design plans, the hedgerow along the western boundary is proposed for retention and enhancement (strengthened with additional native shrub understorey planting) and the majority of the boundary trees are proposed for retention. The unmitigated impact is considered to be **Minor Adverse**. Avoidance measures have been proposed to reduce impacts to **Neutral.**

Wintering birds

4.4.11 There are no habitats present on site which might support significant populations of wintering birds, although the site does offer some limited foraging potential for small numbers of common species. The site is considered to be of **Negligible** value for this group.

Dormice

4.4.12 There were no dormouse records returned for the site, and the habitats present offer an inadequate resource for this species. Furthermore, the site is not suitably connected to areas of suitable breeding habitat for dormice.

4.4.13 The site is therefore considered to be of **Negligible** value for this species and the impact of the proposed development is **Neutral**.

Aquatic mammals including water voles and otters

4.4.14 There were no waterbodies or watercourses suitable for water voles or otters within the site and within close proximity to the site boundary. The site did not offer suitable terrestrial habitats for species within this group and the site was not suitably connected to watercourse or waterbodies within the local area.

4.4.15 The character of the habitats recorded at the site and the mammal records returned for the local area, suggests that the site has no potential to support protected, rare and/or priority aquatic

mammals. The value of the proposed development site for this group is **Negligible** and the impact of the proposed development is **Neutral.**

Terrestrial mammals including badgers

4.4.16 The habitats within the site did not provide very suitable opportunities for sett creation. The hedgerow did not provide suitable cover given its management and proximity to the offsite footpath and road. The site provided some value for occasional foraging by badgers, hedgehogs and urban foxes.

4.4.17 The value for the site for this group is considered to be **Lower** at the **Site Only** level. The impact of the proposed development upon terrestrial mammals is therefore **Neutral**. Mitigation measures have been suggested in Section 5 to safeguard terrestrial mammals during the construction phase.

Bats

Roosting potential - trees

4.4.18 None of the trees within the site boundary provided roosting opportunities for bats. The value for the site for bats roosting in trees is considered to be **Negligible** and the impact is therefore **Neutral**.

Bats roosting- buildings

4.4.19 A summary of the findings of the buildings survey is provided in the table below. The value to bats of some of the existing buildings is **Unknown** and the impact of the proposed development is to be determined by bat emergence/re-entry surveys. If a bat roost is identified during the surveys, a European Protected Species development licence will need to be sought.

Building number	Identified bat use	Potential roost present	Emergence/re-entry survey needed?
1 – Main hotel	No	Yes – under lifted/missing roof tiles & gaps where timber beams meet brickwork.	**High** – at least three surveys; consisting of two dusk emergence surveys and one dawn re-entry survey
2 – Sherley's Farmhouse	No	Yes – under lifted/missing roof tiles, hole in soffits & gaps where timber beams meet brickwork.	**High** – at least three surveys; consisting of two dusk emergence surveys and one dawn re-entry survey
3 – Middle annexe	No	Yes - under lifted/missing roof tiles, hole in soffits & under lifted wooden cladding	**High** – at least three surveys; consisting of two dusk emergence surveys and one dawn re-entry survey
4 – Back annexe	No	Yes - under lifted/missing roof tiles	**Moderate** – at least two surveys; consisting of one dusk emergence survey and one dawn re-entry survey
5 – Deane's Lodge	No	No	**Negligible** – No surveys required

Foraging/commuting potential

4.4.20 Based on the evidence gained during the Phase 1 survey, the site is likely to be predominantly used for commuting and foraging purposes by relatively common and widespread bat species. The hedgerow and trees providing some value to foraging/commuting bats.

4.4.21 The value and impact on this group is currently **Unknown**, pending the results of the bat surveys on the buildings.

4.5 Cumulative impacts

4.5.1 There are no known cumulative impacts.

4.6 Proposals for further survey or investigation

Surveys

4.6.1 It is proposed that the following survey work be undertaken in order to establish whether protected habitats or species are present at the site. The seasons in which species may reliably be surveyed and a brief methodology are given in the table below.

Survey type	Season for survey	Methodology & Objectives
Bat emergence/re-entry survey	May to August	A maximum of three survey visits, comprising two dusk surveys and one dawn survey, to identify roosts within building(s), trees and other structures. See table above for required survey visits on each building.

Biodiversity Net Gain calculations

4.6.2 Some Local Planning Authorities require calculations of Biodiversity Net Gain using the national standard Defra metric, although a small proportion of those councils prefer a different metric. The areas of habitats are given various values, and a calculation of those values and habitat area provides the number of biodiversity units a development site has, before development and for the proposals. An appeal decision in October 2020[12] made it clear that where a Local Plan requires Net Gain measured using a metric, but does not quantity the amount of Net Gain, there is no need to meet the 10% Net Gain requirements of the Environment Act 2022 as those requirements are not yet introduced through secondary legislation.

4.6.3 Hillingdon Local Plan[13] has policy EM7: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. This policy has no set amount of net gain that needs to be achieved and does not require a net gain to be quantified using a metric.

4.6.4 Part 2 of the local plan[14] states the following *'Where appropriate, the Council will require the use of the approved DEFRA biodiversity impact calculator (as updated) to inform decisions on no net loss and net gain.'*

4.6.5 It is recommended that a biodiversity net gain calculation is undertaken to show whether the proposed development will provide a net gain.

[12] Planning Inspectorate (14th October 2020) Appeal Ref: APP/Y0435/W/20/3251121
Land at Brickhill Street, South Caldecotte, Milton Keynes MK17 9FE
[13] Hillingdon London (Adopted November 2012) A vision for 2026 Local Plan: Part 1 Strategic Policies
[14] London Borough of Hillingdon (Adopted 16 January 2022) Local Plan Part 2 Development Management Policies

5 Mitigation and avoidance measures

5.1 Avoidance measures

5.1.1 The following impact avoidance measures have been identified and will be delivered.

Habitats

- All site boundary features, including hedgerow and trees, at the periphery of the site, are to be protected in the built scheme.

Breeding birds

- Vegetation removal required for the construction phase should take place outside the bird breeding season of March to August inclusive, to prevent disturbance to birds, or if removed in that period, only after a survey has shown that no active nests are present.

5.2 Proposed mitigation for known impacts

5.2.1 No mitigation is needed for the following ecological features, because no significant impacts have been identified: European sites and nationally important designated sites; locally important sites; rare plants; invertebrates; great crested newts and other amphibians; reptiles; breeding birds; wintering birds; badgers and aquatic mammals such as water vole and otter.

5.2.2 Protected species surveys are required for bats as set out in Section 4.6 above. Until these surveys have been undertaken, it is not possible to identify accurately the likely mitigation requirements in respect of these species.

5.2.3 The following mitigation is required to reduce the impacts of the scheme to within acceptable limits.

Habitats

- Ensure that no works come closer than Root Protection Zones of trees and shrubs (as a minimum) in retained habitats.
- Replace the two ponds that will be lost with a wildlife friendly pond.
- Any trees proposed for removal to facilitate the development should be replaced with native tree species.

Terrestrial mammals

- Trenches should be filled in prior to the end of the working day, or a plank left leaning up from the base of the trench to the surface, so that animals falling in can get out of the excavation.
- Pipework should be closed off at the end of each working day to avoid badgers and other animals becoming trapped.

Bats

- External lighting should be reduced to a minimum and designed in accordance with guidelines from the Bat Conservation Trust.[15]

5.3 Compensation for ecological impacts

5.3.1 No compensatory habitat creation or management is proposed.

5.4 Species licensing

5.4.1 A European Protected Species licence would be needed to implement any impacts upon bats such as damaging a place used for shelter or disturbing the species in its place of shelter. This will only be required if buildings proposed for demolition are found to have bat roosts within them.

[15] See https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

6 Enhancement measures

6.1 Ecological enhancement

6.1.1 Ecological enhancement aims to improve the quality of the site and the immediate vicinity for native flora and fauna. Such enhancements can also provide aesthetic appeal and can add value to the proposed development.

6.1.2 Enhancement opportunities specific to the development proposals for this site are provided below. It is not anticipated that all of these options would be utilised. The options are listed in order of priority, with habitat enhancements having most benefit to wildlife. Small-scale enhancements targeted at individual species, whilst valuable, are generally of less overall benefit than habitat enhancement measures.

6.2 Habitat enhancement

6.2.1 Wherever possible, planting would use native species, which support biodiversity significantly better than non-native plants. This is due to the numbers of flowers, fruits, seeds and berries that are produced by our native species and their different flowering and fruiting times throughout the year.

6.2.2 Habitat enhancements include the following.

- Structural native trees and shrubs should be planted across the site as a foraging resource for a variety of species.
- Strengthen retained hedgerows with additional native shrub understorey planting.
- Good practice in hedgerow maintenance should be employed, including cutting alternate sides of hedges on alternate years, which will benefit hedgerow species such as breeding birds, small mammals and bats.
- Inclusion of green roofs on proposed buildings.

6.2.3 These enhancements would benefit common invertebrates, breeding birds, badger foraging and bat foraging.

6.3 Small-scale species enhancement measures

6.3.1 Small-scale enhancements to benefit individual species/species groups would include the following.

- Four bat boxes (e.g. Vivara or similar), suitable for a range of bat species, should be erected on retained standard trees or buildings in unlit parts of the site. Bat boxes should be positioned south-east to south-west facing and be at least 5m above ground level.
- Two bird boxes (e.g. Vivara or similar), suitable for a range of bird species, should be erected on retained standard trees in undisturbed parts of the site. These boxes should face away from prevailing winds and be positioned at least 3m above ground level.
- Four swift boxes (e.g. Vivara or similar) should be erected on proposed buildings. These boxes should be positioned on the northern elevations of the proposed buildings and be at least 5m above ground level.
- Up to two habitat piles should be created, using woody cut material (brash) from vegetation clearance. These should be stacked in a quiet, sheltered corner of the site to form piles measuring approximately 2m x 1m x 1m.
- Creation of hedgehog highways through close board fences; a gap of 13cm x 13cm should be cut out of the base of fences to allow hedgehogs to move through the site after construction is complete. Alternatively, include in fence design at least two Hedgehog Friendly Concrete Gravel Boards[16] or similar per garden.

[16] https://www.kebur.co.uk/product/hedgehog-concrete-gravel-board/

7 Recommendations

7.1 Recommended further work needed prior to an application

7.1.1 A Landscape Strategy is required, to be able to demonstrate that the proposed ecological mitigation and/or enhancements are achievable and to support a Biodiversity net gain metric.

7.1.2 Further surveys for bats are recommended, see Section 4.6.

7.1.3 A Biodiversity Net Gain calculation is recommended, see Section 4.6.

7.2 Recommended conditions

7.2.1 It is recommended that the following conditions, based on model conditions in Appendix D of BS42020:2013, are applied to the planning permission.

7.2.2 No removal of hedgerows, trees or shall take place between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check of vegetation for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared and provided written confirmation that no birds will be harmed and/or that there are appropriate measures in place to protect nesting bird interest on site. Any such written confirmation should be submitted to the local planning authority.

8 Conclusions

8.1.1 The purpose of this report was to inform a planning application for the proposed development.

8.1.2 The overall value of the site to wildlife is considered to be **Lower** at the **Parish** scale.

8.1.3 A summary of assessments of value and the impact of the proposed development without mitigation, and the residual significant effects following mitigation, is provided in the table below.

Feature	Level of value	Scale	Unmitigated impact	Confidence level	Mitigated impact
Sites of European importance	Very High	European	Neutral	Certain	-
Sites of national importance	High	National	Neutral	Certain	-
Sites of local importance	Medium	County			
Habitats	Lower	Parish	Minor Adverse	Probable	Neutral
Veteran trees	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Plants	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Invertebrates	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Amphibians including great crested newts	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Reptiles	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Breeding birds	Lower	Parish	Minor Adverse	Probable	Neutral
Wintering birds	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Dormice	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Aquatic mammals including water voles and otters	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Terrestrial mammals including badgers	Lower	Site Only	Neutral	-	-
Bats: roosting in trees	Negligible	-	-	-	-
Bats: roosting in buildings	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	-	-
Bats: foraging/commuting	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	-	-

8.1.4 An **Unknown** status indicates a need for further surveys to determine the value and impact of the development on protected habitats and/or species. Further survey requirements for this site includes **bats**.

8.1.5 The overall impact of the proposals is considered to be **Minor Adverse** in the absence of mitigation. The mitigated impact is considered to be **Neutral,** subject to the outcome of recommended surveys.

8.1.6 The adoption of all or most of the enhancement measures detailed in Section 6 above would give rise to a **Neutral-Minor Beneficial** impact**,** subject to the outcome of recommended surveys. It is unclear at this stage whether the site will provide a positive biodiversity net gain.

Figures

Key

- Site Boundary
- A2.1 Dense / continuous scrub
- A3.1 Broad-leaved scattered trees
- SI B6 Poor semi-improved grassland
- C3.1 Tall ruderal
- G1 Standing water
- A J1.2 Amenity grassland
- J1.4 Introduced shrub
- J2.1.2 Species-poor intact hedge
- J2.4 Fence
- J2.5 Wall
- J3.6 Buildings
- J4 Hardstanding
- Areas not accessible at the time of the survey

B22138 - The Barn Hotel, Ruislip

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Figure 01
Scale: NTS

January 2023

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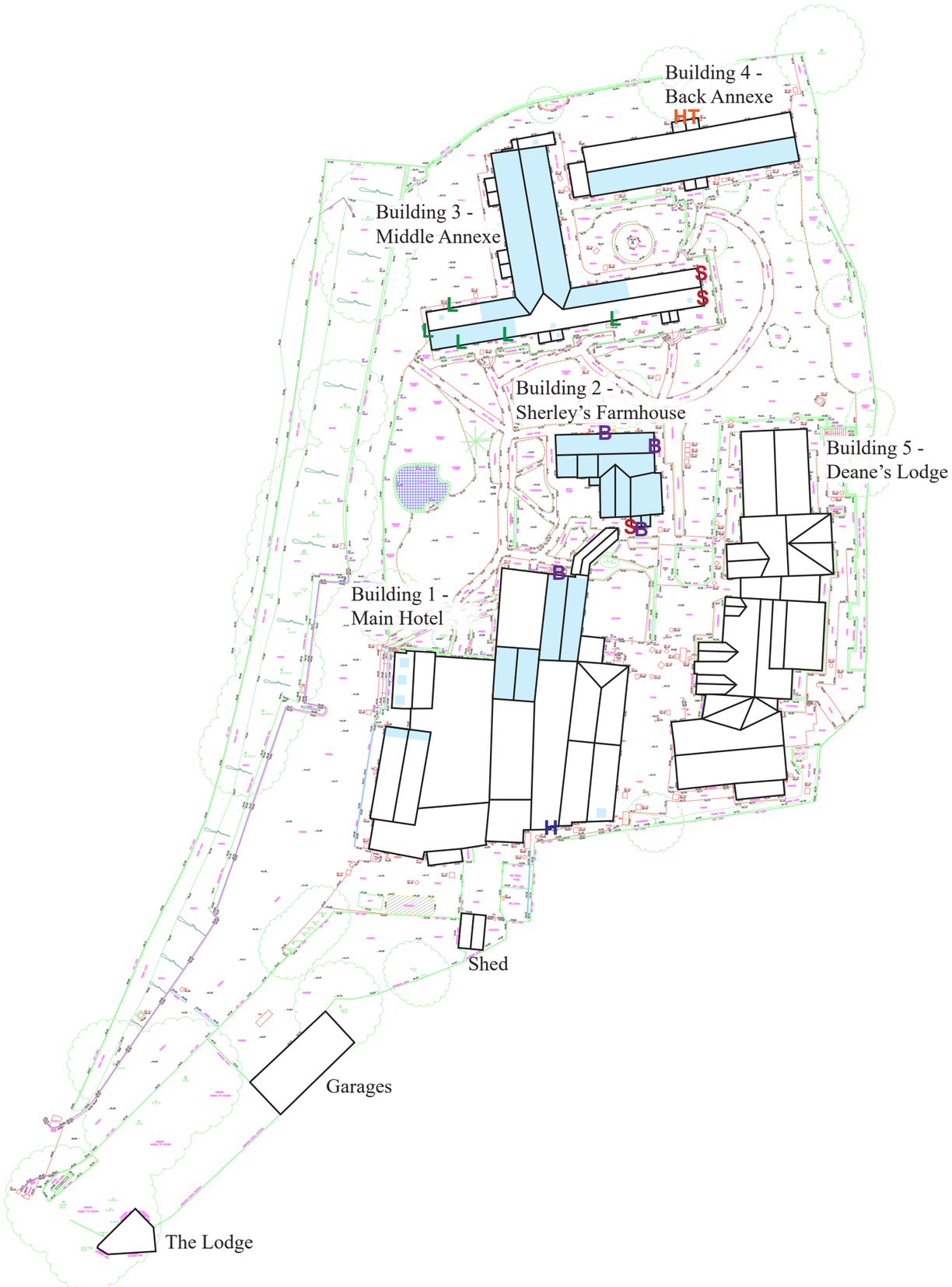
Reproduced from the Topographical Survey



Key

Roof plan

Potential Roost Features

Area where several roof tiles were missing, slipped or

S Hole in soffit

H Hole in render

L Lifted wooden cladding

B Gap where timber beams meet brickwork

HT Lifted and slipped hanging tiles

B22138 - The Barn Hotel, Ruislip

Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats: Buildings

Figure 02

Scale: NTS

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Appendix 1

Legislative and policy context

There is a number of pieces of legislation, regulations and policies specific to ecology which underpin this assessment. These may be applicable at a European, National or Local level. References to legislation are given as a summary for information and should not be construed as legal advice.

Birds Directive

The European Community Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC), normally known as the Birds Directive, sets out general rules for the conservation of all naturally occurring wild birds, their nests, eggs and habitats. It was superseded by the 'new' Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) which generally updated the previous directive.

These requirements are interpreted into English law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) with regard to protection of birds, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 with regard to the registration and regulation of Special Protection Areas.

Habitats Directive

The European Community Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora (92/43/EEC), normally known as the Habitats Directive, aims to protect the European Union's biodiversity. It requires member states to provide strict protection for specified flora and fauna (i.e. European Protected Species) and the registration and regulation of Special Areas of Conservation.

These requirements are interpreted into English law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 with regard to European Protected Species and the registration and regulation of Special Areas of Conservation.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 interpret the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive into English and Welsh law. For clarity, the following paragraphs consider the case in England only, with Natural England given as the appropriate nature conservation body. In Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales is the appropriate nature conservation body.

Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation are defined in the regulations as 'European sites'. The Regulations regulate the management of land within European sites, requiring land managers to have the consent of Natural England before carrying out management. Byelaws may also be made to prevent damaging activities and if necessary land can be compulsorily purchased to achieve satisfactory management.

The Regulations define competent authorities as public bodies or statutory undertakers. Competent authorities are required to make an appropriate assessment of any plan or project they intend to permit or carry out, if the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect upon a European site. The permission may only be given if the plan or project is ascertained to have no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European site. If the competent authority wishes to permit a plan or project despite a negative assessment, imperative reasons of over-riding public interest must be demonstrated, and there should be no alternative to the scheme. The permissions process would involve the Secretary of State and the option of consulting the European Commission. In practice, there will be very few cases where a plan or project is permitted despite a negative assessment. This means that a planning application has to be assessed by the Local Planning Authority, based on information provided by the applicant, and the assessment must either decide that it is likely to have no significant effect on a European site or ascertain that there is no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European site.

Government policy is for Ramsar sites (wetlands of global importance) to be treated as if they were European sites within the planning process.

Appropriate Assessment

Appropriate Assessment is required in certain instances under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Regulation 63 says that:

> *63.— (1) A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which-*
>
> *(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site*

(either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site,

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

(2) A person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation shall provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable them to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required.

(3) The competent authority shall for the purposes of the assessment consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representations made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority may specify.

(4) They must also, if they consider it appropriate, take the opinion of the general public, and if they do so, they must take such steps for that purpose as they consider appropriate.

(5) In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 64 (considerations of overriding public interest), the competent authority shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the European offshore marine site (as the case may be).

(6) In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site, the authority must have regard to the manner in which it is proposed to be carried out or to any conditions or restrictions subject to which they propose that the consent, permission or other authorisation should be given.

The competent authority is typically the local planning authority. The appropriate assessment contains the information the council requires for the purposes of its assessment under the Habitat Regulations.

The Habitat Regulations also are applicable to local authority land use plans and policies. If a policy or plan is likely to have a significant effect upon a European site, the permission may only be given if the policy or plan is ascertained to have no adverse effect upon the integrity of the European site. This approach gives rise to a hierarchy of plans each with related appropriate assessments. For example, the appropriate assessment of a Regional Spatial Strategy will affect policies within a Core Strategy, which will then need its own appropriate assessment, and so on.

European Protected Species

European Protected Species of animals are given protection from deliberate capture, injury, killing, disturbance or egg taking/capture. Their breeding sites or resting places are also protected from damage or destruction, which does not have to be deliberate. A number of species are listed as European Protected Species, with those most likely to be considered in planning applications being bats, dormouse, great crested newt and otter. Natural England may give a licence for actions that are otherwise illegal, subject to them being satisfied on the three tests of no alternative, over-riding public interest, and maintenance of the species in favourable condition.

European Protected Species of plant are also listed and given protection. These species are generally very rare and unlikely to be present in proposed development sites.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 has been amended many times, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It contains provisions for the notification and regulation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and for protected species.

The Regulations regulate the management of land within Sites of Special Scientific Interest, requiring land managers to have the consent of Natural England before carrying out management.

All public bodies are defined as 'S28G' bodies, which have a duty to further the nature conservation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the undertaking of their functions. In practice, this prevents planning applications being permitted if they would harm Sites of Special Scientific Interest, as it would be a breach of that duty.

The Act makes it an offence intentionally to kill, injure, or take any wild bird, take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird, while that nest is in use or being built, or take or destroy an egg of any wild bird. Special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences of disturbing these birds at their nests, or their dependent young.

The Act makes it an offence intentionally to kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places. Some species have lesser protection under this Act, for example white-clawed crayfish, common frog and toads are only protected from sale, and reptile species, other than smooth snake and sand lizard, are protected from intentional killing or injury, but they are not protected from disturbance and their habitat is not protected. It is also an offence intentionally to pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated February 2019 replaces previous Government Policy in relation to nature conservation and planning expressed in the NPPF dated March 2012.

Chapter 15 paragraph 170(d) of the NPPF 2018 says that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraphs 171 and 172 relate to policy for designated sites of biodiversity or landscape importance. Proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged against Local Plans policies which will distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value and maintain and enhance networks of habitats and green infrastructure. Further policy is within paragraph 174, where Local Planning Authorities should within their Local Plans aim to protect and enhance biodiversity by:

- Identifying, mapping and safeguarding components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- Promoting 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.

When determining planning applications Local Planning Authorities should apply the following principles:

- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating it on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused,
- 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;
- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraph 176 adds protection to candidate sites of European or International importance (Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites) and also to those sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential SPA, possible SAC listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Paragraph 177 clarifies that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Government circular 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact Within the Planning System' referenced ODPM 06/2005 has not been replaced and remains valid. It sets out the legislation regarding designated and undesignated sites and protected species and describes how the planning system should take account of that legislation. It does however pre-date the NERC Act 2006 (see below), which includes a level of protection for a further list of habitats and species regardless of whether they are on designated sites or elsewhere.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

This Act includes a list of habitats and species of principal importance in England. Local Authorities are required to consider the needs of these habitats and species when making decisions, such as on planning application.

Local Planning Authority's planning policy

The Local Planning Authority will have policies relating to biodiversity conservation.

Species Legislation

The following table provides an overview of legislation with regard to species.

Protected Species	Legislation			
	Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981	**The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017**	**Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006**	**Protection of Badgers Act, 1992**
Plants (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓[17]	✓	
Invertebrates (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓[18]	✓	
White-clawed crayfish	✓		✓	
Great crested newt, natterjack toad, pool frog	✓	✓	✓	
Other amphibians	✓[19]		✓	
Sand lizard, smooth snake	✓	✓[20]	✓	
Other reptiles	✓[21]		✓	
Breeding birds	✓	✓	✓	
Wintering birds (certain 'rare' species)	✓	✓	✓	
Bats	✓	✓	✓	
Dormouse	✓	✓	✓	
Water vole	✓		✓	
Otter	✓	✓	✓	
Badger				✓

[17] Nine species present in the UK, with very specialised habitat requirements, are European Protected Species.

[18] Fisher's estuarine moth, large blue butterfly and lesser whirlpool ram's-horn snail are European Protected Species.

[19] The four other native amphibian species (smooth and palmate newts, common frog and common toad) are only protected against trade under this act.

[20] Smooth snake and sand lizard are European Protected Species.

[21] The four other native reptile species (common lizard, slow worm, grass snake and adder) are protected against intentional killing, injury and trade under this act.

Appendix 2

Assessment Methodology: Valuing Ecological Features and Impact Assessment

The three-stage assessment method for determining ecological value is based upon assessment matrices published in the Handbook of Biodiversity Methods[22]. It has been updated to comply with recent changes to planning policy and legislation. The three-stage process allows the value of ecological sites, habitats and populations, and the magnitude of the impact, to be cross-tabulated to identify impact significance.

Valuing ecological sites, habitats and populations: scale and level of value

Scale	Level of value	Sites, habitats and populations
European	**Very High**	Statutory sites designated under international conventions or related national legislation, for example: • Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites), • Special Areas of Conservation, • Special Protection Areas.
National	**High**	Statutory sites designated under national legislation, for example: • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England, Wales, Scotland), • National Nature Reserves (UK). Significant viable areas of habitats, or populations or assemblages of species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales (Section 41 species and habitats)[23] of such size and quality as might qualify for SSSI designation. Populations or assemblages of red-listed, rare or legally protected species, as might qualify for SSSI designation, for example: • species of conservation concern, • Red Data Book (RDB) species, • birds of conservation concern (Red List species), • nationally rare and nationally scarce species, • legally protected species.
County	**Medium**	Statutory sites of lower conservation value designated under national legislation, for example Local Nature Reserves (UK). Non-statutory sites designated under local legislation, for example: • County Wildlife Sites, • Local Wildlife Sites, • Roadside Nature Reserves (protected road verges). Viable areas of habitat or populations of species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales (Section 41 species and habitats)[24] of such size and quality as might qualify for designation at the county level. Other non-designated sites which meet the criteria for designation at this level.

[22] Hill, D., Fasham, M., Tucker, G., Shewry, M., Shaw, P. (eds.) (2005) *Handbook of Biodiversity Methods: Survey, Evaluation and Monitoring*, Cambridge University Press.

[23] Listed under S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx.

[24] Listed under S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx.

District/ Borough[25]	**Lower**	Sites meeting criteria for metropolitan designations. Undesignated sites or features not meeting criteria for county designation, but that are considered to enrich appreciably the habitat resource within the local district or borough, for example: • ancient woodland, • diverse, ecological valuable and cohesive hedgerow networks, • significant clusters or groups of ponds, • veteran or ancient trees. Viable areas of habitat or populations of species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales (Section 41 species and habitats)[26] not qualifying for designation at the county level.
Parish	**Lower**	Areas of habitat considered to enrich appreciably the ecological resource within the context of the local parish. Small areas of habitat or populations of species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales (Section 41 species and habitats)[27].
Site only	**Negligible**	Ecological feature or resource not meeting any of the above criteria.

Note: there is much overlap in designations and lists of important species, and many sites, habitats and species appear on several. Where a site, habitat or species has multiple designations or levels of protection, normally the highest level would be the level at which impacts are assessed.

[25] Including metropolitan boroughs.

[26] Listed under S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx.

[27] Listed under S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx. Listed under S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/habsandspeciesimportance.aspx.

Definitions of impact magnitude

Magnitude (negative or positive)	Definition/trigger
Severe	Loss or severe degradation affecting over 75% of a site feature, habitat or population. Adverse change to, or reduced condition of, over 90% of a site feature, habitat or population, for example through disturbance or trampling.
Major	Loss or severe degradation affecting over 25% of a site feature, habitat or population. Adverse change to, or reduced condition of, over 50% of a site feature, habitat or population, for example through disturbance or trampling. For benefits, an impact equivalent in nature conservation terms to a gain of over 50% in a site feature, habitat or population.
Moderate	Loss or severe degradation affecting over 5% of a site feature, habitat or population. Adverse change to, or reduced condition of, over 10% of a site feature, habitat or population, for example through disturbance or trampling. For benefits, an impact equivalent in nature conservation terms to a gain of 10-50% in a site feature, habitat or population
Minor	Loss or severe degradation affecting up to 5% of a site feature, habitat or population. Adverse change to, or reduced condition of, 1-10% of a site feature, habitat or population, for example through disturbance or trampling. For benefits, an impact equivalent in nature conservation terms to a gain of up to 10% in a site feature, habitat or population.
Insignificant	No loss of or severe degradation to a site feature, habitat or population. Adverse change to, or reduced condition of, less than 1% of a site feature, habitat or population. No benefit to a site feature, habitat or population.

Impact significance

	Magnitude of impact							
Value of site, habitat or population	*Severe Negative*	*Major Negative*	*Moderate Negative*	*Minor Negative*	*Insignificant*	*Minor Positive*	*Medium Positive*	*Major Positive*
European (Very High)	Severe Adverse	Severe Adverse	Major Adverse	Major Adverse	Neutral*	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial
National (High)	Severe Adverse	Major Adverse	Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Neutral*	Moderate Beneficial	Major Beneficial	Major Beneficial
County/Metropolitan (Medium)	Major Adverse	Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Neutral	Minor Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial	Major Beneficial
District/Borough (Lower)	Major Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse	Neutral	Minor Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial
Parish (Lower)	Moderate Adverse	Moderate Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Neutral	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial
Minimal/negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial

Where the impact significance falls below Minor Adverse, the term 'Neutral' is used.

*In some circumstances, some 'insignificant' impacts might fail legislative or policy tests and the impact would be greater than Neutral.

Appendix 3

CHASE NEW HOMES
The Excitement is Building

Chase New Homes
Jasmine House
8 Parkway
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6HG

Tel: 01707 660 660

NOTES

39 no. 1 bed flats approx 50 sq.m.
27 no. 2 bed flats approx 61 sq.m.
22 no. 2 bed flats approx 70 sq.m.
7 no. 3 bed houses approx 107 sq.m.

66 parking spaces
(including 14 for the houses and 4 for the retained buildings)

Site layout

1 : 500

North

0 10 20 30 40 50 m

REV	AMENDMENTS	DATE

DRAWN BY Author	DATE 02/24/22
SCALE (@ A1) 1 : 500	PROJECT NUMBER Project Number
CHECKED BY Checker	APPROVED

TITLE

Proposed site layout plan

PROJECT

THE BARN HOTEL, WEST END ROAD, RUISLIP, HA4 6JB

DRAWING NUMBER

22 0063-1 I

24/11/2022 09:50:12

Appendix 4

eCountability
Managing your biodiversity risks and opportunities

In Partnership with

GiGL Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC
the capital's environmental records centre

THIS SUMMARY PAGE MAY BE PUBLISHED
THE FULL REPORT AND MAPS MAY NOT BE PUBLISHED IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Ecological Data Search 12982aw - Summary Page

A 1000m ecological data search was carried out for site The Barn Hotel, Ruislip on behalf of The Landscape Partnership on 19 Dec 2022.

The following datasets were consulted for this report:

- Statutory sites ✓
- Non-statutory sites ✓
- Non-statutory sites (Proposed) ✓
- Protected species ✓
- London invasive species ✓
- Notable Thames Structures ✓
- Habitats ✓
- Open space ✓

Results

Statutory sites	None present within search area
Non-statutory sites	
SINCs	3 SINCs
Proposed SINCs	None present within search area
Areas of Deficiency	Present within search area
Geological sites	None present within search area
Species	
Protected and notable species	375 species records
London invasive species	80 species records
Notable Thames Structures	Not present within search area
Habitats	
BAP habitat suitability	Present within search area
Open space	Present within search area

The report is compiled using data held by GiGL at the time of the request. Note that GiGL does not currently hold comprehensive species data for all areas. Even where data is held, a lack of records for a species in a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that the species does not occur there.

Permission
This data search report is valid until 19/12/2023 for the site named above.

Prepared by Alec Walker
19 Dec 2022