



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

Wick Farm House, Truslers Hill Lane, Albourne, Hassocks BN69DU

Client:

Rick Fieldwick

Survey date:

10/03/2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Mid Sussex District Council. This proposal can be described as "Change of use and refurbishment of existing barn"

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

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Introduction and Context

Introduction

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development. The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment was completed by Arbtech Consulting Ltd in March 2022 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd, 2022). The report assessed the building as negligible for roosting bats and advised precautionary working methods for other protected species, such as reptiles, badgers and hedgehogs.

Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

Limitations

Whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report is a preliminary assessment and does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. Nor does it represent a full botanical assessment. It assesses the likelihood of protected, notable and important habitats and species being present, based on a site and landscape level habitat value-based risk assessment. This is based upon the ecology, biology and known distribution of species as currently understood.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the habitats present within the site (building and developed land, sealed surface) and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

Results, Impacts and Recommendations

Site Location and Landscape Context

Table 1: Site location and landscape context

Site Location							
The site is located at National Grid Reference TQ 24584 15492 and has an area of approximately 0.11ha comprising one building, developed land; sealed surface and native hedgerow. The wider land ownership boundary includes ancient woodland, which lays immediately adjacent to the west of the site. There are numerous ponds and networks of ditches within the wider vicinity.							
Priority Habitats and Designated Sites							
Summary of Survey Findings <u>Priority Habitats</u> There are two priority habitats located within 2 km of the site, including ancient deciduous woodland and traditional orchard. <u>Designated Sites</u> There are two statutory sites within 2 km of the site. These are listed below: <i>Table 1a: Statutory sites within 2km of the site.</i> <table><tr><th>Designation</th><th>Distance from site</th></tr><tr><td>South Downs National Park</td><td>355m W</td></tr><tr><td>Brighton And Lewes Downs Biosphere</td><td>355m SE</td></tr></table> The site does fall within the impact risk zone for Wolstonbury Hill SSSI however, the proposed development type is not listed as possible high risk with regard to this designation.		Designation	Distance from site	South Downs National Park	355m W	Brighton And Lewes Downs Biosphere	355m SE
Designation	Distance from site						
South Downs National Park	355m W						
Brighton And Lewes Downs Biosphere	355m SE						

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

Impacts

No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development, due to the small scale and low overall impact of the development from such sites (where known), alongside additional factors such as distance in combination with connectivity disrupting barriers.

Recommendations

No recommendations.

Habitats and Flora

The site survey was undertaken by Chantae Bleakman-Wells BSc(Hons), MSc, MRSB, Senior Ecologist (Accredited Agent to Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2025-86119-CL18-BAT)

Table 2: Survey weather conditions

Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
10/03/2026	10.2	77	100	20.3	None

Table 3: Habitats and flora

Habitats and Flora: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations <i>This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.</i>
Onsite habitats Summary of Survey Findings <u>Developed land; sealed surface (u1b)</u> The majority of the site comprises hard-standing ground, with some mosses and tall ruderals growing through the cracks. Species include broad leaved doc, common stinging nettle, red deadnettle, ribwort plantain and sticky mouse-eared chickweed. <u>Native hedgerow (h2a)</u> A beech hedgerow is present to the north of the building. In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the native hedgerow was assessed to have a good condition value.

Building (u1b5)

There is one building on site, which is used as an out-building. Full details for buildings on site are included within Table 4.

Impacts

No direct impacts to any habitats on site will occur as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations

No recommendations.

Invasive / Non-native species

Summary of Survey Findings

No non-native invasive or otherwise problematic plants were recorded on site or are considered likely to be on site, but, given seasonal limitations and the sites wider context, may be visible at other times of year.

Impacts

None

Recommendations

None.

Fauna

Table 4: Fauna

Fauna: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations

This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

Roosting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

A review of the MAGIC database for European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. 2 EPSL were identified, as detailed below:

Table 4a: EPSL records within 2km of the site - bats

EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence
2019-39268-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle	1.5km north-east	Destruction of a resting place
2019-38766-EPS-MIT	Brown long-eared, Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle	1.55km south-west	Damage of a breeding site, destruction of a resting place

Buildings

Building B1 Description

B1 is a single-storey, detached, metal-framed, block-built out-building. The pitched roof is constructed of corrugated asbestos. There is a vaulted ceiling, and the interior is used for storage. The blocks appear in good condition, with no suitable roosting features. The building contains broken windows and various small gaps which would allow bats entry to the interior. The ground, walls and objects within the building were thoroughly searched for bat evidence. No bat evidence was recorded. The building's gaps allow light ingress and the interior is susceptible to temperature and humidity fluctuations, thus reducing suitability for bats.

The building appears in the same material condition as during the 2022 Preliminary Roost Assessment survey.

In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J (Ed) 2023), B1 is assessed to have negligible habitat value for roosting bats due to a lack of suitable roosting features.



B1



B1



B1

Impacts

The risk to bats is low.

Recommendations

The following precautionary working methods will further reduce the risk to bats, to an acceptably low level:

- The works will be timed to take place when bats are least likely to be present; November to March. As the building is unsuitable for hibernation due to unstable temperature and humidity regimes, this means that the likelihood of disturbing a bat is extremely low.
- In the unlikely event that a bat is found, work will stop and the ecologist will advise on how to proceed.

Foraging and Commuting Bats**Summary of Survey Findings**

There are no habitats on site which could be used for foraging bats. The wider land ownership boundary comprises good quality foraging and commuting habitat in the form of woodland, grassland, a pond, hedgerows and trees.

Impacts

The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats.
The proposal is likely to cause an increase in current lighting levels, which may cause disturbance to foraging and commuting bats.

Recommendations

A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will be designed to incorporate the measures laid out in the latest (2023) bat lighting guide Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting¹. Light spill onto the ancient woodland must be avoided as far as possible.

Amphibians

Summary of Survey Findings

A review of MAGIC database found no granted EPSL for great crested newts (GCN) within 2km of the site.

A check was also completed for great crested newt class survey license returns and historic pond surveys. No records were identified.

The building and hard-standing are unsuitable for amphibians. The surrounding grassland, woodland and ponds in the local vicinity provide suitable habitat for amphibians.

Impacts

The proposed development is confined to the existing building and hard-standing footprint only, and not impact any suitable habitat.

When completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces a 'Green' risk score, which states: 'offence highly unlikely'.

Recommendations

A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures:

- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
- In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Reptiles

Summary of Survey Findings

The building and hard-standing are sub-optimal for reptiles. The surrounding grassland and woodland edge provide suitable habitat for reptiles.

As such, the presence of reptiles on site cannot be discounted.

Impacts

The proposed development is confined to the existing building and hard-standing footprint only, and not impact any suitable habitat.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to reptiles, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures:

- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent reptiles from utilising these areas.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

Birds

Summary of Survey Findings

The building interior provides suitability for nesting birds. Multiple birds nests were observed at the time of survey.

Impacts

The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.

Recommendations

The works to the building should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August if possible. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests, depending on species present, until the young have fledged.

Badgers

Summary of Survey Findings

The building and hard-standing are unsuitable for badgers, however the surrounding woodland provides suitable sett creation opportunities and the grassland provides suitable foraging habitat for badgers. Therefore, transient badgers may be present within the site for short periods of time.

Impacts

No works will be undertaken within 30m of a known badger sett. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Any pipework exceeding 150mm will be capped overnight.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified within 30m, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Riparian animals

Summary of Survey Findings

There are no riparian habitats on or immediately adjacent to the site. There is a ditch present approximately 50m west of the site.

Impacts

Otters

No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development. No signs of otter were observed.

Water Vole

No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development. No signs of water vole were observed.

Recommendations

Otters

Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats.

Water Vole

Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats.

Hazel dormouse

Summary of Survey Findings

There are no suitable habitats on site to support hazel dormice.

Impacts

No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations

None.

Invertebrates

Summary of Survey Findings

The site provides limited habitat value for a variety of commonplace species but is unlikely to support important species and assemblages.

Impacts

No impacts anticipated.

Recommendations

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the land ownership boundary which would be beneficial for invertebrates:

- Incorporation of log piles/dead wood
- Creation of rock and brash piles

Other e.g. small mammals

Summary of Survey Findings

The site is immediately surrounded by woodland and grassland, which provide suitable habitat for small mammals, including hedgehogs, foxes and rabbits.

Impacts

Construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.

Recommendations

A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Any pipework exceeding 100mm will be capped overnight.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any small mammals are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan

Planning Application:

Planning Application – Appearance Changes to Previously Approved Class R Change of Use, Wick Farm

This application seeks consent for external appearance alterations to a building at Wicks Farm, which already benefits from an approved Class R change of use to a commercial use. The proposed works are designed to ensure the building meets modern standards for security, thermal performance, and energy efficiency, in line with the Building Regulations and the Government's objectives under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to support sustainable development.

The appearance changes have been carefully considered to comply with Mid Sussex District Plan policies DP26 (Character and Design) and DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets). The design approach balances the need for contemporary functionality with respect for the site's rural character and its relationship to the surrounding built environment.

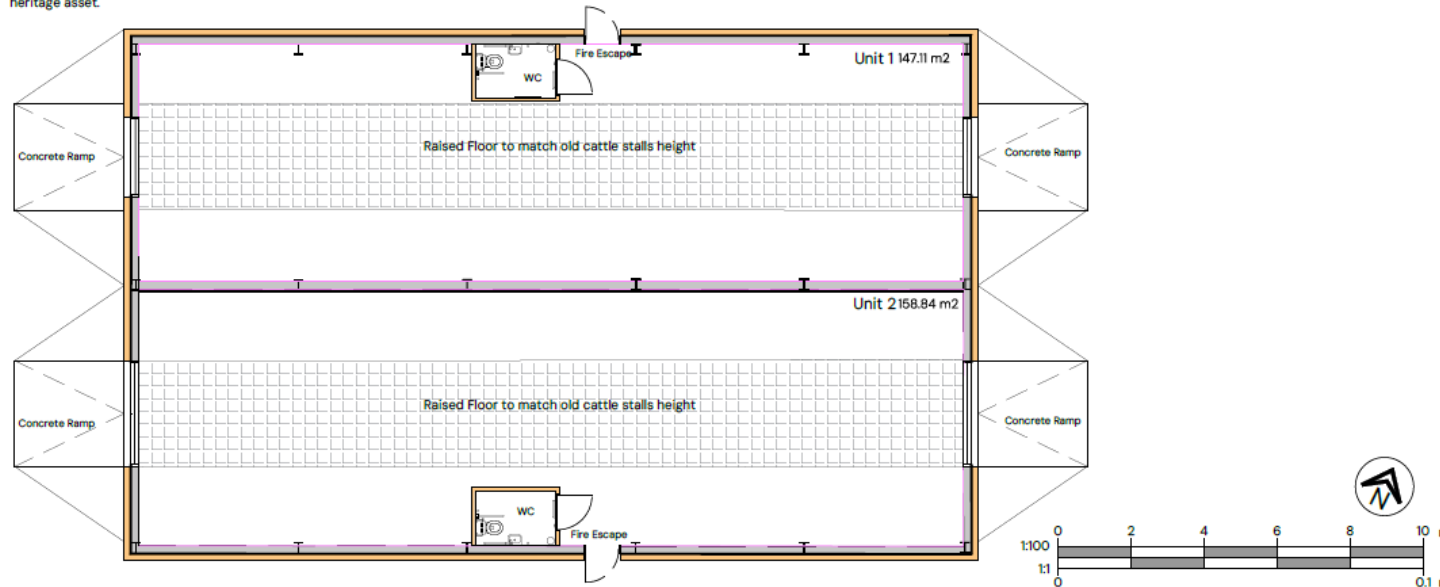
The Northern elevation will remain predominantly timber-clad, ensuring a visual harmony with the nearby Grade II listed Wick Farm House. This choice preserves the agricultural aesthetic typical of the area, in keeping with NPPF Paragraphs 199–202, which require that heritage significance is conserved and any impacts are appropriately mitigated. The proposed materials, finishes, and detailing are sympathetic to the existing form while enhancing the building's visual quality and long-term durability.

A key sustainability factor will be to reuse all structural steel possible in the building, demonstrating that the building is not changing in form or size bar the extra thickness of walls for insulation and modern cladding.

Any concern of impact on the nearby listed property should take into account that the Northern elevation will remain as it currently is, entirely screened by the existing hedgerow and trees. Overall, the works will modernise the building to meet current operational and environmental standards, while safeguarding its contribution to the rural setting and the historic character of the adjacent heritage asset.

FOR COMMENT

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Ground Floor (Proposed)

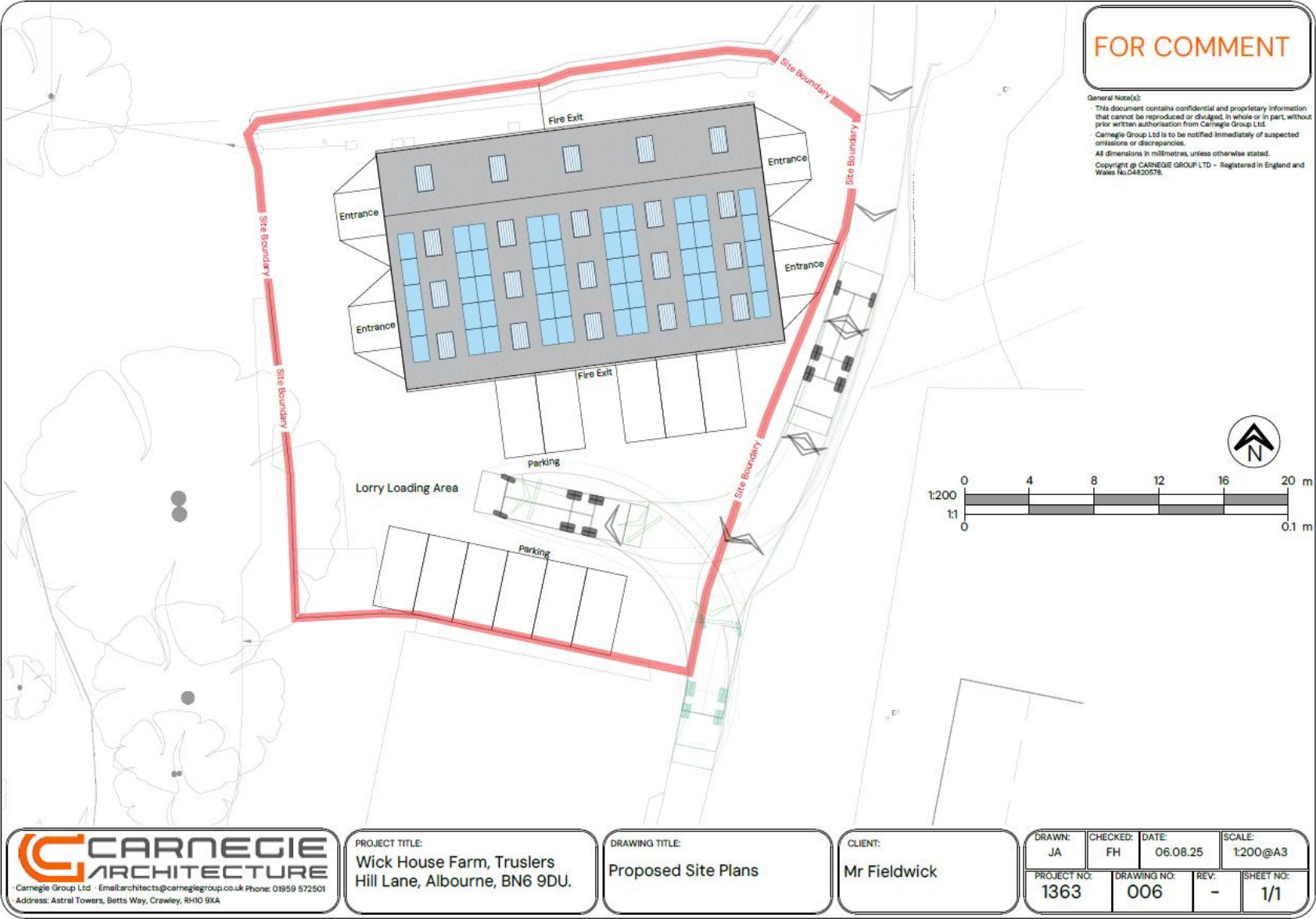


PROJECT TITLE:
Wick House Farm, Truslers
Hill Lane, Albourne, BN6 9DU.

DRAWING TITLE:
Proposed Plans

CLIENT:
Mr Fieldwick

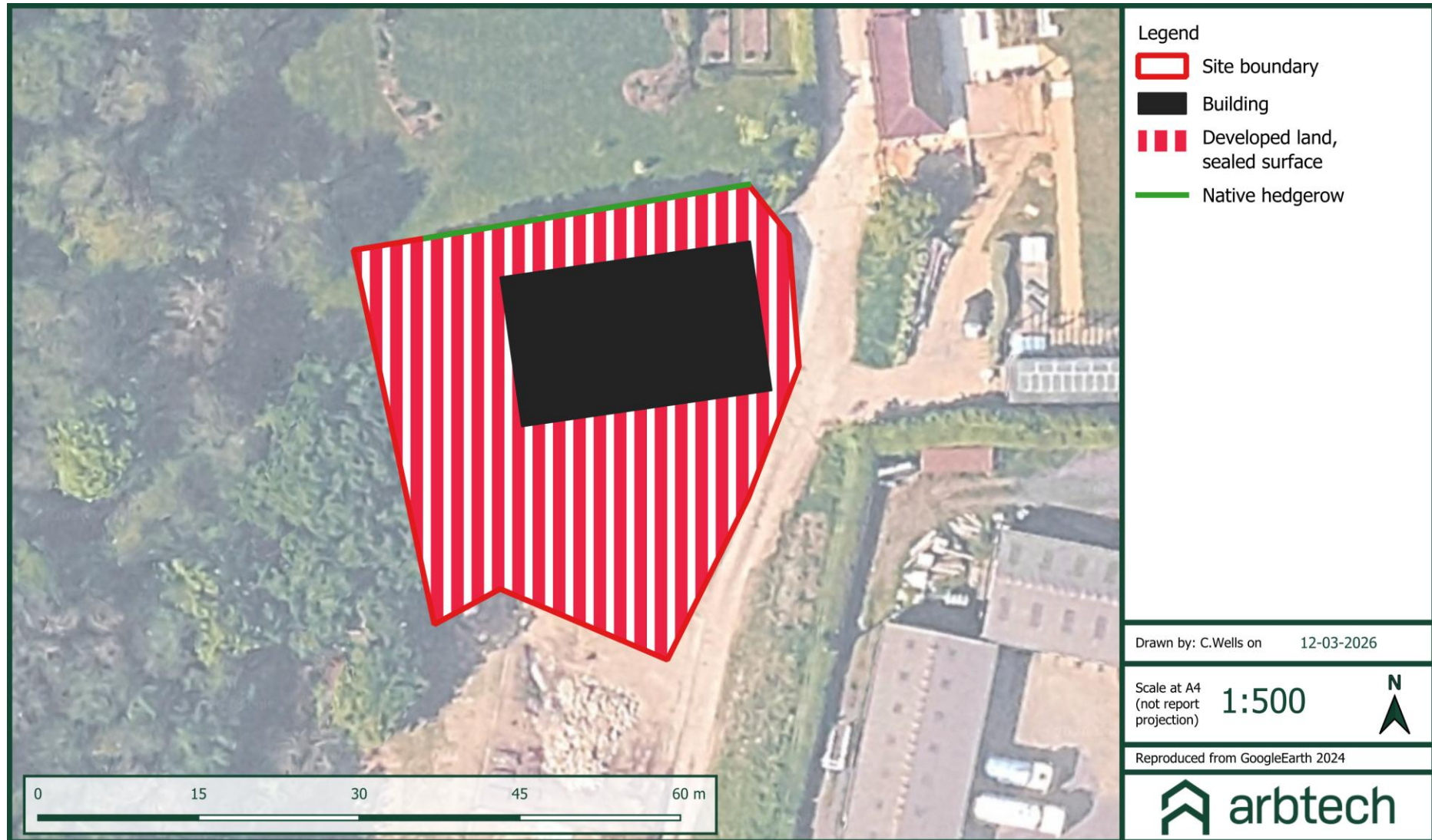
DRAWN: JA	CHECKED: FH	DATE: 06.08.25	SCALE: 1:100@A3
PROJECT NO: 1363	DRAWING NO: 006	REV: A	SHEET NO: 1/1



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: PEA/PRA Plan



Appendix 4: Site Photographs







Appendix 5: Baseline Condition Assessments

Native hedgerow condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	Height >1.5 m average along length. (The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of the shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is >1.5 m height).)	Y
A	Width >1.5 m average along length. (The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (such as blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they are >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).)	Y
B	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length. (This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).)	Y
B	Gaps make up <10% of total length; and No canopy gaps >5 m. (This is the horizontal 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness' but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).)	Y
C	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: Measured from outer edge of hedgerow; and Is present on one side of the hedgerow (at least). (This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedgerow. Undisturbed ground is present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1 m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedgerow. This criterion recognises the value of the hedgerow base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.)	N
C	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground. (The indicator species used are nettles <i>Urtica</i> spp., cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> and docks <i>Rumex</i> spp. Their presence, either singly or together, does not exceed the 20% cover threshold.)	Y

D	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and recently introduced species. (Recently introduced species refer to plants that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives. For information on archaeophytes and neophytes see the JNCC website, as well as the BSBI website where the 'Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora' contains an up-to-date list of the status of species. For information on invasive non-native species see the GB Non-Native Secretariat website.)	Y
D	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities. (This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (for example, excessive hedgerow cutting).)	Y
		Total 7/8
	Condition Good due to passing 7 of 8 criteria and all essential criteria.	

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Version Control

Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Chantae Bleakman-Wells BSc(Hons), MSc, MRSB, Senior Ecologist	11/03/2026
Final	1.0	Chantae Bleakman-Wells BSc(Hons), MSc, MRSB, Senior Ecologist	12/03/2026