



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL REPORT

Spicers Farm, Whitethroat Lane, Balcombe, RH17 6JN.

Document Version/Ref	Date	Author	Reviewed By
250406-PEA-01	20.07.2025	Izabella Kennedy Ecologist	Brooke Waites, MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist

Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2. INTRODUCTION	7
PROJECT BACKGROUND	7
OVERALL SITE DESCRIPTION	7
SURVEY OBJECTIVES	7
LIMITATIONS	8
3. RELEVANT LOCAL PLANNING POLICY	9
MID SUSSEX DISTRICT PLAN 2021-2039	9
4. SURVEY METHODOLOGY	10
DESK STUDY	10
UK HABITAT SURVEY AND SITE WALKOVER	10
GREAT CRESTED NEWT HSI ASSESSMENT	11
PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)	11
5. DESIGNATED SITES FOR NATURE CONSERVATION	12
STATUTORY DESIGNED SITES	12
NON-STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES.	12
6. HISTORICAL RECORDS SEARCH	14
MAGIC RECORDS	14
BIOLOGICAL RECORDS SEARCH	14
7. UK HAB SURVEY RESULTS	15
8. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES RESULTS	18
9. GREAT CRESTED NEWT HSI ASSESSMENT RESULTS	19
10. PRELIMINARY ROOST INSPECTION RESULTS	20
BUILDINGS	20
TREES	22
COMMUTING AND FORAGING HABITAT	22
11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	23
DESIGNATED SITES	23
HABITATS	23
PROTECTED SPECIES	23
OTHER SPECIES	26
12. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	28

GENERAL BIRD BOXES	28
SPARROW TERRACES	29
HEDGEHOGS	29
INVERTEBRATE BOXES.	30
BATS BOXES	31
WILDLIFE FRIENDLY GARDEN PLANTING	33
SHRUB PLANTING	33
13. APPENDICES	34
APPENDIX A – SITE PLAN	35
APPENDIX B – LEGISLATION	36

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal assessing the sites ecological value and anticipated impacts of the proposals.

The site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in a rural area of Balcombe, West Sussex. The site is situated within a predominantly agricultural landscape characterised by a mosaic of arable fields, improved grassland, and scattered woodland blocks.

The proposed development involves an extension to the north-west of the existing dwelling and the works to the existing barn, to create a habitable space, together with associated hardstanding to provide additional parking provision. The immediate surroundings of the proposed development site include an established residential garden, mainly laid to lawn, with mature trees, a wildlife pond, and a small traditional orchard.

The report is broadly considered valid for 18 months, after which time an update may be required.

The table below outlines the key findings and recommendations. See report for further details.

Species/Habitat	Further Surveys/ Assessment Required	Precautionary Measures Only	No further Surveys	Summary of Findings and Recommendations
Designated Sites and Habitats				Given the small scale of the project, no detrimental impacts onto any designed sites or habitats of importance s anticipated.
Bats (Roosting)				Both Building B1 and B2 have been identified as confirmed roosts. As such, it is recommended they are subject to nocturnal emergence surveys on 3 occasions between May- August. Nocturnal surveys have subsequently been completed and results and recommendations are detailed in the separate Bat Survey Report (250406-BAT-01).
Bats (Activity)				A wildlife friendly lighting scheme should be implemented which avoids increased light spill within the site, particularly along the peripheries, where bats are most likely to forage
Reptiles				No areas of suitable habitat are due to be impacted. As such, no further surveys recommended.
Great Crested Newts				One pond is present within the site, however habitats due to be impacted are considered unsuitable for great crested newts, such as close mown grassland, hardstanding and buildings. As such, a precautionary approach is recommended to avoid harm to great crested newts (if present), see report for details.
Hazel Dormice				No suitable habitat due to be impacted, as such no further surveys required.
Otters				No suitable habitat within the site.
Water vole				No suitable habitat within the site.

Species/Habitat	Further Surveys/ Assessment Required	Precautionary Measures Only	No further Surveys	Summary of Findings and Recommendations
White-Clawed Crayfish				No suitable habitat within the site.
Nesting Birds				The site includes trees and buildings suitable for nesting birds (see report for details).
Barn Owl				Old barn owl pellets were present within Building B2; however no evidence of nesting was present. As such it is considered likely an occasional roosting area. The addition of a new barn owl box within the wider landscape is recommended as compensation for the loss of roosting opportunities.
Invasive Non-Native Plant Species (INNPS)				No INNPS were noted within the site.

2. INTRODUCTION

Project Background

This report has been instructed by Mr and Mrs Black.

The proposed development involves an extension to the north-west of the existing dwelling and the works to the existing barn, to create a habitable space, together with associated hardstanding to provide additional parking provision. The immediate surroundings of the proposed development site include an established residential garden, mainly laid to lawn, with mature trees, a wildlife pond, and a small traditional orchard.

This report has been completed with reference to the following plans and proposals:

Where changes to the below plans are inconsequential to biodiversity within the development, updates to this report may not be required.

- Spicers Farm, Proposed Block Site Plan, Atelier de Linde (ref. 236.02.01)
- (Barn) Proposed Elevations, Atelier de Linde (ref. 236.02.37)
- (House) Proposed Rear and Side Elevations, Atelier de Linde (ref. 236.02.37)

Overall Site Description

The site is located within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in a rural area of Balcombe, West Sussex, situated within a predominantly agricultural landscape characterised by a mosaic of arable fields, improved grassland, and scattered woodland blocks. The surrounding habitat includes ghylls, ancient, and deciduous woodland in combination with expanses of pasture and arable fields.

The central grid reference for the site is TQ 29971 28566.

Survey Objectives

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal aims to assess the ecological value and potential impacts of the proposed development on biodiversity. The provide information to support the ecological assessment the following have been undertaken:

- UK Habitat Survey to map habitats within the site
- Preliminary Roost Assessment to assess the sites potential to support roosting bats

- Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Assessment (HSI) to assess suitability of ponds for Great Crested Newts in the local area.
- Assessment of the site to support other protected species and habitats.

Limitations

All areas of the site were fully accessed.

This report is broadly considered valid for 18 months, after which time an updated survey may be required. Due to the mobile nature of flora and fauna, use of the site may change in shorter timescales. Precautionary measures or further recommendations are detailed within this report where required.

3. RELEVANT LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Mid Sussex District Plan 2021-2039

[DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery](#)

Biodiversity and geodiversity will be protected because they are important natural capital assets and provide benefits as part of ecosystem services. Nature recovery will be supported and encouraged because it is important for delivering improvements to nature, ecological networks and green and blue infrastructure.

Proposed development likely to affect designated nature conservation sites, protected species, priority habitats and priority species must carry out habitat and species surveys at the earliest opportunity in order to inform the design and conserve important ecological assets as listed below from negative direct and indirect effects. These assessments will need to be submitted in an ecological impact assessment report.

[DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows](#)

Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected because they are valuable natural capital assets including for biodiversity, nature recovery, green infrastructure, health and wellbeing, and increasing resilience to the effects of climate change.

4. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

MAGIC, DEFRA's online map application was used to search for statutory designation sites within 10 km of the site, the presence of any habitats of principal importance within proximity to the site, such as ancient woodland and for records of European Protected Species.

Biological records were obtained from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) for a 2 km radius from the proposed site. The records obtained include details of non-statutory sites designated sites, and historical records of protected and notable species.

UK Habitat Survey and Site Walkover

The survey was undertaken on 13th of May 2025 by Brooke Waites an experienced Principal Ecologist and Associate Member of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), and Izabella Kennedy, an experienced ecologist.

The vegetation and habitat types within the site were noted during the survey in accordance with the categories specified for a UK Habitat Survey¹. The site survey followed methodology for an ecological assessment detailed in CIEEM's guidance for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals.²

The site survey included an assessment of:

- Evidence of protected and notable species presence within or adjacent to the site
- Suitability of habitats within the site to support protected and notable species
- Inspection for invasive species within the site
- Assessment of the site's ecological connectivity
- Presence of Habitats of Principal Importance

¹ UKHab Ltd. (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <https://ukhab.org>)

² CIEEM (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Great Crested Newt HSI Assessment

A Great Crested Newt HSI Assessment was undertaken in accordance with current survey methodology³. The assessment measured numerous factors such as area, location, presence of wildfowl and vegetation cover to rate the suitability of individual ponds for their suitability for great crested newts.

Ponds within 250 m radius of the proposed development were identified using DEFRA's MAGIC application. Where access was possible, the ponds were subject to a HSI assessment.

Where ponds were considered ecological isolated from the proposed development such as by major roads, and dispersal of great crested newts into the site is considered unlikely, it was not considered necessary to undertake a detailed assessment.

Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

The PRA was undertaken by Brooke Waites, MCIEEM, an experienced Principal Ecologist, following best practice guidelines issued by the Bat Conservation Trust⁴. The surveyor holds a Natural England licence to disturb bats whilst surveying (Licence number: 2019-39448-CLS-CLS)

All accessible parts of buildings and trees on site were systematically inspected to look for bats or signs of use by bats from ground level and where required, with use of a ladder. This was with the aid of high-powered torch, binoculars and an endoscope.

Evidence searched for included:

- Individual bats
- Bat Droppings
- Urine staining
- Oil staining
- Feeding remains

³ Oldham et al. (2000) Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) The Herpetological Journal.

⁴ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition) The Bat Conservation Trust, London

5. DESIGNATED SITES FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

MAGIC, DEFRA's online map application, was used to search for statutory designation sites within 10 km of the site and a local records centre search was undertaken to identify non-statutory designated sites within 2 km of the site.

Statutory Designed Sites

A total of 25 statutory designated sites were identified within 10 km of the site. These comprised 13 SSSI and 12 LNR Sites.

The closest designated sites, or those where an impact is considered likely are detailed below.

High Weald AONB

The site is situated within the High Weald AONB - protected landscape designated to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, the High Weald is treasured for its rich history, diverse wildlife and fascinating archaeology. Trees and woodland are a particularly distinctive feature of the High Weald landscape, covering nearly a third of the AONB – much of it being an ancient woodland.

Ardingly Reservoir LNR

Situated 3.2km east of the site, the Ardingly Reservoir is a significant wildlife area, acting as a Local Nature Reserve and Biodiversity Opportunity Area. It's valued for its diverse habitat, supporting a variety of bird species, particularly wetland birds, and for its role in the High Weald's natural landscape. The reservoir itself and the surrounding areas, including Loder Valley, are designated as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI).

Cow Wood and Harry's Wood SSSI

Situated 2.4km west of the site, the Cow Wood and Harry's Wood SSSI is ecologically valuable as a designated ancient woodland site, featuring steep-sided stream valleys (ghylls) and a rich community of breeding birds. The ghylls support plants with an Atlantic distribution, and the site is important for various bird species, including those with a preference for woodland habitat.

Non-statutory Designated Sites.

A total of 4 non-statutory designated sites were identified within 2 km of the site. These comprised 3 LWS and 1 RSPB reserve.

The closest designated sites, or those where an impact is considered likely are detailed below.

Balcombe Estate Rocks LWS

Situated 300m north and 1.4km north-west of the site, the Balcombe estate rocks occur in three separate sites to the east and southwest of Balcombe village. They are important for the ferns and lower plants that grow on them, some of which are very rare. The woodland around the rocks is of varied character but at one site the wood contains a good range of ancient woodland indicator plants.

Rowlands Wood RSPB Reserve

Situated 1.2 km north-east of the site, ancient and semi-natural woodland.

6. HISTORICAL RECORDS SEARCH

MAGIC Records

Bats

2 EPS licences for Bats have been granted within 2 km of the site.

The closest licence is located approximately 690m south-east, for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, and whiskered bats.

The other licence is located approximately 1.9km south-east of the site, for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats.

GCN

No EPS licences for GCN have been granted within 2km of the site.

An eDNA of a pond located 1.6 km south-west of the site, conducted in 2019, returned a positive result for Great Crested Newts (GCN).

Dormice

1 EPS licence for Dormouse has been granted within 2km of the site. The licence is located approximately 1.3km north-east of the site, for the destruction of resting and breeding habitat.

Biological Records Search

The maps below show records of key protected species considered to be most sensitive to the impact from the proposed development. Other species records were returned within a 2 km radius of the site, which are considered unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development and are therefore not summarised below.

Please note, [REDACTED] and otter data is not provided by Sussex Biological Records Centre due to the risk of persecution. As such, these species are not displayed within the maps below.



Legend

- Buffered
- Red Line Boundary

Biological Records Data (bats only)

- Barbastelle
- Unidentified bat
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Common Pipistrelle
- Leisler's Bat
- Unidentified Long-eared Bat species
- Unidentified Myotis species
- Nathusius's Pipistrelle
- Natterer's Bat
- Noctule
- Unidentified Pipistrelle species
- Serotine
- Soprano Pipistrelle
- Whiskered Bat
- Whiskered/Brandt's



Site name:
Spicers Farm, Balcombe

Plan title:
Biological Records Data (bats only)

Date: 24/05/2025



Legend

- Red Line Boundary
- 2 km radius

Biological Records Data (Excluding bats)

- Adder
- Common Lizard
- Grass Snake
- Great Crested Newt
- Hazel Dormouse
- Hedgehog
- Slow-worm



Site name:
Spicers Farm, Balcombe

Plan title:
Biological Records Data (Excluding bats)

Date: 24/05/2025

7. UK HAB SURVEY RESULTS

The section below details the habitats present within the site. A detailed habitat plan can be found in Appendix A.

Buildings

The site comprises two structures: a residential dwelling which is a listed building dating from the 16th century, and an agricultural barn.



Image 1: Building B1



Image 2: Building B2

Pond

There is a well-established seasonal wildlife pond to the south of the residential property. The pond exhibits characteristics of a mature freshwater habitat supporting diverse marginal vegetation dominated by extensive stands of common reed and bulrush, transitioning to areas of

floating vegetation including water lily and pondweed. The riparian zone comprises mature trees creating a buffer habitat.

Orchard

The site includes a small orchard comprising a number of young fruit trees with an understory of improved grassland.



Image 3: Small area of fruit trees and grassland to the north of the site.

Vegetated garden

The site includes a vegetated garden, mainly laid to lawn with small areas of shrubbery and flower beds.



Image 4: Rear Garden of the property

Trees

The site includes a small number of trees, all of which are due to be retained within the proposed development. All trees have been individually assessed for their potential to support roosting bats (see below).

8. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES RESULTS

The table below details the suitability of habitats within the site for protected and notable species. Species not detailed below are considered unlikely to be detrimentally impacted by the proposed development.

Species	Potential habitat on site
Bats	All trees within the site have been individually assessed for their bat roosting potential. Both buildings were identified as confirmed roosts due to the presence of droppings internally. See section 10 for details.
Reptiles	Habitats within the proposed work area are broadly considered unsuitable for reptiles due to the close mown nature of the grassland and dominance of hardstanding and buildings.
Great Crested Newts	One pond is present within the site. Terrestrial habitats, including woodland areas and ruderal, provide suitable shelter for great crested newts.
Hazel Dormice	The habitats within the proposed work area are largely considered unsuitable for dormice, as they comprise garden, hardstanding and buildings with scattered trees. Habitat within the wider site, such as hedgerows and scrub provide suitable habitat and are connected to areas of habitat within the wider landscape.
Otters	No suitable habitat within the site or surrounding area.
Water vole	No suitable habitat within the site or surrounding area.
White-Clawed Crayfish	No suitable habitat within the site or surrounding area.
Nesting Birds	The site includes areas of shrub, hedgerows, trees and buildings, all of which provide suitable nesting habitat for a range of bird species.
Hedgehogs	Shrubs within the site and connectivity with the surrounding landscape and woodland provides suitable habitat for hedgehogs.
Invasive Species	No invasive species were recorded within the site.

9. GREAT CRESTED NEWT HSI ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Two ponds were identified within 250 m of the proposed development site, including one within the site itself.

The onsite pond, P1 was assessed as having good suitability for great crested newts. Pond P2 was in private land and could not be assessed. No other ponds were identified within 250 m of the site.

The terrestrial habitat within the site itself is generally considered suboptimal for great crested newts as it is dominated by close mown grassland. Small areas of suitable habitat such as ruderal and scrub are present within the wider site area; however, the pond and surrounding habitat will not be impacted by the development.



Image 5. Pond and surrounding vegetation



Image 6. Vegetated garden.

10. PRELIMINARY ROOST INSPECTION RESULTS

Buildings

The site consists of several buildings. Each building has been individually assessed for its bat roosting potential below.

Building B1

Building B1 is a large residential property with a pitched roof, with stone roof tiles, and two prominent roof chimneys. Hanging tiles are present on the eastern, western and southern elevations of the building and an area of wooden cladding is present to the west.

Evidence of use by bats was present in the loft space in a form of droppings and urine stains as such the building has been identified as a confirmed roost.



Image 7: Droppings inside Building B1



Image 8: Hanging tiles on the southern elevation of B1.

Building B2

Building B2 is a large agricultural barn constructed with timber cladding and clay tile roofing. The interior contains traditional post-and-beam construction with diagonal bracing.

Evidence of bats was found in the form of droppings and insect remains, indicating the barn may be used as a feeding roost.

Multiple gaps visible between the roof tiles were identified as potential entry points; however, the open aspect of the roof interior means that roosting opportunities are limited. Single-clad walls also do not provide suitable roosting space. A small number of cracks in the walls were identified. These were inspected via endoscope and considered too small to be suitable for roosting bats. They also did not lead into any crevices, which may provide sufficient shelter.



Image 9: Internal view of Building B2.



Image 10: Exterior of Building B2

Trees

The site includes a small number of trees within the vegetated garden. All trees within the proposed work area were assessed as having Negligible bat roosting potential.

Commuting and Foraging Habitat

The site itself is considered to have high potential for foraging and commuting bats. The site includes mature tree belts to the west with hedgerows which connect to areas of woodland within the wider landscape. As such, it is considered likely a number of bat species utilise the site and its ecological corridors to some extent.

11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Designated Sites

The proposed development comprises an extension to the north-west of the existing dwelling and works to create a habitable space within the existing barn. The proposed development is considered unlikely to have a detrimental impact on designated sites within the local area.

Habitats

The site consists of buildings and hard standing, with the gardens dominated by close-mown modified grassland. A small orchard is present to the north of the site. The habitats detailed below are of notable biodiversity value within the site.

Trees

The site includes a number of trees, all of which are due to be retained. Tree protection measures should be followed in line with arboricultural guidance.

Protected Species

Roosting Bats - Buildings

Building B1 and B2 were both identified as confirmed roosts, due to the presence of droppings internally. Therefore, the proposed development may have a detrimental impact on bat roosts in the absence of mitigation measures. As such, it is recommended that further surveys are undertaken to assess the use of the building by roosting bats.

In line with current Good Practice Guidelines, it is recommended that Building B1 and B2 are surveyed on three occasions between May-August (inclusive). Surveys must be separated by a minimum period of three weeks. Use of night vision aids such as infra-red or thermal imaging cameras will be required.

To provide full coverage of the suitable features within the buildings a total of 4 survey positions are required per building.

Where an impact on roosting bats cannot be avoided, a Natural England Mitigation Licence will be required.

Roosting Bats – Trees

All trees within the site have been assessed for their bat roosting potential and were found to be of negligible suitability. As such, no further surveys or mitigation is recommended.

Bats - Commuting and Foraging Habitat

Given the habitats present within the site itself and the wider landscape, it is considered likely bats utilise the site for foraging and commuting to some extent.

A Wildlife-friendly Lighting Strategy should be implemented to minimise light spill from the scheme onto retained semi-mature and mature trees within and adjacent to the site, which provide potential bat roosting, foraging and commuting habitat. The lighting strategy should follow these key principles:

- Use of unnecessary lighting will be avoided.
- The horizontal and vertical spread of artificial light will be minimised and take into account both primary and reflected light sources. Directional lighting can be achieved through the use of LED bulbs and by angle and orientation of beam. Use of a cowl, louvre or other light shield may also be implemented if required.
- Timers should be used to ensure that overall illumination is reduced during core night-time hours.
- Light intensity will be minimised and light sources selected should emit zero ultra-violet light wherever possible.

Reptiles

The proposed works area comprises hardstanding and closely mown grassland, with scattered trees and shrubs. Shrubs present around the pond may support reptiles; however, the development will not have an impact on these areas. As such, no further surveys or mitigation are recommended.

Great Crested Newts

The proposed work area comprises close-mown grassland and hardstanding, unsuitable for great crested newts. The closest pond is located directly south of the proposed development. The pond will not be impacted by the development and the proposed works will be concentrated on areas of short mown grassland, and

Given the size of the area, it is unlikely the habitats themselves support a population of great crested newts, however individuals may on occasion disperse using this habitat.

In order to minimise the risk of harm to great crested newts (if present), precautionary measures are recommended during the site clearance phase of the works. These are outlined below:

- To maintain the low suitability of the proposed development for GCN (if present) Vegetation should be kept short throughout the year.

- Tree belts and mature shrubbery within the site, where GCN are most likely to disperse through, must be retained and protected during construction. Storage of machinery and materials must not occur within these protected areas.
- Excavations that are created during works will be backfilled and compacted before nightfall or have a gentle sloping gradient at one end to allow any newts to exit.
- The accumulation of water within excavations should be avoided, as any temporary pools may become colonised by GCN.
- Stored materials such as rubble should be raised off the ground on pallets.
- Where GCN are identified during the site, works must cease and an ecologist contracted. A Natural England licence may be required for completion of the works.
- Prior to construction all contractors must receive a toolbox talk detailing the protection and identification of GCN and the precautionary measures which must be followed.

Where great crested newts are found to be present, works must cease and a Natural England Mitigation Licence will be required.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hazel Dormice

Mature hedgerows and tree belts within the site provide suitable habitat for dormice. They are also connected to areas of woodland and networks of hedgerows in the wider landscape.

However, the proposed development is due to retain these habitats. Therefore, the proposed development is considered unlikely to impact these species. As such no further surveys or mitigation is recommended.

Otters

No habitat suitable for otters is present within or adjacent to the site. The proposed development is considered unlikely to impact these species. As such no further surveys or mitigation is recommended

Water Voles

No habitat suitable for Water Vole is present within or adjacent to the site. The proposed development is considered unlikely to impact these species. As such no further surveys or mitigation is recommended.

White-clawed Crayfish

No habitat suitable for White-clawed Crayfish present within or adjacent to the site. The proposed development is considered unlikely to impact these species. As such no further surveys or mitigation is recommended.

Nesting Birds

The site includes areas of shrub, trees and buildings, all of which provide suitable nesting habitat for a range of bird species.

In order to avoid destruction of active birds nests, it is recommended that vegetation clearance and building work is undertaken outside of the nesting season (Typically February – August inclusive). Works may be undertaken during the nesting season if pre-works check has been undertaken by an ecologist within 24 hours of the work and they can confirm no active nests are present.

Where birds' nests are present, they must be left in-situ and undisturbed until the young have fledged.

Other Species

Barn owl

Evidence of barn owl presence has been recorded in the form of pellets, indicating that a barn owl is using Building B2 (the agricultural barn) for roosting. No evidence of nesting was found. As the roosting site will be lost due to the proposed works, mitigation is proposed in the form of a barn owl box installation. One box is already in situ within the wider land ownership. It is recommended that an additional box could be installed in one of the mature trees south-west of the residential property overlooking the fields to compensate.

Other Mammals

Other mammals such as rabbits and foxes may be present within the site. Although not protected by conservation legislation, all mammals are covered by the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, which prevents crushing of mammal species (amongst other offences).

Therefore, it is recommended that in order to prevent the entrapment or crushing of any mammals occupying the site during site clearance, any mammal burrows are excavated using hand tools until the absence of mammals can be verified.

Invasive non-native Plant Species (INNPS)

No invasive non-native plant species were recorded within the site. As such, no further surveys or mitigation is recommended.

12. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Wherever possible, ecological enhancements should be designed into the proposed development and landscape design. The section below details possible ecological enhancements which should be considered within the scheme.

General Bird Boxes

The installation of bird boxes increases nesting opportunities for bird species within the site. These can be to be integrated into the new structure, or installed on mature trees within the site. Boxes should be installed over 2 m and avoid areas of disturbance and prevailing winds. Example models are shown below.



Schwegler 26 brick box nest



Woodstone Seville Nest Box 32 mm.

Sparrow Terraces

Sparrow terraces provide opportunities for multiple nests. They can be integrated into the structure or wall mounted. Boxes should ideally be installed between 2 and 5 m above ground, avoiding areas of interference and prevailing winds. The recommended model is shown below.



Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box

Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are suffering a steep decline throughout the UK. The proposed landscaping is due to create habitat suitable for hedgehogs. To further enhance the site for hedgehogs, hedgehog domes can be placed within dense vegetation in the site, away from disturbance. The dome will provide a suitable shelter for breeding and hibernation. The recommended model is shown below.



Recommended Model: Schwegler Hedgehog Dome or similar.

Additional measures can also be included within the site to enhance it for hedgehogs. These include adding gaps or purpose-built hedgehog gates can be used to allow hedgehogs movement through gardens.

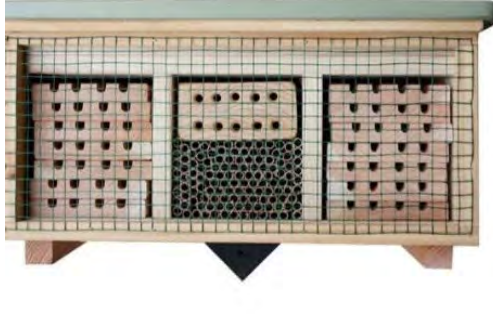
During the site clearance works, consideration should be given to chipping or composting vegetation for re-use on the new habitats on site, or creation of brash piles on the periphery of the site as a further aid to increasing.

Invertebrate Boxes.

In order to provide additional habitat for invertebrates to shelter, over-winter or nest in, invertebrate boxes can be installed within the site. These should be placed in sunny locations in areas of suitable habitat. It is recommended invertebrate boxes are not placed in close proximity to bird boxes. Recommended models are shown below.



Recommended Model: Insect Tower



Conservation Solitary Beehive

Bats Boxes

To provide new opportunities for roosting bats within the site, bat boxes should be installed within the site. These can be integrated into the new structure or installed on mature trees within the site.

The boxes should be placed at least 3 m above the ground, away from dense vegetation and artificial light. Ideally boxes will be placed facing south or east. Recommended models are shown below.



Habitat Bat Box 001 - Custom Brick Facing



Beaumaris Bat Box

Wildlife Friendly Garden Planting

In order to enhance the sites suitability for bats and other wildlife, wildlife friendly planting within the site should be encouraged.

To maximise ecological value, species should be chosen with a range of flowering periods and aim to include night flowering plants to encourage night flying invertebrates. Recommended species include⁵:

- Red Campion (*Silene dioica*)
- Red Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*)
- Sweet Williams (*Dianthus barbatus*)
- Wood Forget-me-not (*Myosotis sylvatica*)
- Knapweed species (*Centaurea sp.*)
- Lavender (*Lavandula*)
- Night Scented Jasmine (*Cestrum nocturnum*)
- Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*)
- Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*)

Shrub planting

Shrub planting should include a variety of species found on the Royal Horticultural Society's 'Plants for Pollinators' lists, such as:

- Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*)
- Common box (*Buxus sempervirens*)
- Common hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Bell heather (*Erica cinerea*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- Barberry (*Berberis species*)

⁵ Bat Conservation Trust (2015) Encouraging Bats: A Guide for bat-friendly gardening and living

13. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Habitat Plan

Appendix B – Legislation

Appendix A – Site Plan



Legend

 Red Line Boundary

Habitat baseline

 Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

 Buildings

 Ponds

 Orchards

 Vegetated garden

Preliminary Roost Assesment (Buildings)

 Confirmed Roost

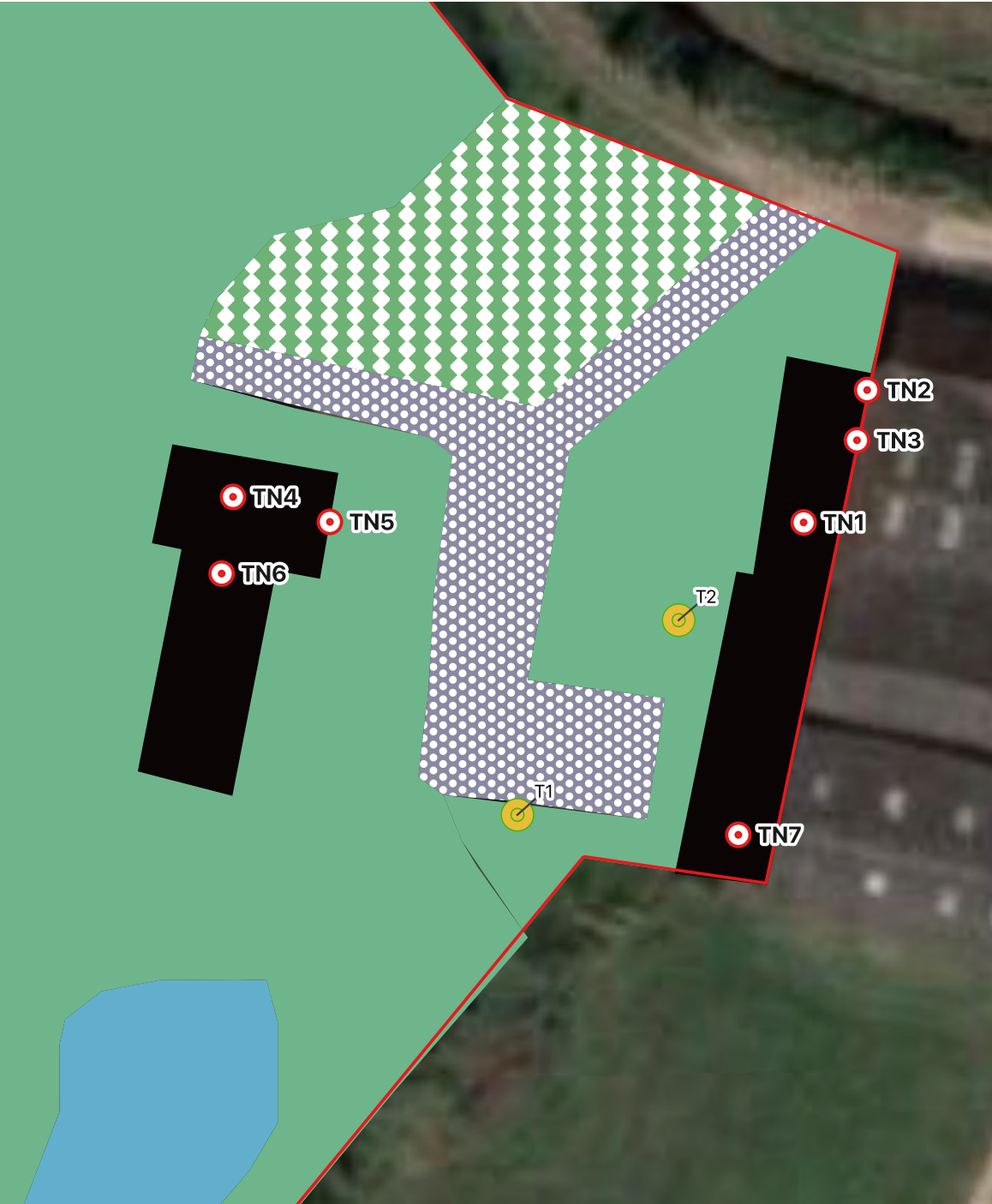


Site name:
Spicers Farm, Balcombe

Plan title:
Habitat Map

Date: 15/05/2025

Site target notes



TN.No	Comments
TN1	Barn owl pellets
TN2	Disused birds nest
TN3	Scattered bat droppings (approx <50)
TN4	Large number of bat droppings on chimney
TN5	Bat droppings falling from roof
TN6	Broadly inaccessible area of loft space due to health and safety concerns
TN7	Potential bat feeding remains and scattered droppings



Appendix B – Legislation

Wildlife Legislation

Bats

All species of bat and their breeding sites or resting places (roosts) are protected under Regulation 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As a result It is an offence to:

- intentionally to kill, injure or handle a bat.
- to possess a bat (whether live or dead).
- disturb a roosting bat without a licence.
- sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence.
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not.

Reptiles

Smooth snakes and sand lizards are European protected species (EPS) are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

It is an offence to:

- deliberately kill, injure, disturb or capture them
- deliberately take or destroy their eggs
- damage or destroy their breeding sites and resting places
- possess, control or transport them (alive or dead)

For smooth snakes and sand lizards, it is also an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb them while they occupy a structure or place used for shelter or protection
- obstruct access to a place of shelter or protection

Other native reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to kill or injure:

- Adders
- Grass snakes
- Common or viviparous lizards
- Slow worms

All native reptiles are listed as rare and most threatened species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

GCN are designated and protected as European protected species (EPS). EPS are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence to:

- deliberately kill, injure, disturb or capture them
- deliberately take or destroy their eggs
- damage or destroy their breeding sites and resting places - even if GCN are not present
- possess, control or transport them (alive or dead)

It is also an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb GCN while they occupy a structure or place used for shelter or protection
- obstruct access to a place of shelter or protection

GCN are listed as rare and most threatened species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Hazel Dormice

Hazel dormice are designated and protected as European protected species (EPS). EPS are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

It is an offence to:

- deliberately kill, injure, disturb or capture them
- damage or destroy their breeding sites and resting places
- possess, control, transport (alive or dead)

It is also an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb hazel dormice while they occupy a structure or place used for shelter or protection
- obstruct access to a place of shelter or protection

Otters

Otters are designated and protected as European protected species (EPS). EPS are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

It is an offence to:

- deliberately kill, injure, disturb or capture them
- damage or destroy their breeding sites and resting places - even if otters are not present
- possess, control or transport them (alive or dead)

It is also an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb otters while they occupy a structure or place used for shelter or protection
- obstruct access to a place of shelter or protection

Water Vole

Water voles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take them
- possess or control them (alive or dead)

It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- damage or destroy a structure or place used for shelter or protection
- disturb them in a place used for shelter or protection
- obstruct access to a place used for shelter or protection

White-clawed Crayfish

Water voles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally take them.

They are also fully protected under Annex II and V of the European Habitats Directive (1992), requiring the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for their protection and prohibiting the taking or disturbance of the species in the wild. The European Bern Convention lists white-clawed crayfish in Appendix III as a protected species.

Birds

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) states that all wild birds are protected and usually cannot be killed or taken except under licence. As a result, you must not:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird
- intentionally damage, destroy or take the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built - nests of golden eagles, white tailed eagles and ospreys are protected all year round
- intentionally destroy an egg of any wild bird
- intentionally or recklessly disturb certain wild birds or their dependent young while they are at or near to an active nest site
- kill or take huntable birds during the close season for that species

Specially protected birds - often referred to as 'Schedule 1' birds - receive enhanced protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The birds listed in Schedule 1 are further divided. Part I birds are fully protected at all times, whereas Part II birds are protected only during the close season.

All birds, their nests and their eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 from being killed or taken, but Schedule 1 birds and their dependent young are also protected from disturbance at or near the nest.

Mammals

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 prevents certain cruel acts against mammal species such as crushing, drowning, burning and other offences.

Invertebrates

Three UK invertebrate species are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 – large blue butterfly, fisher's estuarine moth, little ramshorn whirlpool snail. It is an offence for anyone to deliberately disturb, capture, injure or kill them. It is also an offence to damage or destroy their breeding or resting places, to disturb or obstruct access to any place used by them for shelter. It is also an offence to possess, or sell these species.

Approximately 400 further invertebrate species are listed as 'Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see below).

Invasive Species

The purpose of section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Act (as amended) is to prevent the release into the wild of certain plants and animals which may cause ecological, environmental, or socio-economic harm.

To achieve this section 14 prohibits the introduction into the wild of any animal of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state, or any species of animal or plant listed in Schedule 9 of the Act.

Schedule 9 lists non-native species that are already established in the wild, which continue to pose a conservation threat to native biodiversity and habitats, so that further releases should be regulated.

The Hedgerows Regulations

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 were introduced to protect hedgerows of importance from destruction. The Regulations define a hedgerow as, 'a row of bushes forming a hedge with the trees growing in it'. The law however does not clarify the difference between a line of trees and a hedgerow.

The Regulations apply to any hedgerow growing in, or adjacent to, any common land, protected land, or land used for agriculture, forestry or the breeding or keeping of horses, ponies or donkeys, if:

- it has a continuous length of, or exceeding, 20 metres; or
- it has a continuous length of less than 20 metres and, at each end, meets (whether by intersection or junction) another hedgerow.

These Regulations do not apply to any hedgerow within the curtilage of, or marking a boundary of the curtilage of, a dwelling-house.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.

Planning policies should promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with

less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC Act)

The NERC Act was created to make provision in connection with wildlife, sites of special scientific interest, National Parks and the Broads; to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.