

7. Ecology and Biodiversity

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment has been undertaken by Environmental Assessment Services Ltd (EAS, October 2025) in accordance with the CIEEM EclA Guidelines, BS 42020:2013, and the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, July 2025). A full site visit and habitat condition assessment were completed on 17 September 2025.

The site currently comprises a single residential dwelling with associated garden, outbuildings, and areas of hardstanding. Existing habitats consist primarily of managed vegetated garden, sealed surfaces, and a small number of ornamental trees. There are no water features, hedgerows, semi-natural habitats, or designated ecological sites within or adjacent to the development boundary. A small watercourse lies beyond the eastern site boundary but is separated by garden planting and will remain unaffected by the proposal.

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing garage and kitchen extension to facilitate the construction of one of the new dwellings. These works have already been granted planning permission under a previous consent DM/21/2148, which was validated and determined without the requirement for an ecological survey. The garage and kitchen structures are of modern, prefabricated construction and offer negligible potential for roosting bats or nesting birds, with no features such as roof voids, soffits, or cavities suitable for protected species. Site conditions have not materially changed since that earlier approval, and there is no new evidence to indicate any increase in ecological value or likelihood of species presence.

The BNG assessment confirms that the site supports only habitats of low ecological value, typical of a managed residential curtilage. No evidence of protected species was identified, and the habitats present offer negligible potential for such species. The proposed development will not result in significant ecological impacts. Ecological functionality is assessed as limited, and the redevelopment is not expected to alter the ecological character of the site or its surroundings.

The assessment demonstrates that ecological considerations have been fully addressed through the baseline survey and habitat condition mapping undertaken for the BNG assessment. As such, there is no reasonable likelihood of the proposal affecting protected species or habitats, and the requirement for a separate Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) would therefore be disproportionate.

In line with Policy DP38 of the Mid Sussex District Plan, the development will incorporate biodiversity enhancement measures, such as:

- Installation of integrated bat and bird boxes within new dwellings
- Use of native and pollinator-friendly planting within garden areas
- Sustainable garden management to maintain ecological value

With these enhancements and the off-site BNG provision identified in the submitted BNG Report, the proposal accords with national and local policy requirements for biodiversity protection and net gain.