



ROCK LODGE

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

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SUMMARY

- A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken at the Site Rock Lodge in Scaynes Hill, West Sussex in July 2025. No rare habitats or botanical species were recorded within the Site boundary.
- The habitats present onsite are typical of those associated with residential properties, comprising of managed semi-natural grassland, ornamental planting, scattered trees, and hardstanding.
- The proposals for the Site include the creation of a new driveway which will result in the loss of ornamental shrub, scattered trees and managed semi-natural grassland, including the removal of the existing gravel driveway to be replaced with soft landscaping.

Ancient Woodland

- There are no onsite ancient woodlands, however the nearest block of ancient woodland is approximately 40m north of the Site, with a second block some 80m east.
- There will be no adverse impacts to the ancient woodland, such as increase in artificial lighting, compaction of tree roots and soil or alteration of the water table.
- No further recommendations are required.

Bats

- Three trees are proposed to be removed. Two of these trees (T2 and T3) have 'Low' suitability to support a bat roost. To minimise the risk to bats, T2 and T3 will be subject to a soft felling approach. This will involve sectional removal of the trees under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.
- No further surveys for bats are required.

Reptiles

- The Site is dominated by well managed garden lawn which provides no opportunities for resting or sheltering reptiles. The Site boundaries provide some suitable habitat for commuting and resting reptiles. No further surveys for reptiles are required.

Amphibians

- There are no onsite ponds, however one pond within the blue line boundary (land ownership), and another 13 ponds within a 250m radius according to the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) maps.
- Within a 3km radius of the Site are four Great Crested Newt (GCN) European Protected Species (EPS) licences, the nearest of which is some 115m west of the Site.
- Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment of the pond (P1) within the blue line boundary has indicated that P1 has 'Average' suitability for GCN.
- Due to the onsite habitats and extent of the works no further surveys are required, however a Reasonable Avoidance Measure (RAMs) has been provided.

Dormice

- No suitable dormouse habitat will be lost or impacted by the proposals. No further surveys for the species are required.

Badger and Hedgehog

- No evidence of badger such as setts have been recorded onsite. Precautionary methods regarding removal of spoil piles have been provided in relation to hedgehogs.

Breeding Birds

- With regard to breeding birds, it has been recommended that clearance of any vegetation is undertaken outside the bird breeding season.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken at Rock Lodge (previously known as Quarry Lodge), Lewes Road, Scaynes Hill, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, hereinafter referred to as 'the Site'. The Site is approximately 0.4ha in size, located at OS grid reference TQ 37105 22783 approximately 2km south-east of the town Haywards Heath. The immediate and surrounding landscape comprises of vineyards, farmland and small blocks of ancient and deciduous woodland.
- 1.2 The proposals include the creation of a new driveway, which will result in the loss of ornamental shrub, scattered trees and managed semi-natural grassland, including the removal of the existing gravel driveway to be replaced with soft landscaping.
- 1.3 The PEA survey was undertaken on 2nd July 2025. The survey includes a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, which provides information relating to the habitats within the Site, and a Protected Species Assessment, which identifies potential for protected species and informs the need for further protected species surveys. The Protected Species Assessment includes a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), which aims to identify any evidence of and potential for roosting bats.
- 1.4 The objectives of the survey were to:
- Classify and map the habitats within the Site according to those within the Phase 1 manual;
 - Determine the potential for protected species to occur within the Site, including an assessment of the building(s) and trees for potential to support bats;
 - Identify key ecological constraints to allow early avoidance or minimisation of ecological effects through appropriate design;
 - Suggest appropriate further surveys where necessary; and
 - Suggest measures to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 A preliminary search within 3km of the Site was undertaken for designated areas, priority habitats, European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) using the MAGIC interactive mapping service.

2.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 The Site was subject to a Phase 1 Habitat Survey on 2nd July 2025. The habitats present on the Site were mapped in accordance with the '*Handbooks for Phase I Habitat Survey*' (JNCC, 2003). Habitat areas and features of topographical and/or ecological interest were described in the form of target notes. These were later used to create botanical species lists by target note area and also to create colour coded Phase 1 Habitat map. All nomenclature follows Stace (2019). Non-native or invasive species were also identified and mapped where appropriate.

Survey Constraints

- 2.2.2 The PEA survey is based on a single site visit and the aim is to identify ecological constraints and potential for species to occur within a site. It should be noted that whilst every effort is made to identify invasive botanical species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), as well as those classed as rare or declining, species may not be visible at certain times of year and therefore may not be detectable during a single site visit. Likewise, the presence of densely vegetated habitats may, in some cases, restrict access and non-native botanical species may not be recorded in these areas.

2.3 Protected Species Assessment

- 2.3.1 The Protected Species Assessment aims to assess the potential for protected species to occur due to the habitats present. It does not include any species-specific survey methods that are designed to demonstrate whether the Site is in fact used by such species. The exception is badger *Meles meles*, as field signs for this species can be searched for, including setts, snuffle holes, latrines, pushes and hairs.

Bat Tree and Habitat Assessment

- 2.3.2 As part of the protected species assessment, a ground level investigation of all suitable trees was carried out to identify bat potential. Bats may use any crack or hole (such as woodpecker holes), splits or flaking bark and ivy (JNCC, 2004). Bats will also use different roosts at different times of the year, therefore it can be difficult to confirm bat roosts in trees. Field signs include dark streaking and droppings under access points. However, even where bats are known to occur, such signs are not always evident. Trees were also noted if they supported ivy *Hedera helix*. Ivy can do one of two things: very old, dense ivy can provide cavities for bats between the thick interwoven stems and the tree trunk, or it can conceal features in the tree itself.
- 2.3.3 In addition, the onsite habitats were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats. Trees, buildings, and habitats were placed into one of four categories as described in the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Survey Guidelines, 4th edition (Collins, 2023) and set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Bat building, tree, and habitats assessment criteria

Negligible	Habitat, building or tree with negligible features likely to be used by roosting, foraging or commuting bats.
Low	A building or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space for shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.
Moderate	A building or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat, but which are unlikely to support a roost with high conservation status. Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting and foraging, such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.
High	A building or 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, conditions and surrounding habitat. Continuous, high quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats, such as river valleys, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.

2.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

2.4.1 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken by Emma Waller (licence no. 2020-45876-CLS-CLS) on 2nd July 2025 of the onsite trees. The building (B1) which is within the redline boundary was not subject to a PRA due to the proposals having no direct or indirect impacts.

2.5 Habitat Suitability Index Assessment

2.5.1 Onsite pond P1 was assessed in terms of its suitability for great crested newts (GCN) using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment methodology on 30th June 2023. This survey follows guidance published by the Amphibian and Reptile Groups (ARG, 2010) and is a field and desk-based assessment of waterbodies for their potential to support GCN. It involves examining ten “Factors” associated with GCN pond occupancy, which are:

1. Geographic location;
2. Pond area;
3. Permanence;
4. Water quality;
5. Percentage of pond shaded;
6. Waterfowl;
7. Fish;
8. Number of ponds within 1km;
9. Terrestrial habitat; and

10. Percentage macrophyte cover

- 2.5.2 Each factor is given a numerical score and is entered into a weighted calculation to ascertain a single value, the HSI, which is a value between 0.00 and 1.00. The resulting value is then compared to categorical scale, to establish the potential for encountering GCN:

Table 2 – HSI Scores and Assessment Level

HSI Score	Assessment Level
< 0.5	Poor
0.5 – 0.59	Below Average
0.6 – 0.69	Average
0.7 – 0.79	Good
> 0.8	Excellent

2.6 Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.6.1 Although it is not the purpose of this report to present legislation and planning policy in relation to the proposal, their applicability is explained where appropriate. The following environmental legislation and planning policy that should be considered alongside the development includes:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (as amended) 2017 amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU exit) Regulations 2019;
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (as amended) 1981 ;
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
 - The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) revised 2024;
 - Environment Act 2021;
 - Mid Sussex District adopted Local Plan 2014 – 2031; and
 - Mid Sussex District proposed updated Local Plan 2021 – 2039

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.1.1 There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) within a 3km radius of the Site, the nearest of which is Chailey Common SSSI approximately 1.95km south-east of the Site. There are no other statutory designated sites within a 3km radius.

Non-statutory Designated Sites

- 3.1.2 Within a 3km radius of the Site are six non-statutory designed sites, these sites and their proximity to the Site are described in Table 3 below:

Table 3 – Non-Statutory Designated Sites within 3km

Non-Statutory Site Name	Distance and Direction from the Site
Costells Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	650m north-west
Scaynes Hill Common LWS	700m north-west
Walsted Cemetery LWS	1.7km north-west
Scrase Valley LWS	3km north-west
Western Road Cemetery LWS	3km north-west
Wapsbourne Wood LWS	2km north-east

Ancient Woodland

- 3.1.3 Within a 3km radius of the Site are numerous fragmented parcels of ancient semi-natural woodland and ancient replanted woodland. The nearest parcel is Rock Wood ancient semi-natural woodland, approximately 40m north-east of the Site. There is a second area of Rock Wood replanted ancient woodland some 80m east.

Priority Habitats

- 3.1.4 Under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, an inventory of Priority Habitats was devised. This is a list of habitats and species of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. Within a 3km radius there are four habitat types including lowland heathland with its nearest point approximately 1.6km south-east, deciduous woodland with the nearest block 10m west of the Site, traditional orchard with its nearest point some 430m north-east and woodpasture and parkland some 1.5km south-east. There are also areas of good quality grassland within a 3km radius, although not a priority habitat, they are recognised for their high biodiversity and ecological importance.

European Protected Species Mitigation Licences

- 3.1.5 There are nine records of European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences within a 3km radius and these are for bats *Chiroptera*, great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* and dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*. There are two bat EPSM licences, the nearest of which is 2km south-east and allowed for the damage and destruction of a roost site for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* and was active between 2012 to 2014. There are three GCN EPSM licences, with the

nearest approximately 115m west of the Site, allowing the damage and destruction of a resting place for the species between 2019 – 2023. There are three dormouse EPSM licences, the nearest of which some 2.4km north-west of the Site, allowing the damage and destruction of breeding habitat for the species and was active between 2011 – 2013.

Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns

- 3.1.6 Within a 3km radius of the Site is one GCN class survey licence return, which is approximately 300m north-west of the Site.

3.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 3.2.1 The Site consists of a residential property, with detached garage, hardstanding and associated garden with planted ornamental beds and well managed grassland. The habitats present within the Site are shown on Figure 3, with further detail provided by way of specific target notes: these are denoted by the letter 'TN'. Photographs of selected target notes are provided within Figure 2.

Scattered Trees

- 3.2.2 Within the Site is a large mature cedar *Cedrus* sp. and planted semi-mature Japanese maple *Acer palmatum*.

Semi-improved Grassland

- 3.2.3 The majority of the Site consists of well managed semi-improved grassland (TN3), with the species composition comprising of rye grass *Lolium perenne*, rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, and annual meadow grass *Poa annua*. The grassland is dominated by grass species, however herbaceous species present include meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, dandelion *Taraxacum* sp., bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides*, lesser stichwort *Stellaria graminea*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* and cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*.

Ornamental Planting

- 3.2.4 Within the Site are areas of managed ornamental planting and shrubs. Species include *Viburnum* sp., *Geranium* sp., pampas grass *Cortaderia selloana*, tutsan *Hypericum androsaemum*, pagoda dogwood *Cornus alternifolia*, *Rhododendron* sp., *Cotoneaster* sp., butterfly bush *Buddleia davidii*, scaly male fern *Dryopteris affinis*, St. John's wort *Hypericum perforatum*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, *Rosa* sp., pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, hedge bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, *Hydrangea* sp., and montbretia *Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora*.

Boundaries

- 3.3.5 The northern and western boundaries of the Site comprise primary of mature and semi-mature trees and shrub planting with areas of closeboard fencing (TN1), with the eastern boundary comprising of open managed grassland (TN3). The entrance to the existing driveway is within the north-western corner. Species along the northern and western boundaries include cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, bamboo *Bambusa* sp., silver birch *Betula pendula*, butterfly bush, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, spruce *Picea* sp., pagoda dogwood *Cornus alternifolia*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, English yew *Taxus baccata*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, Eucalyptus sp., Thuja sp.,

Cypress sp., English oak *Quercus robur*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., ivy *Hedera helix*, rhododendron, pendulous sedge and scaly male fern.

Buildings

- 3.3.6 There are two buildings within the Site: a large residential house (B1) along the northern boundary and a detached garage (B2) along the western boundary. As neither of these buildings are to be impacted by the proposals, they were not subject to a PRA.

Hardstanding

- 3.3.7 The current tarmac driveway runs from the north-western corner, down to the detached garage (B2) along the western boundary.

3.3 Protected Species Assessment

Bat Tree and Habitat Assessment

- 3.3.1 Three trees within the Site are proposed to be removed to make way for the new driveway. These three trees (T1 – T3) were assessed for their potential to support day roosting bats. Tree T1 is a mature ash with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 0.8m. The tree has some areas of ash dieback, however no obvious features such as cracked and lifted bark or woodpecker holes. Tree T1 has been assessed as having ‘Negligible’ suitability to support day roosting bats. Trees T2 and T3 are both cypress trees, T2 with a DBH of 0.3m and T3 0.7m. Both trees have areas of cracked and lifted bark, with T2 having a large ivy stem approximately 10cm wide along the trees eastern side. Both trees have ‘Low’ suitability to support day roosting bats. The habitats within the Site provide low quality foraging opportunities, with levels of artificial lighting from the residential house. However, the immediate surrounding landscape, which comprises of ancient woodland, hedgerow and mature treelines are considered optimal habitat for foraging and commuting bats. Overall, due to the immediate surrounding area and onsite habitat providing continuous connected habitat, the Site is considered to provide ‘Moderate’ quality habitat for bats under the BCT guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Reptiles

- 3.3.2 The Site contains limited suitable habitat for foraging, commuting and sheltering reptiles. The Site’s boundaries provide some opportunities for sheltering and commuting corridor to the wider landscape, with P1 suitable for foraging grass snakes *Natrix Helvetica*.

Amphibians

- 3.3.3 There are no onsite ponds, however a series of small cascading ponds within the blueline boundary some 35m west of the Site (P1 – P4) and an empty disused swimming pool. At the time of the survey, only pond P1 held a substantial amount of water, with ponds P2 – P4 containing between 5 – 10cm at the deepest points. Pond P1 is the top pond, connected to P2 – P4 through a series of cascades. An HSI assessment was done of P1 only. The HSI results and description of the ponds are provided below:

Pond P1

- 3.3.4 Pond P1 is located some 35m east of the Site and is a small, concrete, lined, ornamental pond which has become overgrown with *Elodea* species. Vegetation surrounding the pond comprise ornamental planting such as tutsan, pendulous sedge, scaly male fern. There is suitable GCN terrestrial habitat immediately surrounding the pond, including a rockery, overgrown planting

and grassland, with ancient woodland some 50m east of the pond. The pond received an HSI score of 0.68 which translates to 'Average' suitability for GCN.

Table 4 – P1 HSI Results

1	Geographic location	1.00
2	Pond area	0.3
3	Pond permanence	0.5
4	Water quality	0.67
5	Shade	1.00
6	Water fowl effect	1.00
7	Fish presence	0.33
8	Pond count	1.00
9	Terrestrial habitat	0.67
10	Macrophyte cover	0.80
HSI Score		0.68
Pond suitability		<i>Average</i>

Ponds P2 – P4

- 3.3.5 Ponds P2 – P4 are connected to one another, including P1, via a cascade system. However, these cascades were dry at the time of the survey. Ponds P2 – P4 are small, concrete and unlined, holding between 5 – 10cm of water at the deepest points and covered in lemna.

Dormice

- 3.3.6 The Site itself contains limited suitable habitat for dormice, comprising of well managed grassland and ornamental planting. The Site boundaries do not provide the best connective habitat due to lack of sufficient vegetated understory. The immediate surrounding area, such as the ancient woodlands, provide sub-optimal habitat for foraging, nesting and commuting dormice due to dense growth of rhododendron and non-native tree species such as redcedar. The nearest EPSM licence is 2.4km from the Site.

Badger and Hedgehog

- 3.3.7 No signs of badger, such as setts, latrines or snuffles holes, were recorded during the survey. The Site contains suitable foraging, sheltering and commuting habitat for hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* in the form of grassland, understories along the boundaries and immediate surrounding area and woodlands.

Breeding Birds

- 3.3.8 The Site contains habitat suitable for nesting birds within the scattered trees and boundary habitats. The surrounding habitat including the woodlands, farmland and vineyards are optimal for breeding birds.

4.0 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Desk Study

- 4.1.1 No designated sites lie within the boundary of the Site, however the Site falls within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Chailey Common SSSI. The proposals include the creation of a new driveway which will result in the loss of ornamental shrub, scattered trees and well managed semi-natural grassland, including the removal of the existing gravel driveway to be replaced with soft landscaping. The categories listed for this SSSI IRZ include planning applications relating to pipelines, pylons and electricity cables, minerals, oil and gas and any industrial/agricultural development that could cause air pollution. The proposed development does not match any of these descriptions and therefore consultation with Natural England is not required.
- 4.1.2 In regard to impacts on statutory and non-statutory designated sites within a 3km radius, such as Chailey Common SSSI, it is considered that based on the scope of the works, there will be no adverse impacts to these sites.

4.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Rare and Invasive Species

- 4.2.1 No rare or nationally scarce botanical species or habitats were recorded during the Phase 1 Habitat survey. The habitats within the Site are typical for residential dwellings, with managed grassland, ornamental planting, buildings, hardstanding, and scattered trees. However, there were at least four invasive non-native species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) within the Site. These five species include rhododendron, cotoneaster, montbretia and Elodea.
- 4.2.2 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, and therefore efforts should be made to regulate the species. Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) also applies to Schedule 9 species, which prohibits the introduction and release of certain plants and animals which may cause ecological, environmental, or socio-economic harm.
- 4.2.3 The proposals for the Site will not directly impact habitats where Schedule 9 species have been identified, such as the ponds or ornamental planting. Due to the scale of the proposed works, it is considered that the proposals will not cause the spread, or accidental introduction of these four species within the surrounding landscape. If these species are to be removed, they should be disposed of responsibly. To dispose of these species offsite safely, it is recommended that this is done either by a registered waste carrier or in accordance with the conditions in regulatory position statement (RPS): treatment and disposal of invasive non-native plants. If the conditions in the RSP are followed, an environmental permit to treat or bury non-native plant material is not required.

4.3 Protected Species Assessment

Bat Tree and Habitat Assessment

- 4.3.1 Two trees (T2 and T3) have been assessed as having 'Low' suitability for day roosting bats. Suitable features include thick ivy stems and lifted bark. These trees will be removed under the proposals to make way for the new driveway. To minimise the risk to bats, T2 and T3 will be subject to a soft felling approach. This will involve sectional removal of the trees under the

supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. The branches and sections containing any features with potential to support roosting bats, such as cavities, loose bark, or splits, will be lowered gently to the ground and left undisturbed for a minimum of 24 hours before being moved or processed. Felling will ideally be undertaken during the bat active season (typically between April and September), avoiding periods of peak hibernation. If any evidence of bats is discovered during works, all activity will cease immediately, and further advice will be sought from Natural England.

Reptiles

- 4.3.2 The Site contains limited suitable habitat for foraging, sheltering and commuting reptiles. The proposals will be restricted to well managed garden lawn, with some vegetation along the western boundary to be lost for the new driveway, however this area is well shaded and dominated by ground ivy, providing unlikely habitat for sheltering reptiles. Due to the scale of the works and onsite habitats, it is considered highly unlikely the works would impact any reptile species. No further surveys are required.

Amphibians

- 4.3.3 The Site itself contains limited suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians, with the Site boundaries providing some opportunities for rest and shelter. However, the immediate surrounding area does comprise of suitable aquatic and terrestrial habitat for amphibians, including GCN. Pond P1 was subject to an HSI assessment, which considered the pond as 'Average' for GCN. Ponds P2 – P4 are considered unsuitable due to the low water levels. The proposals will not directly impact any waterbodies or suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians, with only well managed garden lawn and a small section of the eastern boundary to be impacted. There is a GCN EPSM licence some 115m of the Site, however the A272 (Haywards Heath Road) separates the Site from the location of the EPSM licence, which would act as a barrier to the movement of amphibians including GCN. Due to the unlikely event of GCN being present onsite, no further surveys are required, however as they are known to be within the local area, a Reasonable Avoidance Measure (RAMs) has been provided and should be followed. In the unlikely event that GCN are found onsite, all works will stop and Natural England will be contacted.

Dormice

- 4.3.4 There is limited suitable onsite habitat for dormice. The immediate surrounding habitat which comprises of ancient woodland is considered sub-optimal dormouse habitat due to large patches of rhododendron and other non-native tree species such as redcedar. The most suitable dormouse habitat comprises of the hedgerows surrounding the adjacent vineyard, which extends into blocks of woodland to the east, away from the Site. No suitable dormouse habitat will be lost to the proposals, therefore no further surveys are required.

Badgers and Hedgehogs

- 4.3.5 No evidence of badger or setts have been identified within the Site and no further surveys are necessary. However, there is good foraging and commuting habitat for both badger and hedgehog. Hedgehogs are a Priority Species protected under the NERC Act 2006 and protected from harm under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. If any spoil piles are found, these should be removed carefully by hand.

Breeding Birds

- 4.3.6 All wild birds, including eggs and chicks, are protected against injury or killing and their nests are protected against damage or destruction when in use by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). The removal of trees T1 – T3 should therefore be undertaken outside the bird breeding season, limiting this work to the period 1st September to 1st March. If these dates do not coincide with planned schedules, then it is recommended that the vegetation is checked by a suitably experienced ecologist before the works commence. If any breeding birds are noted, works in the vicinity of the nest would have to cease until fledging has occurred. Measures to retain the suitability of the Site for breeding birds have been provided under the National Planning Policy Framework in section 4.4.

4.4 National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) sets out planning policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. Section 15 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- safeguarding local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks including designated sites, wildlife corridors and stepping-stones and areas identified by national and local partnership for enhancement;
- promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and ecological networks;
- promoting the protection and recovery of protected species; and
- identifying and pursuing opportunities for measurable net gains for biodiversity

- 4.4.2 Regarding NPPF and the enhancement of the Site to benefit local wildlife, it is recommended that the measures detailed below are included in the scheme to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

Planting

- If invasive non-native species are to be removed to safeguard and enhance the biodiversity of the Site, this should be done in accordance with RPS 178 or by a registered waste carrier. Once invasive non-native species are removed, native species can be planted in their place.
- Any planting required for the scheme should focus on invertebrates and should include generous native and nectar-rich species. Flowering plants should be made available for as long as possible through the year by planting a combination of plants which flower during spring, summer and late summer. This would benefit local wildlife by providing more nest building opportunities and food sources for small mammals, birds and invertebrates. Species such as lavenders *Lavandula* sp., heathers *Calluna* sp., and honeysuckles *Lonicera* sp. are good nectar sources for bumblebees and other insects, and climbing plants such as honeysuckle and jasmine *Jasminum officinalis* can also be used by birds to forage and nest in.

Birds

- To maintain the value of the Site for nesting birds, at least two boxes, such as the [*Vivara Pro Seville 28mm Woodstone Nest Box*](#) or [*Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Nest Box*](#) which are suitable for a variety of bird species such as wrens, coal tits, tree sparrows, robins, spotted flycatchers, song thrushes and blackbirds should be installed

on the eastern elevation of suitable trees to avoid strong sun or prevailing wind and rain.

Hedgehog

- If any closeboard fencing is to be installed, 13cm x 13cm square holes should be cut into the base of the fences to allow hedgehogs to move through the landscape. Where possible, these holes should connect to areas of suitable hedgehog habitat. A hedgehog house such as the [Hedgehog Nest Box](#) could be incorporated into the back garden, within suitable hedgehog vegetation such as scrub or the base of a hedgerow, however this should be away from the main road which runs east of the Site.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken at Rock Lodge, Scaynes Hill, West Sussex in July 2025. There are no designated sites or Priority Habitats within the Site boundary.

Bats

- 5.2 Trees T2 and T3 have been identified as having 'Low' potential for roosting bats. To minimise the risk to bats, T2 and T3 will be subject to a soft felling approach. This will involve sectional removal of the trees under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 5.3 The Site has been assessed as having 'Moderate' habitat suitability, however due to the scope of the works no further surveys for bats are required.

Reptiles

- 5.4 No suitable reptile habitat will be lost to the proposals. No further surveys for reptiles are required.

Amphibians

- 5.5 There are no waterbodies within the Site, with limited suitable terrestrial habitat. No suitable terrestrial habitat will be lost to the proposals; therefore, no further surveys are required. As GCN are known to be within the wider area, a RAMs have been provided in the unlikely event GCN are found during the works.

Dormice

- 5.6 No suitable dormouse habitat will be impacted by the proposals and therefore no further surveys are required for the species.

Badger and Hedgehog

- 5.7 No evidence of badger such as setts have been recorded onsite. If any spoil piles are found and need to be removed, this should be done carefully by hand.

Breeding Birds

- 5.8 With regard to breeding birds, it has been recommended that clearance of any vegetation and removal of trees is undertaken outside the bird breeding season.

NPPF

- 5.9 Recommendations have been made to enhance the Site for biodiversity in accordance with NPPF. These include generous native and nectar rich planting, installation of bird boxes and enhancements for hedgehog.

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Appendix 1 – Great Crested Newt (GCN) Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)

Timings – GCN and Reptiles

- The works should take place during the active season for amphibians and reptiles, avoiding the hibernation period between mid-November and the end of February.

Site Induction – GCN

- All contractors working on the project will be briefed on the potential presence of amphibians prior to works commencing. This method statement will be used as a brief with a copy of the amphibian ID card. The project ecologist's contact details will be left on site and should any GCN be found, then the project ecologist will be contacted for advice on how to proceed. If any GCN are found, then works should stop and a licence from Natural England may be required to continue works.

Careful Design of Works Area

- During the construction period, care should be taken to avoid creating artificial habitats and temporary resting places for amphibians within the work areas, such as turf, spoil and rubble piles. Stored materials will need to be isolated from areas of vegetation by locating them on hardstanding or well managed lawn, away from the site boundaries, and if possible, raising them off the ground using storage bags on pallets. Before moving materials, which have been stored on the ground, the area should be carefully checked for animals. Any waste piles should be moved off site, stored in skips or temporarily stored on areas of isolated hardstanding / bare ground.
- Any trenches which are left open overnight during construction works should have planks of wood placed in them to provide an exit ramp for any animals which may fall into them. As a precaution each morning any ditches or holes will be checked by the site manager. Trenches should be checked for animals before they are infilled.

Amphibian and Reptile ID Card

GREAT CRESTED NEWT

- 15cm in length
- Black skin and bright orange belly
- Male GCN have white stripe on the tail



SMOOTH NEWT

- Up to 10cm in length
- More brown in colour but can vary from light, sandy and dark brown
- Spots on belly and throat, typically with some bright orange



PALMATE NEWT

- Typically, between 7 – 9cm in length
- Similar in colour to smooth newt, often slightly darker
- Palmate newts lack spots on their throats, which are often a pink or yellow colour
- Thin filament on the end of their tails
- Males have black webbing on their back feet



TOAD



FROG





SLOW WORM

- Legless lizards, often mistaken for snakes
- Adult males are greyish brown (sometimes with blue speckling), and females are brown with dark sides and sometimes a dark line down the centre of the back
- Juveniles are often gold in colour with dark stripe running along the length of the body

COMMON LIZARD

- Colours vary from dark brown to olive green
- Around 10cm in length



GRASS SNAKE

- Colours can vary but typically brown-olive green with black bars down the sides and a yellow and black 'collar' around the neck