

Baseline Habitat Condition Assessment (BHCA)

Survey site:

Lullings Cottage, West Hill, Balcombe, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 6QY

Client:

Tim Musker

Survey date:

16th May 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Mid Sussex District Council. The proposal is described as:

The demolition and replacement of an existing .

The BHCA survey is written to inform the baseline for a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) report, and is based on UKHabs habitat methodology in accordance with [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024](#).

The site survey was undertaken by Anya White BSc.					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
16/05/2025	14	42	0	15	0

Ecological Survey Factor Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, photos in appendix 3 and proposal plan in appendix 4). Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> <i>(UKHab codes used)</i>	<p>The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 32828 30403 and has an area of approximately 0.127ha.</p> <p>The site consists of a residential dwelling, a shed, grassland and six trees. There is also a short patio outside the front door of the dwelling and in between T1.</p> <p><u>Developed, sealed surface [u1b]</u></p> <p>A short patio of paving stones is present to the front of the property and in between T1.</p> <p>This habitat type is not subject to a condition assessment.</p> <p><u>Developed, sealed surface [u1b5]</u></p> <p>There are two buildings present on site. One of which is a house, which is currently unoccupied and no longer maintained. The other is a shed structure, which has been used as a log store and is also not currently maintained.</p>

	<p>This habitat type is not subject to a condition assessment.</p> <p><u>Modified grassland [g4]</u></p> <p>The majority of the site is modified grassland, which is subject to frequent management and was previously used as a residential garden. However, the dwelling is now unoccupied and there is no barrier between the grassland within the survey boundary and the wider field that the dwelling is situated within.</p> <p>The following species were recorded:</p> <p>A – Cocksfoot <i>Dactylis glomerata</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>,</p> <p>F – Perennial rye <i>Lolium perenne</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i>,</p> <p>O – Broadleaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>,</p> <p>R – Common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, common bent <i>Agrostis capillaris</i>, dandelion <i>Taraxacum agg.</i>, Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i>, common daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i>, cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i>, primrose <i>Primula vulgaris</i>, bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, common stinkhorn <i>Phallus impudicus</i>, bracken <i>Pteridium sp.</i>, daffodil <i>Narcissus sp.</i>, creeping cinquefoil <i>Potentilla reptans</i>,</p> <p>The grassland was assessed using the ‘Grassland – Low distinctiveness’ habitat type condition assessment sheet with the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2, including at least 2 forbs FAIL - Sward height is varied. At least 20% less than 7cm and at least 20% more than 7cm) PASS - Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area PASS - Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area (poaching, machinery use, erosion, management activities) FAIL
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cover of bare ground is between 1 - 10% FAIL - Cover of bracken is less than 20% PASS - There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species PASS <p>Poor condition assessment has been given.</p> <p><u>Scattered trees [32]</u></p> <p>There are six scattered trees within the site boundary. All trees are proposed to be retained. The scattered trees are detailed in the table below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Tree number</th> <th>Species</th> <th>Diameter at breast height (DBH)</th> <th>Condition</th> <th>Location</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>T1</td> <td>Cherry laurel</td> <td>20cm</td> <td>Moderate</td> <td>To the front door of the dwelling, on the east.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>T2</td> <td>Conifer</td> <td>25cm</td> <td>Good</td> <td>By the northwest of the dwelling in between the house and the shed.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>T3</td> <td>Hazel</td> <td>15cm</td> <td>Good</td> <td>To the rear of the dwelling, on the western boundary.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Tree number	Species	Diameter at breast height (DBH)	Condition	Location	T1	Cherry laurel	20cm	Moderate	To the front door of the dwelling, on the east.	T2	Conifer	25cm	Good	By the northwest of the dwelling in between the house and the shed.	T3	Hazel	15cm	Good	To the rear of the dwelling, on the western boundary.
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T4	Horse chestnut	40cm	Moderate	On the path to the north of the site, on the east.
T5	Oak	10cm	Moderate	On the path to the north of the site, to the west.
T6	Oak	110cm	Good	On the path to the north of the site, on the east side but north of T4.

The scattered trees were assessed using the 'Individual trees' habitat type condition assessment sheet with the following criteria:

1. The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).
2. The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide
3. The tree is mature
4. There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.
5. Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark
6. More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.

	<p>The results of the condition assessment are detailed in the table below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Tree number</th> <th>Criteria 1</th> <th>Criteria 2</th> <th>Criteria 3</th> <th>Criteria 4</th> <th>Criteria 5</th> <th>Criteria 6</th> <th>Overall condition</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>T1</td> <td>FAIL</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>FAIL</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>MODERATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>T2</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>FAIL</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>GOOD</td> </tr> <tr> <td>T3</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>FAIL</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>GOOD</td> </tr> <tr> <td>T4</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>FAIL</td> <td>FAIL</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>MODERATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>T5</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>FAIL</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>FAIL</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>MODERATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>T6</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>PASS</td> <td>GOOD</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Ground Level Tree Assessment</u></p> <p>The trees on site were assessed for potential roosting features (PRF) for bats, and T1 - T5 were found to be negligible. T6 was a mature oak, which had multiple knots and splits, particularly higher up the stem, which were inaccessible from ground level. This tree had coverings of ivy, which could have hidden features on the tree that could be used by bats. However, only T3 is to be removed, therefore no PRF will be impacted to facilitate the development.</p> <p>Additionally, no birds nests were observed within the trees, however birds could use the onsite trees as well as offsite areas for nesting and resources.</p>	Tree number	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6	Overall condition	T1	FAIL	PASS	PASS	FAIL	PASS	PASS	MODERATE	T2	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL	PASS	PASS	GOOD	T3	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL	PASS	GOOD	T4	PASS	PASS	PASS	FAIL	FAIL	PASS	MODERATE	T5	PASS	PASS	FAIL	PASS	FAIL	PASS	MODERATE	T6	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS	GOOD
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<p><i>Foreseen Impacts</i></p>	<p>The habitats on site are widespread and not notable. No direct impact on adjacent or nearby habitats off site is foreseen from their removal.</p>																																																								

<i>Recommendations</i>	As more than 25m ² of habitat is being removed for the development (building demolition and dwelling construction), the proposals are not a householder application or a self-build scheme, a biodiversity net gain (BNG) will be required as the proposals do not fall under any of the exemption cases. The BNG metric will use this report to inform the baseline.
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Appendix 1: Survey/Habitat map



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed plan

Project: 241_Lullings Cottage



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WillGamble/Architects.

Appendix 4: Photos

Photo	Description
	<p>Photo 1: A common stinkhorn</p>



Photo 2: T1



Photo 3: T2



Photo 4: A view of the site from the southeast corner looking north



Photo 5: The unoccupied dwelling on site



Photo 6: The shed on site, with T3

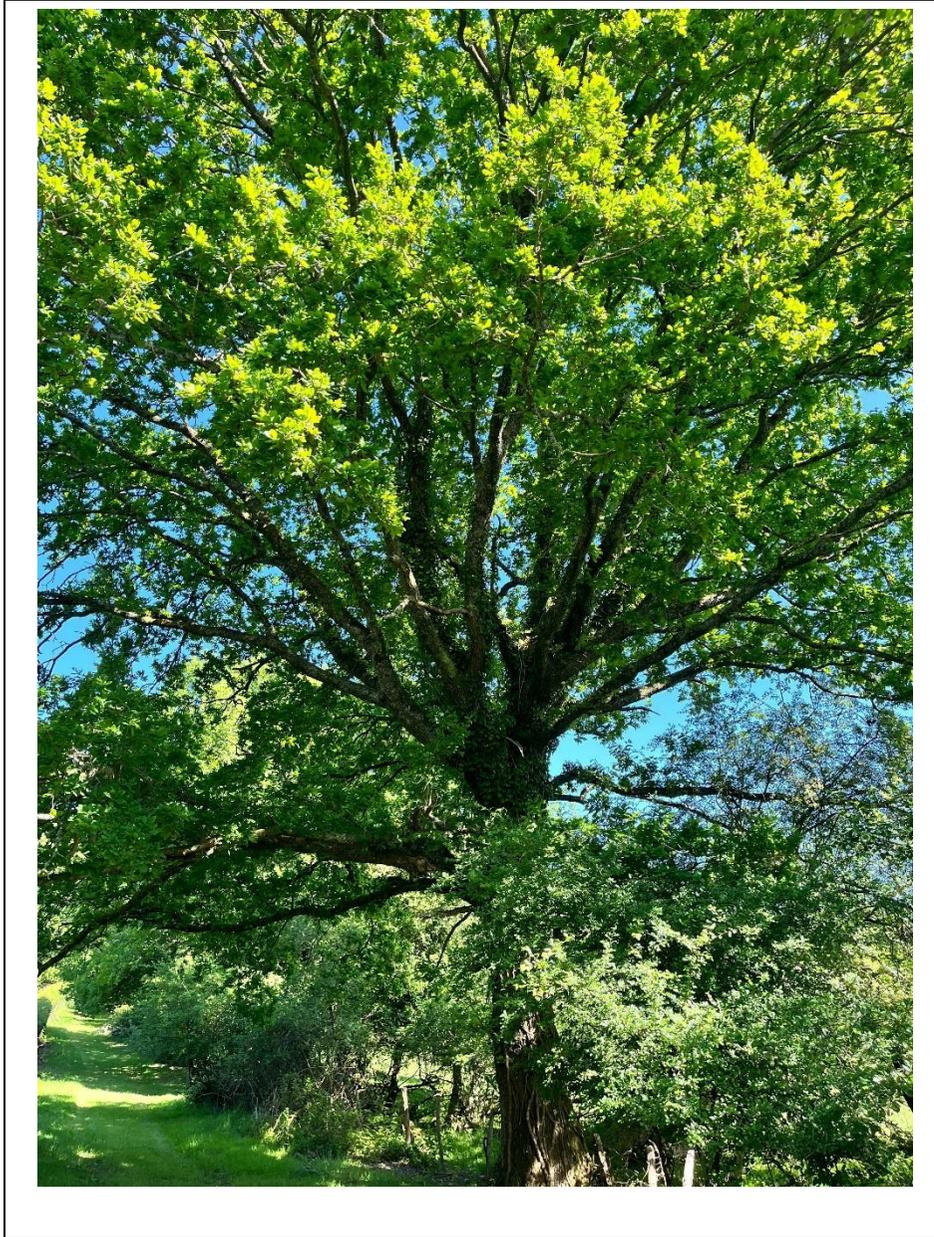


Photo 7: T6

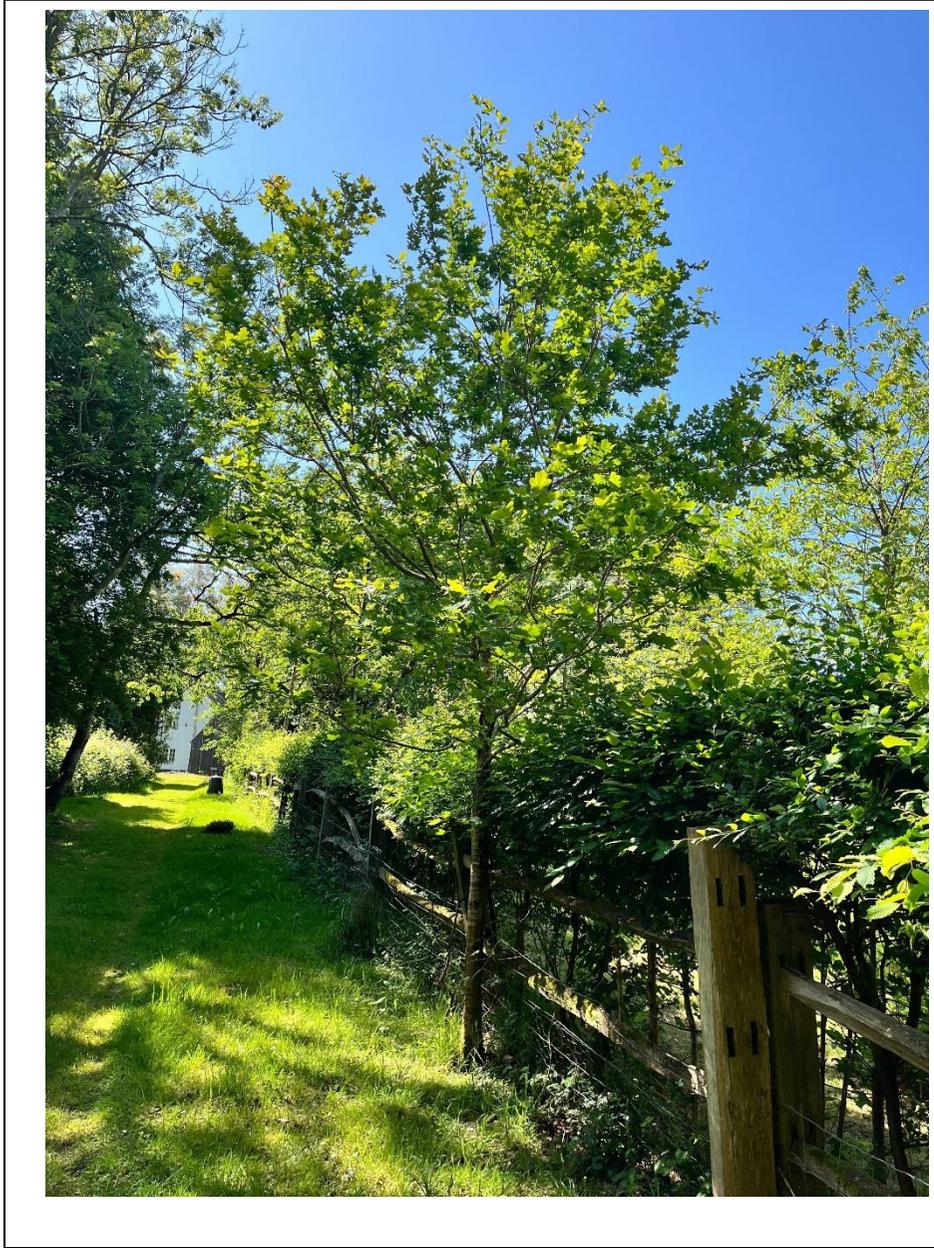


Photo 8: T5

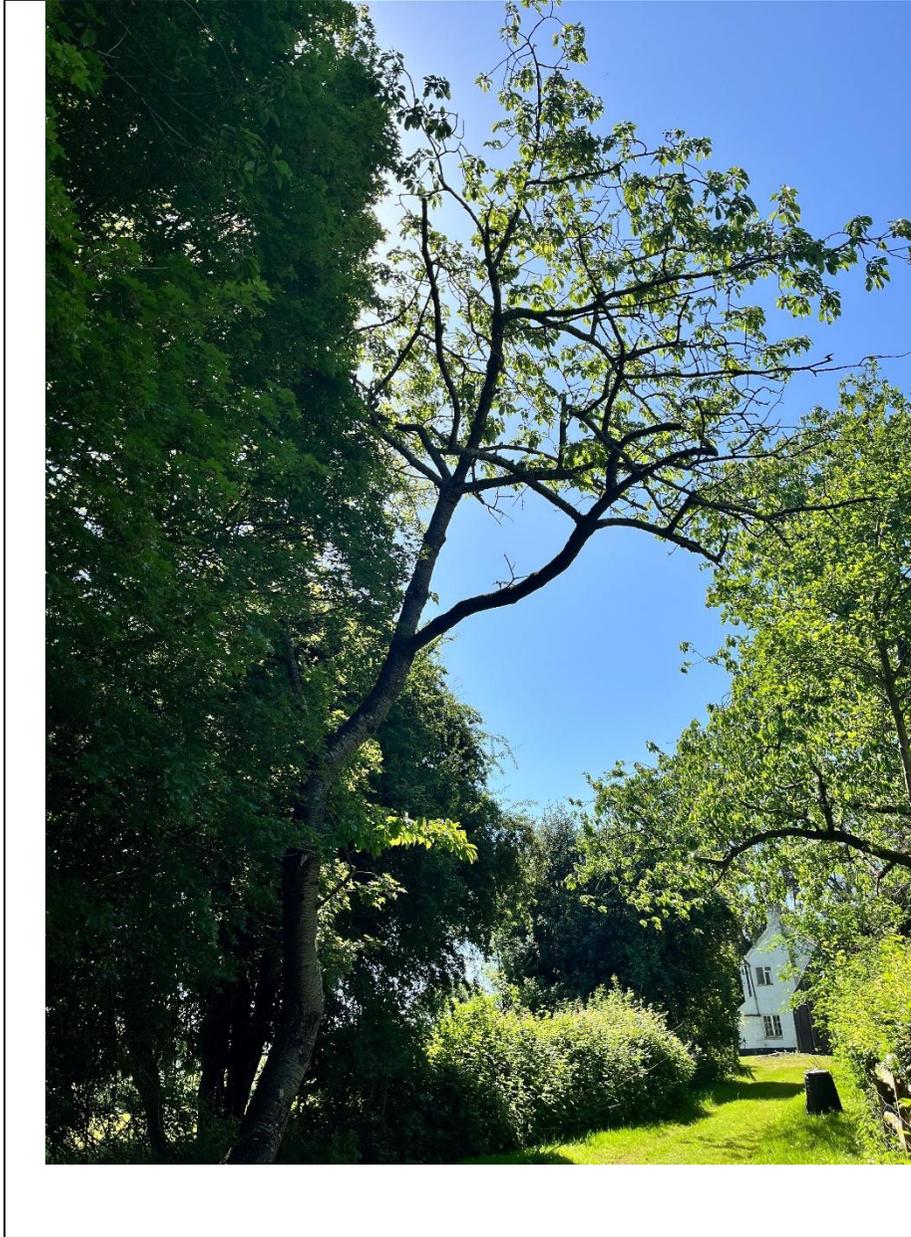


Photo 9: T4

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Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Anya White BSc, Consultant Ecologist	21/05/2025
Final	1.0	Anya White BSc, Consultant Ecologist	29/05/2025
Revised	3.0	Anya White BSc, Consultant Ecologist	09/10/2025