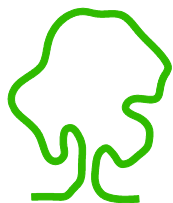


**MR DAVID HILL**

**PASCOTTS FARM, SNOWDROP LANE, LINDFIELD,  
WEST SUSSEX RH16 2QE**

**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**

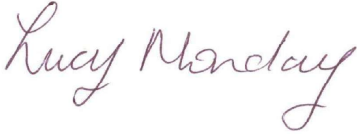
June 2025 (Updated August)



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Environmental Assessment Services Ltd

## REPORT DATA SHEET

| Requirement             | Data                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Report Reference        | 798/GouldBaxter/DHill/PascottsFarm/PEA                                                                                                                    |
| Date                    | June 2025                                                                                                                                                 |
| Client                  | Mr David Hill                                                                                                                                             |
| Report type             | Preliminary Ecological Appraisal                                                                                                                          |
| Purpose                 | Submission to Planning                                                                                                                                    |
| Revisions               | August 2025 – Further habitat assessment completed                                                                                                        |
| Prepared by             | <div>Federica Roseo BSc (Hons)</div> <div></div> <div>Signed</div>      |
| Approved and updated by | <div>Lucy Monday BSc (Hons), ACIEEM</div> <div></div> <div>Signed</div> |

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**MR DAVID HILL**

PASCOTTS FARM, SNOWDROP LANE, LINDFIELD,  
WEST SUSSEX RH16 2QE

**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**

June 2025 (Updated August)

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**MR DAVID HILL**

PASCOTTS FARM, SNOWDROP LANE, LINDFIELD,  
WEST SUSSEX RH16 2QE

**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**

June 2025 (August 2025)

**NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

Environmental Assessment Services Ltd has been appointed to prepare a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in relation to the proposed development of land at Pascotts Farm, Linfield for residential use.

The site comprises a paddock used as grazing pasture located between the existing residential dwelling and Snowdrop Lane to the southeast. It is proposed to develop the site to comprise two detached residential dwellings with associated access and parking from Snowdrop Lane.

The aim of this report is to collate preliminary, baseline information on the conservation and ecological status of the site in terms of habitats and species within the framework of current environmental legislation and provide recommendations in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the site, where appropriate.

The assessment comprised consultation with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre to obtain records of protected, rare and notable habitats and species within 1 km of the site, consultation with Mid Sussex District Council regarding Tree Preservation Orders for trees within and adjacent to the site, and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) undertaken on 3 April 2025 (and repeated on 24 July 2025) to identify habitats and features of ecological value and the site's likely potential to support protected, rare and other notable species.

Consultation with Mid Sussex District Council has confirmed that there are no trees within or adjacent to the site which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Assessment of the site, along with a review of consultation data provided by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, confirmed that the site does not lie within or immediately adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.

Habitats within and immediately adjacent to the site include grassland (pasture) which has been heavily grazed and poached, a small area of scrub, a seasonal pond, mature trees and a hedgerow with associated ditch which lies along the southeast boundary of the site with Snowdrop Lane.

The site is considered to have potential to support notable and protected species including amphibians, reptiles, birds, bats, and dormice. The potential for these species is principally associated with the small area of scrub and hedgerow habitats which will be impacted by the proposed development. Further surveying and mitigation is recommended in this case.

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**MR DAVID HILL**

PASCOTTS FARM, SNOWDROP LANE, LINDFIELD,  
WEST SUSSEX RH16 2QE

**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**

June 2025 (August 2025)

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 The following report, prepared by Environmental Assessment Services Limited, is a preliminary assessment of the baseline status of the ecology of land at Pascotts Farm in Linfield, West Sussex.

1.1.2 The site comprises a paddock used for grazing (sheep) and a small area of scrub located between the existing dwelling (to the northwest) and Snowdrop Lane (to the southeast). The site is divided from Snowdrop Lane by a mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees and an associated (roadside) ditch. The Ordnance Survey map reference for the centre of the site is TQ 35307 23805. See Appendix A for the site location and existing site plans.

1.1.3 It is proposed to develop the site for residential use to include two detached dwellings with associated garaging, access and parking from Snowdrop Lane. Two new vehicle access points are to be created from Snowdrop Lane into the site through the existing hedgerow, and the small area of scrub within the western corner of the site is to be removed. See Appendix B for the proposed development plans.

**1.2 Aim of the Report**

The aim of the report is to collate preliminary, baseline information on the conservation and ecological status of the site in terms of habitats and species, within the framework of current environmental legislation.

The report also evaluates the potential of the site to support protected species, in particular for:

- Animals and plants listed under Schedules 1 and 5, and Schedule 8, respectively, of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) as amended, and those European protected species listed under Schedules 2 and 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- Plants and animals with Red Data Book<sup>1</sup> or Notable<sup>2</sup> status.

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<sup>1</sup> The World Conservation Union Red List of threatened species provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on taxa (species or group of related species) evaluated to determine their relative risk of extinction.

<sup>2</sup> Notable (or Nationally Scarce) species occur in 16 – 100 10 km squares in Britain.

- Plants, animals and habitats identified as Priority Species / Habitats or Species / Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation in England (formerly UK Biodiversity Action Plan)<sup>3</sup>.

Where the site includes habitats and/or features of ecological value and/or has potential for use by protected species, an assessment of the likely impacts of the proposal is made, together with recommendations for any further surveying, mitigation and/or enhancement as considered appropriate.

### 1.3 Legislation

The legislation relevant to this study is:

- i. Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which transposes into UK law the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (known as the “Bern Convention”) and the Birds Directive 2009.
- ii. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000, which strengthens the legal protection for threatened species.
- iii. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, which through Section 41 provides a list of habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity conservation (Priority Habitats and Species) in England.
- iv. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, which transposed the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law.
- v. Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which safeguards both the animals and their setts.
- vi. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (made under section 97 of The Environment Act 1995), which make provisions for the protection of important hedgerows.
- vii. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which makes requirements for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the planning system.

### 1.4 Assessment Method

This assessment has been prepared generally in accordance with the CIEEM EcIA guidelines, as applicable, as recognised by the British Standard on Biodiversity BS42020:2013.

The assessment was undertaken in two stages:

- a) Consultation: comprising data searches by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) and Mid Sussex District Council.

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<sup>3</sup> Species derived from Section 41 list of the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 + the hen harrier.

b) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) carried out on 3 April 2025 and repeated on 24 July 2025 to:

- Assess the baseline status of the site.
- Identify its potential for use by species of flora and fauna protected or controlled under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and associated European legislation.
- Identify notable habitats and features of interest that should or could be retained and/or enhanced as part of the proposed development.

## **2. CONSULTATION AND BASELINE DATA SEARCH**

### **2.1 Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre Data Search**

2.1.1 Data obtained from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) provided information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites and records of protected and notable species within the search area. The search was conducted for a 1 km radius surrounding the Ordnance Survey grid reference TQ 35307 23805. The search area was selected based on the scale and likely impacts of the proposed development.

2.1.2 The statutory and non-statutory designated sites identified by SxBRC within 1 km of the site are set out in section 3.2 below, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on these sites. Mitigation, where appropriate, is recommended in section 4.

2.1.3 Records of protected and rare species within 1 km of the site have been provided by SxBRC. These records are discussed under the protected species headings in Section 3.3 below, together with an assessment of the potential impact of the proposed development on these species. Further survey and/or mitigation, where appropriate, is recommended in section 4.

### **2.2 Mid Sussex District Council**

2.2.1 Mid Sussex District Council's online mapping was used to identify any trees or group of trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or conservation area protection within or adjacent to the site. Mapping has confirmed that there are no TPOs for trees within or adjacent to the site and the site does not lie within a conservation area.

### **2.3 Local Geology and Soil Type**

2.3.1 Soil type will impact factors including site drainage, nutrient availability and pH. This, together with other factors such as site topography and anthropogenic activity, will impact site flora and fauna.

2.3.2 According to the British Geological Survey (available online), the site lies on Upper Grinstead Clay (Mudstone) over Upper Tunbridge Wells Sand (Sandstone).

### 3. SITE ASSESSMENT

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (walkover survey) was carried out on 3 April 2025 and repeated on 24 July 2024. The following is based on the findings of these surveys, together with a review of information provided by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) and Mid Sussex District Council. Photographs taken during the site survey are provided in Appendix C.

#### 3.1 Habitat Assessment

- 3.1.1 The site is located within a more rural but still developed area in Lindfield to the east of Haywards Heath. There has been considerable residential development of land within 1 km of the site, including a large residential estate to the northwest which is accessed from Gravelye Lane. Other notable habitats within the local area include rough grassland and pasture, a large area of scrub and scattered trees with grassland (to the northwest of the site), woodland and arable land / crops (predominantly to the east and southeast).
- 3.1.2 The proposed development site comprises a small grazing paddock together with a small area of scrub located between the existing house (Pascotts) and Snowdrop Lane. The paddock is accessed via the driveway which leads to the existing dwelling and also provides access to a small (disused) barn complex to the north of the paddock. The wider site, within the same ownership, includes the barns, the existing detached residential dwelling with surrounding garden laid to lawn, an area of scrubland to the southwest of the house (which links, without boundaries, to the scrub within the proposed development site) and three additional paddocks, two of which are used for grazing in combination with the study site, and one which has been left for hay (cut in July).
- 3.1.3 The paddock is secured with stock fencing which excludes the area of scrub within the western corner of the site and the hedgerow to the southeast, protecting both from grazing pressure. The area of scrub extends beyond the northwest boundary of the proposed development site.

#### *Grassland*

- 3.1.4 The site was first visited in early April when the grassland was in poor condition, heavily grazed showing little species diversity, and limited to the more dominant species including creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*), with common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) beneath the tree canopy to the southeast. At this time the grassland was considered to be modified grassland in poor condition.
- 3.1.5 In July the sheep were removed from the paddock to allow the grassland to recover. This allowed for a further assessment of the type and condition of the grassland. The grassland is dominated by perennial ryegrass and a few other common species (including Yorkshire fog, fescue, bent and sweet vernal grass). Herbaceous species recorded within the grassland in July included common sorrel, cudweed, knotweed (not Japanese), yarrow, bird's-foot trefoil, ragwort, greater plantain, ribwort

plantain, scarlet pimpernel, selfheal, field veronica, mouse-ear, redshank, creeping thistle and broad-leaved dock.

- 3.1.6 The grassland is improved, enrichment most notable leading up to and surrounding the feeding station located within the northern corner of the paddock. Grazing pressure is most notable along the southeast boundary of the paddock beneath the tree canopy where the ground is predominantly bare or covered by common nettle.

#### *Ponds*

- 3.1.7 Towards the southern corner of the site (adjacent to the hedgerow) is a low lying area (pond) which was dry at the time of our visits. We understand, from view of the topographic survey of the site, that this feature has held water this winter but, based on our observations, is likely to be dry for much of the year. The pond is surrounded by trees including two mature oaks and two mature willows (*Salix spp*), together with holly and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). The ground within the area is mostly bare, with the exception of some brambles (*Rubus spp*), common nettle, and broad-leaved dock. The trees overhang the depression resulting in 100% shading and there is dead wood within the pond area. The pool is not fenced off, and the sheep which graze the paddock have open access.
- 3.1.8 Adjacent to the site (but outside the redline boundary) at the northern end of the hedgerow is a small pond which was holding water at the time of our first site visit in April, but only damp in July. The ditch which extends along the roadside appears to discharge into this pond. The pond appears to be shallow and heavily silted with vegetation (grasses) growing within the middle of the pool. This pond is shaded by overhanging mature trees at the northern end of the hedgerow, which ends at the existing driveway access for Pascotts Farm.

#### *Scrub*

- 3.1.9 Within the western corner of the site is an area of scrub which has been separated from the site by stock fencing. The northeast corner of the scrub currently houses bee hives. This area of scrub extends west beyond the proposed development site boundary. The scrub comprises bramble (*Rubus spp*) with willow (*Salix spp*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), aspen, hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), oak (*Quercus spp*) and a small, but mature walnut tree (*Juglans regia*). The hazel includes a line of hazel stands along the northeast boundary of the scrubland which extends west and connects to hedgerows and treelines which extend through the wider area. The current scheme for the site includes the removal of the scrub within the site, but the walnut tree is to be retained.

#### *Hedgerow and Associated Ditch*

- 3.1.10 Along the southeast boundary of the paddock with Snowdrop Lane is a mature hedgerow comprising hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), with large, mature hedgerow trees including oak (*Quercus spp*) and hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), and an associated ditch adjacent to Snowdrop Lane. Some standing dead wood (of holly) is also present within the

hedgerow. The ditch is vegetated, comprising grasses and common herbaceous plants seen elsewhere within the site.

- 3.1.11 Ground on the west side of the hedge, within the site, is bare, with some common nettle and dock. There is evidence that a narrow strip of land adjacent to the hedgerow has been sectioned off from the paddock in the past. This includes three gate/fence posts, crossbars and a fallen gate, plus a some hawthorn which have been permitted to grow along what would have been the fence line. There are some scattered trees within the previously fenced area, including two groups of three oaks which fall outside of the hedgerow line. It is most likely that these trees were able to become established while this area was fenced off from the paddock.
- 3.1.12 A group of three mature hornbeam and two mature oak are present immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the site. Whilst the main trunk of these trees lie outside of the site boundary line, the rooting area of these trees will extend into the site.

## **3.2 Designated Sites and Priority Habitats**

- 3.2.1 The site does not lie within or adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory sites. There are no statutory sites within 1 km of the study site. There are three non-statutory sites and two designated road verges within 1 km (as identified by SxBRC). The three non-statutory sites are Local Wildlife Site (LWS) including M08 - Costells, Henfield and Nashgill Woods located ~1000 m east from site, M18 - Walstead Cemetery ~850 m north from site and M25 - Scrase Valley ~950 m west from site. Road verge units are Lewes Road ~500 m east from site and Northlands Avenue ~600 meter west from site. The proposed development of site, comprising two residential dwellings, is not considered likely to have any significant impact on any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.
- 3.2.2 European sites include Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. These, together with Ramsar sites, are protected for their ecological significance. Proposed development should not adversely affect the integrity of European and Ramsar sites.
- 3.2.3 The Castle Hill SAC is situated 16 km to the south of the site. The semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland which are situated on calcareous substrates, together with the dry grassland and scrub on chalk or limestone, are the qualifying feature for this site which act as important orchid sites.
- 3.2.4 The Lewes Downs SAC is situated approximately 17.7 km to the southwest of the site. The semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies which are situated on calcareous substrates, together with the dry grassland and scrub on chalk or limestone, are the qualifying feature for this site which act as important orchid sites.
- 3.2.5 Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC lie approximately 11 km to the west of the site. Ashdown Forest comprises one of the largest continuous blocks of lowland heath in southeast England, supporting important assemblages of nationally rare invertebrates and birds of European importance. The site lies well outside the 7 km

buffer zone identified by Mid Sussex District Council and therefore is not thought likely to impact the Ashdown Forest SPA or SAC.

3.2.5.1 There will be no direct land take from any designated (or non-designated) sites as a result of the proposed development. Designated site habitat management will not be affected by the proposed development. The potential impact of the proposed development on feature species of the European and Ramsar sites (including lighting impacts) and invasive species is considered in section 3.3 below.

3.2.6 The site has also been assessed for its potential to include or be part of (BAP) Priority Habitat as listed on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act).

3.2.7 Section 41 Habitats recorded within 1 km of the site include:

- Traditional orchard
- Deciduous woodland
- Ancient woodland
- Ghyll woodland

3.2.8 The majority of the site comprises species poor, heavily grazed and poached grassland, however, there is a temporary pond located within the site towards the southern corner, and a second pond lies outside but adjacent to the northeast corner of the site, which is connected to the roadside drainage ditch.

3.2.9 There is ancient and deciduous woodland ~100 m east, ~270 m west and ~680 m north from site. There are numerous ponds, surface water drains and watercourses within 1 km of the site. Ghyll woodland is found 500 m southeast of site and 3 traditional orchards are found southeast of site.

### **3.3 Protected and Controlled Species**

#### **3.3.1 *Trees and Hedgerows***

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA, GHA Trees Ltd, May 2025) has been produced for the site and reviewed as part of this assessment.

There is a mixed species hedgerow along the southeastern boundary of the site with Snowdrop Lane. The hedgerow is predominantly hornbeam, with some holly and hazel. The hedgerow includes a number of hedgerow trees including large mature oaks, hornbeam and holly trees. Based on the number of woody species present, and the dominance of hornbeam within this section of hedgerow, it is not considered species rich. A shallow, vegetated ditch runs the length of the hedgerow, discharging into a pond adjacent to the northeastern corner of the site, where the hedgerow ends, adjacent to the existing entrance / driveway to Pascotts Farm. The mixed species hedgerow, with associated hedgerow trees and ditch, is considered to be a feature of significant ecological value to the site and wider area, providing potential resting, roosting, nesting and navigation/commuting potential through the area. One of these trees was noted to have significant potential for roosting bats (see section 3.3.7 below).

In addition to the hedgerow trees, there are trees which lie within the area previously fenced off from the paddock along a strip of land adjacent to the hedgerow. These include oaks and hawthorn, together with group of willow trees (including fallen dead wood) within the pond area towards the southern corner of the site.

As part of the proposed development, two new access points will be made through the hedgerow and across the ditch to permit access to each of the new dwellings directly from Snowdrop Lane. In accordance with the recommendations given in the initial versions of the arboricultural impact assessment report, the access points have been located to minimise the impact on existing trees. Under the current scheme two sections of hedgerow are to be removed, including a group of hornbeam and hazel (Group #4) located adjacent to the southern corner of the site, a group of seven tightly grown oaks (Group #12), and three additional low quality oak trees (G11) which have been permitted to grow outside the line of the hedgerow within an area which has been fenced off in the past but which is now open to the wider paddock. These oaks are considered to be of lower ecological value than the trees to the north and south which lie within the line of the hedge.

The proposed development will result in the loss of some trees for which compensation planting should be included within the scheme, and there will be some encroachment on trees to be retained which will require protection measures to be put in place. New hedging is to be included along the northeast, northwest and southwest boundaries of the site and between the two plots. This will improve connectivity through and around the site. See section 4.2 below.

### 3.3.2 Plants

There are records of 32 notable higher flowering plants, two lower plants and 14 notable species of mushroom within 1 km of the site of which one flowering plant, English Sticky Eyebright (*Euphrasia officinalis subsp. anglica*), one lower plant Slender Thread-moss (*Orthodontium*) and one mushroom, Big Blue Pinkgill (*Entoloma bloxamii s. lat.*), recorded at Walstead Cemetery, are (NERC) Species of Principle Importance in England.

The site comprises heavily grazed and poached modified grassland, with a small area of bramble scrub with willow and hazel. No notable plants or plant communities were noted during the site walkover assessment. The grassland and bramble scrub within the site is considered unlikely to support any rare and/or notable plant species.

In addition to the above mentioned trees and shrubs, the hedgerow includes clematis (travellers joy), and the adjacent drainage ditch supports species common to high fertility soils of the area. Plants found around the pond are also common of fertile soils (including common nettle and dock).

The development will result in the loss of the existing grassland, bramble scrub and two sections of hedgerow and adjacent ditch to permit access. It is also likely that the pond area will be cleared to enhance the visual appeal of the site. This is

unlikely to result in the loss of any rare and/or notable plant species. No further botanical surveying is recommended in this case.

### 3.3.3 *Invertebrates*

There are records of protected and rare invertebrate species within 1 km of site including one bee, one beetle, four butterflies, one damselfly, one dragonfly, two crickets, 42 moths, one spider, two true flies and one true bug.

These include Brown Hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*) and the Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*) which are protected under the Schedule 5 section 9.5a of the Wildlife Countryside Act (animals are protected from being sold, offered for sale or being held or transported for sale either live or dead, whole or part). Brown Hairstreak is also a Species of Principle Importance (NERC), and the site lies within a priority area for this species (MAGIC map).

Other priority (NERC) species recorded in the area include small heath and white admiral butterflies, apple lace-bug (a true bug) and 27 moth species (knot grass, green-brindled crescent, mouse moth, dusky moth species brocade, minor shoulder-knot, mottled rustic, broom moth, sallow, small square-spot, small phoenix, dusky thorn, small emerald, ghost moth, rustic, rosy rustic, shoulder-striped wainscot, rosy minor, brindled beauty, powdered quaker, grass rivulet, white ermine, buff ermine, feathered gothic, blood-vein, pale eggar, cinnabar, and oak hook-tip).

Habitat to the north of the site, which includes grassland and scrub with trees, is considered likely to be of good habitat to support both notable and protected invertebrate species. Within the site, the hedgerow with mature trees, bramble scrub and ponds (on and adjacent to the site) are considered to have potential to support notable invertebrate species. Within the hedgerow, and in the pond location within site, dead wood is present. This is of importance to saproxylic invertebrates (species that are dependent on dead and/or decaying wood) at differing stages of their life cycle.

The hedgerow with trees and associated ditch, and the ponds are to be retained and the pond within the site boundary restored as part of the site's redevelopment, but the small area of scrub will be lost, and dead wood is likely to be removed from the proposed garden areas. This will result in a small reduction of available habitat, which should be compensated for. See section 4.2.

### 3.3.4 *Amphibians*

Great crested newts (GCN) and natterjack toads are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), making them a UK and European Protected Species. It is an offence (amongst other things) to: deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill an individual of the species; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place. Meaning that both the individual and its habitat are protected.

There are eight records of common frog (*Rana temporaria*), six records for smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), nine records for palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*) and four records for common toad (*Bufo bufo*) within 1 km from site. Common toad has been recorded on Snowdrop Lane. Most recent records are from 2017 for common toad and 2014 for the other species recorded.

Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) have not been recorded within 1 km from site since 1987, and the location of these records is uncertain. Defra's Magic map has confirmed there are no records of GCN pond surveys between 2017 and 2019 and no GCN class survey licence returns within 1 km of the site. Absence of a record does not indicate species absence, however, we are aware that newt surveying has been undertaken within 1 km of the site in 2014, with both palmate and smooth newt having been confirmed present.

Land within 500 m of the site is considered likely to include good habitat for GCN, including grassland, scrub, woodland and a number of ponds / lakes and water courses. There are approximately seven ponds within 250 m of the site, including the pond on site and second pond adjacent to the site, and a further four within 500 m of the site. Ponds within 250 m of the site, other than those on/adjacent to the site, include a set of inline ponds within woodland to the east and a pond with developed banks surrounded by residential properties to the southwest of the site. Ponds within the wider area have not been surveyed as part of the current assessment, therefore their conditions are unknown, but these water bodies may support GCN.

At the time of our visit the pond within the site was dry and appeared to have been dry for some time. This pond is not connected to a waterway and is heavily shaded by trees. The pond adjacent to the northeast corner of the site is connected to a shallow roadside drain and was holding water at the time of our visit first visit but then became dry in early summer. It is likely that the pond within the site holds water during prolonged and/or heavy rainfall.

The majority of the site, comprising very short cropped / grazed grassland is considered to have low potential for use by GNC, however, the small area of bramble scrub may offer some shelter and foraging, and the vegetated drainage ditch and adjacent hedgerow could offer shelter, foraging and commuting habitat.

In this case, the proposed development may result in the loss of a small area of potential GCN habitat and could put GCN at risk of harm during site clearance and redevelopment.

Further surveying and/or mitigation and licencing is recommended in this case. See further recommendations given in section 4.4 below.

### 3.3.5 Reptiles

The more widespread reptiles; grass snake, slow worm, viviparous lizard and adder, are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). It is an offence, amongst other things, to intentionally kill or injure any individual. The more restricted species; sand lizard and smooth snake, are fully

protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making them European Protected Species.

There are eight records of slow worm, 12 records of grass snake, and five records of common lizard within 1 km from site. Surveying completed by others on adjacent land deemed marginally better habitat confirmed a low population of grass snake, slow worm and viviparous lizard.

The grassland within the site is presently considered to be of low suitability for reptiles due to heavy grazing pressure. The small area of scrub within the southwest corner of the site may offer some shelter and foraging potential together with the vegetation along the eastern boundary of the site with Snowdrop Lane.

The proposed development will result in the clearance of the scrub habitat and the creation of two access points through the vegetation along the eastern boundary of the site. This is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on reptile habitat within the area but may present a risk to any individual reptiles during site clearance and development works, for which mitigation is recommended. See section 4.5 below.

### 3.3.6 *Birds*

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by UK law. It is an offence to take, kill or injure any wild bird, or to take, damage or destroy any nest (whilst being built or in use) or egg of any wild bird under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In addition to this protection, those birds and their young listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) must not be disturbed at or near the nest. Part I birds are protected at all times and Part II during the closed season only.

There are 105 record of rare, notable and protected species with 1 km of site, of which four species are included in the Birds Directive A1, 21 species are included in NERC section 41, and nine species are included in the WCA section 1.

The hedgerow, trees and bramble scrub within the site are considered to offer suitable roosting, nesting and foraging habitat for birds, however, the grassland which dominates the site is of low potential, due to current grazing pressure.

The proposed development will result in the loss of a small area of bramble scrub. The majority of hedging and trees will be retained, but there will be a change of use which may impact how birds use the site.

The proposed development is not considered likely to have a significant impact on birds, however, nesting birds may be impacted during the clearance and redevelopment of the site for which protection measures will be required. See section 4.6 below.

### 3.3.7 Bats

All species of bat are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (meaning all species of bat are both UK and European Protected Species).

It is illegal to:

- Kill, injure or capture (take) bats.
- Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not).
- Damage, destroy or obstruct access to a bat roost.

Disturbance is unlawful where bats ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear/nurture their young, hibernate or migrate is impaired or where local distribution or abundance is significantly impacted. This may occur where actions impact their roosts, flight lines or foraging areas.

There are records of Serotine Bat (*Eptesicus serotinus*), Alacathoe Bat (*Myotis alcathoe*), Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*), Brandt's Bat (*Myotis brandtii*), Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), and Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) within 1 km from site. Defra's Magic Map has found no Granted European Protected Species Applications within 1 km of the site.

The surrounding area is considered to include good habitat for bats including woodland, scrubland, grassland with hedgerows, watercourses and ponds.

The hedgerow with mature trees along the eastern boundary of the site with Snowdrop Lane, and the area of scrub which is connected to further field boundaries which extend out across the landscape, are considered to offer suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats. Some of the mature trees within the hedgerow on site and adjacent to the site include features such as holes and lifted bark which may offer suitable roosting habitat for bats.

The proposed development will result in the removal of two sections of hedging to permit two access points / driveway entrances, and the area of scrub within the southwest corner of the site. The trees to be removed under the current scheme have no/negligible roosting opportunities, but the proposed redevelopment and future use of the site could impact bats using the mature trees and hedgerows to roost and/or navigate.

It is considered likely that the hedgerow will maintain its function as a commuting and foraging habitat providing that vegetation and tree clearance is limited to a single width access point for each dwelling and artificial lighting, which can particularly impact brown long-eared bats recorded in the area, is restricted.

In this case, protection measures will be required to ensure that all trees with roosting potential are retained and protected, the function of the site boundary hedgerow with trees is retained, and that potential lighting impacts on bats are managed. See section 4.7 below.

### 3.3.8 *Badgers*

Badgers are protected in the UK under the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992 (as amended). It is an offence, amongst other things, to take, injure or kill a badger, or interfere with a badger sett (this includes intentionally or recklessly disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett). To avoid committing an offence a permit must be obtained to damage, destroy, obstruct or disturb a badger when it is occupying a badger sett.

There is suitable habitat to support badgers within 500 m of the site.

The bramble scrub within the southwest corner of site, could easily conceal a badger sett. However, no sett/s or field signs such as latrines, well-worn paths, or signs of feeding behaviour (snuffle holes) were observed during the site walkover to suggest that badgers may be present / use the site.

In this case, it is acknowledged that badgers may start using the site at any time. Therefore, precautionary protection measures should be put in place. See further recommendations given in section 4.8 below.

### 3.3.9 *Common/Hazel Dormice*

The common (or hazel) dormouse is protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making common dormice a European Protected Species. It is illegal to deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or disturb a dormouse or damage, destroy or obstruct dormouse breeding or resting place. Disturbance including obstruction and/or removal of habitat.

Typical common dormice habitat comprises deciduous woodland and scrub rich in hazel, flowers, pollen, fruit and insects, and hedgerows, the latter notably important for navigation/commuting. Dormice rarely descend to the ground, therefore any new gap/s or removal of hedgerow may result in habitat loss and/or obstruction.

There are 30 records of hazel dormice within 1 km of the site, most recently recorded in 2021. Surveying has been conducted in both 2009 and 2016 at Gravelye Lane, with presence confirmed. Gravelye Lane lies to the northwest of the site. There has been a significant amount of development on the eastern side of this road. Habitat to the east of Gravelye Lane is well connected to the site.

The hedgerow along the east boundary of site together with the area of scrub are both considered to offer suitable foraging, nesting and commuting habitat for dormice. Both the hedgerow and scrub are connected to further suitable habitat within the surrounding area which has been confirmed to support hazel dormice.

The proposed development includes the removal of the scrub and two sections of hedgerow to permit access, together with the removal of some adjacent trees. This is likely to impact any dormice which may use the site.

Further surveying has been instructed and is underway to confirm the likely presence / absence of this species and, if present, the likely impact on the species. See section 4.9 below.

### 3.3.10 *Other Protected and Notable Species hedgehog*

There are nine records for Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), a NERC species, and one for Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) within 1 km of the site.

The hedgerow and bramble scrub within the site is considered to offer suitable habitat for both these species. The majority of the hedgerow will be retained but two sections of the hedgerow and the bramble scrub will be removed. This is unlikely to have a significant impact on the local population of these species, however, there is the potential to cause harm during development, for which protection measures should be implemented, and compensation planting provided. See section 4.10 below.

### 3.3.11 *Non-native Invasive Species*

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) lists those non-native species that are established in the wild but which pose a conservation threat to native biodiversity and habitats. Schedule 9 aims to regulate further release of these species by making it a criminal offence to release them into the wild.

Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre has records of 15 plant and six animal Schedule 9 species and Sussex INNS within 1 km of the site. This includes records of Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

No non-native invasive species were identified on site during the site walkover assessment.

Standard protection measures are recommended in this case. See section 4.11 below.

## 4. MITIGATION

The preliminary ecological appraisal identified some habitats and features of ecological value with the potential to support rare and protected species for which further surveying and / or mitigation is recommended.

### 4.1 Habitats

The proposed development will result in the loss of existing grassland (which dominates the site), the loss of a small area of bramble scrub (which adjoins further scrub), and the removal of two sections of hedgerow, together with adjacent trees, in order to provide two new entrance points into the site.

Compensation for the loss of habitats should be delivered. The site is to be redeveloped for residential use with soft landscaping comprising garden habitat, likely to be laid to lawn, with possibly some shrubs and/or flower beds. This habitat will help to offset the loss of existing grassland. Features likely to be retained during residential use should be included within the plans for the soft landscaping scheme. Boundary hedging is most likely to be retained. It is therefore recommended that mixed species hedging is planted between and surrounding the two new plots. This will help to offset the loss of scrub habitat. As the hedging matures, it will offer foraging roosting and connectivity considered beneficial to wildlife and appropriate to the setting.

The proposed development will also impact the existing hedgerow with associated (roadside) drainage ditch along the eastern boundary of the site, the pond located within the site, and may impact the pond adjacent to the site. Protection, compensation and enhancement measures will be required in relation to these features.

Mitigation in relation to the hedgerow and trees is given in section 4.2 below.

The pond within the site should be retained. If it is to be retained in the long term, within the residential garden area, measures should be taken during development to enhance the visual appeal and function of the pond. This is likely to require the removal of some trees, excavation and possibly the addition of a liner.

The pond adjacent to the site is fed by the roadside ditch which is to be crossed with the addition of two new entrance points. The ditch should be culverted to maintain the flow of water through the ditch and to the pond. The retained section of ditch, including the associated vegetation, should be protected and soil/spoil should not be deposited within the ditch.

## **4.2 Trees and Hedgerow**

Six mature oaks found on the northeast side of site, two hedgerow sections within the northeast of site and one in the southeast side of site will be removed to create access to the proposed new dwellings.

It is recommended that new mixed species hedgerows are planted between and surrounding the two new residential plots. To further enhance the hedgerows, and to compensate for the removal of trees, it is recommended that standard trees are planted within the hedgerow lines. Careful consideration should be given to the location of these hedgerow trees to ensure that they have sufficient space to mature into full size standards and to ensure that they do not cause a nuisance to residents either by significant shading or crowding etc.

Protection measures for retained hedgerow and trees, and their root area should be implemented during development work, following advice given within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (GHA Trees Ltd, May 2025).

### **4.3 Invertebrates**

Compensation planting is recommended in relation to the loss of bramble scrub, trees and hedging within the site. New native, mixed species hedging with trees along the northern, western, southern and between the two plots should be incorporated into the proposed landscape plans, together with measures to enhance the pond habitat within the site.

Where possible, the removal of deadwood from the existing hedgerow should be avoided as this provides an important habitat for saprophytic invertebrates.

### **4.4 Amphibians**

The proposed development will impact habitat with the potential to support amphibians including GCN. Whilst there are no recent records of GCN within 1 km of the site, there is suitable terrestrial habitat together with approximately 7 ponds within 250 m of the site. That we are aware, no surveying of these ponds for habitat suitability or presence / likely absence has been undertaken.

There are presently two options available within Mid Sussex District where there is the potential for development to impact GCN. These including surveying and application for a licence from Natural England or, application to join the District Level Licence scheme run by Nature Space on behalf of Mid Sussex District Council, which will licence the scheme based on probability and likely scale of impact, without the need for surveying.

Surveying would usually include a habitat suitability assessment of all ponds within 250 m of the site (and potentially 500 m subject to access), followed by eDNA testing, presence likely absence surveying (usually bottle trapping Mid-March to June) and population surveying, subject to the findings at each stage of the assessment.

Application to the DLL negates the need for surveying. Nature Space should be contacted for advice on fees.

The preferred option in this case is likely to be influenced by project and survey time frames and costs.

### **4.5 Reptiles**

It is concluded that there will be no significant loss of habitat as a result of the proposed development of the site but, due to the presence of suitable habitat within the surrounding area, there is the potential for harm to be caused to reptiles during development works, including site clearance and ground works for which protection measures should be implemented.

Protection measures should include the use of reptile exclusion fencing, together with appropriate translocation effort to remove any reptiles which may be contained within the fencing prior to the start of works. The fencing should remain in place until the development works are complete, at which point the site will again form

part of the wider habitat. Protection measures may be secured through application of an appropriately worded condition of any planning approval if granted.

#### **4.6 Birds**

The proposed development will include the removal of two short sections of hedgerow, some trees and scrub which may be used by nesting birds. While the loss of this habitat is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on local bird populations, protection measures will be required to ensure that no nesting birds are disturbed by the proposed development, and compensation planting is included within the scheme to offset the loss of nesting potential.

Vegetation clearance for the protection of nesting birds should be undertaken outside of the nesting season (Feb - Aug). If any vegetation clearance is to be undertaken during the nesting season, a nest bird check will be required. Should nesting birds be active on site, works may need to be suspended until all chicks have fledged.

Compensation planting may be achieved with the provision of new native, mixed species hedging with trees along the boundaries and between the two plots.

#### **4.7 Bats**

The present scheme avoids the removal of trees with the potential to support roosting bats. However, it is recommended that protection measures are implemented during the redevelopment of the site to ensure that all trees with potential for roosting bats are retained and protected during the development of the site (see tree protection measures). No works should be undertaken on trees with the potential to support bats, without prior surveying and impact assessment.

The existing hedgerow with trees may be used as a foraging and commuting feature by the local bat population. Whilst the removal of two sections of hedging to provide access is unlikely to significantly diminish this feature, the change of site use could impact how bats use the site, notably where there is a significant increase in lighting.

A lighting scheme which minimises light spill onto the existing and proposed hedgerows and trees should be agreed with the Council for the protection of fauna, including bats, likely to use this habitat.

#### **4.8 Badgers**

No field signs of badgers were identified during the site walkover, however, it is acknowledged that badgers may start using the site at any time. Precautionary measures should therefore be implemented.

During site clearance, checks for badgers and/or signs of badgers should be undertaken especially in the bramble scrub habitat in the southwest corner of site. If the presence of badgers is suspected/confirmed, advice should be sought from a suitably experienced ecologist.

During development, protection measures for badgers should be implemented. Excavations should be covered overnight and any large excavation, which cannot be reasonably covered, should include a ramp for animals to escape. Excavations should be checked daily, and animals helped to escape or otherwise assisted as appropriate for their welfare.

#### **4.9 Common/Hazel Dormice**

Further surveying to confirm the presence / likely absence of dormice is required in this case in order to inform the requirement for mitigation and licencing, if present.

Should dormice use the site, it is considered that there is suitable potential for mitigation, however, the full scope of mitigation should be confirmed following further surveying.

Dormouse surveying has been commissioned and is underway.

#### **4.10 Other Protected and Notable Species**

Habitat which may be used by hedgehogs (a Priority Species) will be impacted by the proposed development. Protection measures should be implemented to avoid harm during site clearance, and new planting should be included within the scheme to compensate for the loss of bramble scrub and removal of two sections of the existing boundary hedgerow.

New, mixed, native species hedging along the site boundaries and between the plots is likely to create new habitat to support this (and other) species.

If any new evidence of protected species is discovered whilst site clearance and construction work is in progress, Natural England should be informed immediately and appropriate advice on how to deal with the situation should be sought from a qualified ecologist.

#### **4.11 Non-native Invasive Species**

All non-native invasive species should be appropriately dealt with to restrict their spread into the wild.

Biological protection measures should be implemented when transferring soil and plant material. This includes transferring vehicles and machinery on and off site, the disposal of soils and importation of soils which could contain plant matter, and the importing of new planting as part of the landscaping scheme.

### **5. ENHANCEMENT**

Some ecological enhancement should be included within the development site to secure biodiversity improvement beyond that of the existing site.

## **5.1 Pond**

The pond within the site should be enhanced for the benefit of local wildlife. This will also need to be delivered in a form suited to a residential garden habitat.

An assessment of the pond should be made in relation to its condition and potential to hold water. It may be necessary to install a lining to deliver a pond feature which holds water throughout the year which is likely to be more suited to a garden habitat.

Planting should include marginal, emergent and submerged aquatic species, and should avoid invasive species.

## **5.2 Bats and Birds**

- 5.2.1 Roosting and nesting features for both birds and bats should be included within the proposed development of the site. The features to be installed should include both bat boxes and nesting bird boxes and should be positioned onto suitable trees within the garden area and within the fabric of the proposed building to provide long-term roosting / nesting features within the site.

## **5.3 Sustainability**

Features which reduce pollution, reduce energy consumption, decrease waste, and water use, should be incorporated into the site design wherever possible. The following, together with other sustainability features (such as household appliances, which reduce energy consumption and water use), should be considered for inclusion within the design:

- The proposed residences should have water butts connected to the roof down pipe to collect water for watering plants within the garden.
- Composting facilities should be provided within the gardens.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The site (as existing) comprises a small paddock used for grazing (sheep). The grassland within the site is heavily grazed and poached, limiting its ecological value, however, there are other features within and adjacent to the site which are considered of ecological value and which may support notable and protected species.
- 6.2 It is proposed to develop the site to include two detached residential dwellings with associated gardens, parking and access from Snowdrop Lane.
- 6.3 The development will include the removal of two sections of hedging and adjacent trees to permit the development of two new access points, and will include the removal of a small area of bramble scrub from the southwest corner of the site. There are two ponds, one within and one immediately adjacent to the site. Both

ponds are to be retained but will be impacted by the proposed development for which protection measures will be required.

- 6.4 Further surveying has been recommended in relation to hazel / common dormice which may use the hedgerow and/or scrub habitat, and further surveying or a district level licence is recommended in relation to great crested newts. Further surveying / checks will be required for nesting birds, if site clearance works are scheduled during the nesting season for overriding reasons.
- 6.5 The site is considered to have some, but limited, potential for use by reptiles for which protection measures are recommended, but the proposed development is considered unlikely to result in the loss of any significant reptile habitat. Protection and compensation measures have also been recommended in relation to hedgehogs.
- 6.6 Compensation measures have been recommended in relation to the removal of hedgerow and scrub habitat, and the potential impacts on invertebrates, and enhancement measures have been recommended in relation to the existing pond habitat.
- 6.7 Table 6.1 includes a summary of recommendations included within this report.

**Table 6.1: Summary Table**

| Habitat / Species  | Further surveying | Protection measures* | Compensation measures | Enhancement measures |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Ponds              | ✓                 | ✓                    | x                     | ✓                    |
| Hedgerow and Trees | Completed         | ✓                    | ✓                     | x                    |
| Planting           | x                 | x                    | x                     | ✓                    |
| Invertebrates      | x                 | x                    | ✓                     | ✓                    |
| Amphibians         | ✓                 | ?                    | ?                     | ?                    |
| Reptiles           | x                 | ✓                    | x                     | x                    |
| Birds              | x                 | ✓                    | ✓                     | ✓                    |
| Bats               | ✓                 | ?                    | ?                     | ✓                    |
| Badgers            | x                 | ✓                    | x                     | x                    |
| Dormouse           | ✓                 | ?                    | ?                     | ?                    |
| Other              | x                 | ✓                    | ✓                     | ✓                    |
| Non-native species | x                 | ✓                    | x                     | x                    |

✓ - requirement confirmed, X – no requirement, ? – waiting results of further surveying

\*including pre-commencement checks

- 6.8 Where further surveying and mitigation, as recommended within this and subsequent reporting, is included within the development design and schedule, protected and notable species may continue to use the site. Where enhancement is included within the design, there may be scope for the ecological enhancement of the site.

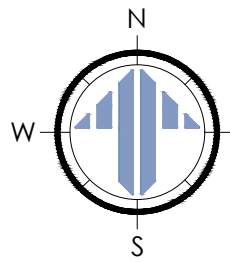
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## **APPENDIX A**

### Site Location and Existing Site Plans

FOR PLANNING  
PURPOSES ONLY

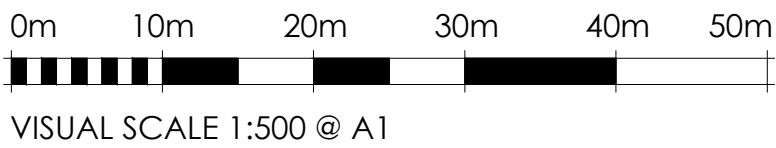
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DRAFT



SITE BLOCK PLAN - AS EXISTING  
SCALE @ 1:500 ON AN A1 SHEET



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|      |       |     |            |  |      |
| *    | *     | *   | *          |  | *    |
| REV. | DATE. | BY. | AMENDMENT. |  | CHK. |

PLANNING



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NOTES:  
DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING UNLESS FOR PLANNING PURPOSES.  
CHECK ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE BEFORE ANY WORK IS COMMENCED.  
ALL GOODS MATERIALS AND WORKMANSHIP MUST CONFORM WITH  
CURRENT BUILDING REGULATIONS, BRITISH STANDARDS AND CODES OF  
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CLIENT:  
Mr. D. Hill

PROJECT:  
Pascott's Farm  
Snowdrop Lane  
Lindfield, West Sussex  
RH16 2QE

DRAWING:  
Site Block Plan As Existing

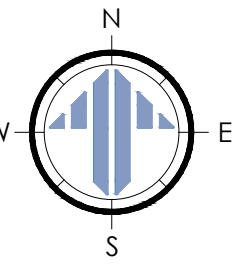
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| JOB NO.<br>GH814 | DRAWING NO.<br>D.PL.08 | REV.<br>* |
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## **APPENDIX B**

### **Proposed Site Plans**

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



**DRAFT**



SITE BLOCK PLAN - AS PROPOSED  
SCALE @ 1:500 ON AN A1 SHEET

|      |          |     |                        |      |
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| A    | 09.05.25 | RH  | Entrances repositioned | *    |
| REV. | DATE.    | BY. | AMENDMENT.             | CHK. |

## PLANNING



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CLIENT.

Mr. D. Hill

PROJECT.

Pascott's Farm  
Snowdrop Lane  
Lindfield, West Sussex  
RH16 2QE

DRAWING.

Site Block Plan As Proposed

|                     |                        |                                |
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| DATE.<br>26.03.2025 | SCALE AT A1.<br>1:500  | DRAWN BY. RH<br>CHECKED BY. MC |
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## **APPENDIX C**

### Photographs



**Photograph 1 :**

View of grassland and post and rail fence from the north boundary looking south.



**Photograph 2:**

Northeast corner of site.



**Photograph 3:**

View of the eastern site boundary from within the site looking south.



**Photograph 4:**

View from the southeast corner of the site looking north towards the pond area.



**Photograph 5 :**

East boundary of site looking north from a position north of the pond.



**Photograph 6**

View of the site looking south towards the pond.



**Photograph 7:**

Dead wood within the seasonal pond area which was dry at the time of our visit.



**Photograph 8:**

Pond immediately adjacent to north section of eastern boundary of site. The pond is shaded by a mature oak tree, surrounded by vegetation and adjacent to Snowdrop Lane.

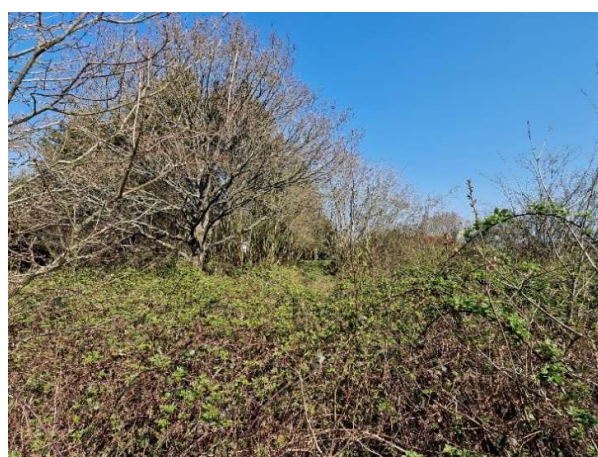


**Photograph 9 and 10:** View of eastern side of hedgerow adjacent to road.

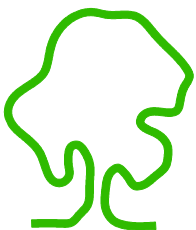


**Photograph 11:**

Standing dead wood (holly), present in hedgerow eastern boundary of site.



**Photographs 12 and 13:** Scrub area dominated by bramble.



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