

**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF LAND & BUILDINGS AT
HURSTMEAD LEWES ROAD HAYWARDS HEATH RH17 7SN
DECEMBER 2025**



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1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land and buildings at Hurstmead, Lewes Road, Haywards Heath, RH17 7SN.

The survey and report were commissioned by Nigel Jeffrey on behalf of the client.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Daytime Bat Assessment were conducted by Sean McMinn from Marsh Environmental on the 17th of December 2025, a suitably qualified ecologist and licensed bat ecologist a trained bat surveyor (>25yrs) and licensed by Natural England (Bat License number 2015-11447-CLS-CLS). Sean is also a Natural England Bat Warden, License Number 2015-1446.

Sean McMinn has been working as a professional Ornithologist and Ecologist for over thirty years both in the UK and overseas and was a consultant Wildlife Inspector for Defra's Global Wildlife Division for 17 years. He has a particularly diverse knowledge of British Fauna and Flora. Sean has been a regular contributor to various magazines, journals and periodicals throughout this period and is a regular advisor on conservation and legislative issues for both government and non-government organizations. Sean is also a holder of several protected species' licences that includes bats, great crested newts, barn owl, marsh harrier and peregrine falcon amongst several others.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Hurstmead is located east of Haywards Heath, in West Sussex. The site is set in a residential landscape of large houses with mature gardens, hedgerow and woodland.

The site survey area consists of the main house and garage, a mix of sparsely vegetated ground, (cleared areas) hard standing, tennis court and individual/scattered trees and scrub. The site is located at grid reference: TQ 34422311.

Site Plan



FIGURE 1: HURSTMEAD LOCATION AND APPROXIMATE SURVEY AREA BOUNDARY



3. METHODOLOGY

Site Survey

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Hurstmead, Lewes Road, Haywards, Heath, RH17 7SN was undertaken on the 17th of December 2025. The survey area concentrated on the land as defined on the site plan and in red on figures 1 & 2.

The habitat survey was undertaken in general accordance with the UK Habitat Classification and standard best practice as recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management in their Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM 2023). A basic habitat plan illustrates the results in figure 2.

FIGURE 2: HURSTMEAD PHASE 1 SURVEY HABITAT MAP



4. RESULTS – WHAT WE FOUND

Objectives

The objectives of this commission were to:

1. Conduct a baseline ecological survey and appraisal of the above site and identify notable ecological factors/features;
2. prepare a 'Phase 1' Habitat Map with Target Notes to recognised standards;
3. produce a written summary of results;
4. provide appropriate recommendations for mitigation, biodiversity protection/ enhancement, etc.

Limitations

It should be noted that, whilst the investigation of the site was appropriately intensive within the intended framework of the commission, and we feel it is unlikely that significant matters have been overlooked, a single visit will inevitably miss species not apparent on the date of survey by reason of seasonality, mobility, habits or chance. The month of December is outside the optimal survey period for many taxa of nature conservation interest in this part of the United Kingdom

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Habitats & vegetation (NB. Please be aware that several designated habitat types and many plants enjoy legal protection in Britain.)	
General description	Hurstmead is located east of Haywards Heath, in West Sussex. The site is set in a residential landscape of large houses with mature gardens, hedgerow and woodland. The site survey area consists of the main house and garage, a mix of bare earth (cleared areas), hard-standing, individual/scattered trees and scrub. The site is located at grid reference: TQ 34422311.
Target Note (TN) 1-2 (for location of TNs please see plan above)	Approximate location of trees with potential bat roosting features.
Target Note 3	Area of hanging tiles associated with the proposed extension.
Target Note 4--6	Area of scrub, line of trees and species poor hedge

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Statutory designations (on/near)	<u>Information from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside)</u> Information on this site from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) is as follows: The nearest Statutory Designated Site is Chailey Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 3.9km southeast of Hurstmead at the nearest point.
Non-statutory designations (on/near)	<u>Information from MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside)</u> Information on this site from MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) is as follows: There is Greenhill Shaw Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland 90m south of Hurstmead.
Notable hedgerows, woodland or scrub	There is an area of scrub with scattered trees (manly oak with some maple and hornbeam) bordering the main road. At least two of the oaks had loose bark and or holes in the branches or trunks that provide roosting habitat for bats and also potential nesting bird habitat.
Ecologically notable trees (e.g. veteran, wildlife significant) ¹	There is an area of scrub with scattered trees (manly oak with some maple and hornbeam) bordering the main road. At least two of the oaks had loose bark and or holes in the branches or trunks that provide roosting habitat for bats and also potential nesting bird habitat. Although not veteran trees they have potential wildlife significance.
Ponds/water courses	There are no ponds or water courses on site. There is a pond within Greenhill Shaw 128m southeast of Hurstmead.
Notable communities	None observed on site.
Notable vascular plants	None observed on site.
Notable bryophytes	None present on site.
Notable lichens	None present on site.
Notable fungi	None present on site.
Other notable habitats/vegetation	None.
Features that should be retained	Trees and hedging where possible.
Mammals (NB. Several species and their habitats have very strict protection in British/European law.)	

¹ Please note that we do not check TPO status as this is a landscape/amenity planning classification.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Badger	There was no evidence of badgers during the survey and within the curtilage of the development however it is possible they are present in the wider area.
Otter	No suitable habitat on site.
Other mustelids	None observed.
Bats	The main house is substantial that is mostly brick built with a peg tiled roof covering and extensive hanging tiles on external walls and dormers. Examination of the tiles revealed numerous tiles uneven or lifted and or missing in places providing potential bats roosting features. The soffits were all intact and examination of the roof space where present found no evidence of bats, with no droppings or urine marks and intact cobwebs indicating a lack of movement within the roof space. The majority of trees on site were subject to a basic ground level examination for potential bats roosting features, the majority of which did not exhibit any, however there were at least two trees in the area of laurel scrub between the house and the main road that exhibited holes in the limbs and trunks and cracks in the bark that provide potential bat roosting opportunities. It is understood these trees are to remain. The garage was also examined as it also has a peg tiled roof however they were all intact with very limited bat roosting features. The surrounding area is considered of good bat foraging habitat with linkages to pockets of ancient woodland.
Water vole	No suitable habitat on site.
Common or hazel dormouse	There is no habitat on site suitable for this species.
Deer	None observed however they may occur in the wider area.
Hedgehog	May use the site for foraging as suitable habitat exists on site and neighbouring gardens.
Shrews	May use the site for foraging/breeding as suitable habitat is present and in neighbouring gardens.
Others	Other mammals such as fox, voles, rat and mice may use the site for foraging/breeding as suitable habitat exists.
Birds (NB. With the exception of eleven derogated pest or very common species, the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 and amendments) gives protection to all wild birds in Britain from killing, injuring or taking as well as taking, damaging or destroying nests in use or being built, and taking or destroying eggs. Many species are also protected by European and international statutes. ²⁾	
Schedule 1	None.

² Please also see http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/status_explained.aspx and <http://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/u38/downloads/home-news/2011-11/SUKB%202011%20final.pdf> for red and amber lists etc., and explanations.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Red list	None recorded during the survey.
Active nests	No active nests found; survey undertaken outside of the main nesting season in the UK. It is considered likely that a range of the common garden species may use the site and surrounding area to nest as suitable breeding bird habitat is present in trees, hedgerow and scrub on site.
Other	Blackbird, Blue tit and wren were seen on or adjacent to the site. There are likely to be a greater range of bird species in the general area.
Herpetofauna (NB. The grass snake, slow-worm, viviparous (common) lizard and adder (viper) are all protected from intentional killing and injury under Schedule 5, Section 9(1), of the Wildlife and Countryside Act as amended/reinforced by the CROW Act 2000. They are also protected under Schedule 5, Section 9(5) which prohibits selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, or advertising for sale, any live or dead animal, or any part of, or anything derived from the species. Other species and their habitats have stricter protection at national and European levels.)	
Adder	None and unlikely in this area.
Grass snake	The current onsite (bare earth) habitats present on site are unsuitable for reptiles and amphibians in general.
Slow-worm	The current onsite (bare earth) habitats present on site are unsuitable for reptiles and amphibians in general.
Common lizard	The current onsite (bare earth) habitats present on site are unsuitable for reptiles and amphibians in general.
Rarer reptiles	None (not found in this area).
Great crested newt	Unlikely on site with the absence of any aquatic habitats.
Natterjack toad	No (not found in this area).
Other amphibia	Unlikely within the immediate garden zone.
Fish	
Significant fishery	None on site.
Macro-invertebrates (NB. Several species enjoy legal protection.)	
Notable assemblage (terrestrial)	None present or indicated on site.
Notable assemblage (aquatic)	None.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Crayfish	None present as there are no suitable aquatic habitats.
Roman snail	None observed.
Lesser silver water-beetle	None.
Stag beetle	None.
Mining bees	None observed on site or signs of them.
Other notable spp or groups	None present on site.
Notable invertebrate habitat	None present on site.
“Invasive” species (There are an increasing number of these being listed by authorities, some subject to regulatory control.)	
Japanese knotweed (or related <i>Fallopia</i> spp.)	There is Japanese Knotweed on site and is to be cleared and treated.
Giant hogweed	None present on site.
Himalayan balsam	None present on site.
Tree-of-heaven	None present on site.
New Zealand pigmyweed	None present on site.
Floating pennywort	None present on site.
Parrot’s feather	None present on site.
Water fern (<i>Azolla</i>)	None present on site.
Weeds Act natives (common ragwort, creeping and spear thistles, curled and broad-leaved docks)	None.
Other exotics that may cause problems such as <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> , <i>Buddleia davidii</i> .	There is a stand of bamboo and occasional rhododendron on site.

ITEM	OBSERVATIONS
Invasive animals (signal crayfish, killer shrimp, oak processionary moth, harlequin ladybird, zebra mussel, grey squirrel <i>etc.</i>)	None.
<i>Phytophthora ramorum</i> and other serious plant diseases (sudden oak death, <i>etc.</i>)	None observed on site.
Policy	
Are there any known conflicts with local planning biodiversity policy	None anticipated.
Are there any known conflicts with national planning biodiversity policy	None anticipated.
Are there any known conflicts with European or international biodiversity policy	None anticipated.

GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION (Geodiversity is a material planning consideration)	YES/NO	ACTION REQUIRED IF “YES”
Are there any features of geological importance on the development site?	Unknown	
Are there any features of geological importance adjacent to the development site or that might be affected by the development (during or post construction)?	Unknown	

FIGURE 3: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD AT HURSTMEAD

Entrance and line of conifers



View west side of property



View south over tennis court



Oak with bat roosting features



View southeast



Aerial view of tennis court



Garage



Rear view of property



Scattered trees



Front view of house



View east



Internal view of roof



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are to meet compliance with current legislation, planning policy and best practice as recognised by the various statutory authorities. They are intended to fulfill ecological planning formalities and facilitate the implementation of the project.

FURTHER WORK LIKELY TO BE NEEDED	
From observations of this walk-over examination, is further work likely to be needed regarding notable/protected species, habitats, planning policy, biodiversity duty or related regulatory compliance?	YES
Work required if "yes":	Reason
Bats- The main house exhibits potential bat roosting features, mainly between gaps in the peg tiled roof covering and gaps between hanging tiles on external walls. There is an extension proposed on the west side of the property which would result in a small surface area of 6.3sqm of hanging tiles to be removed. Although the hanging tiles are intact on this side of the property with no gaps where bats could crawl under, it is recommended as a precaution that the small, tiled section in this area to be removed is done so under the supervision of a licensed bat ecologist, alternatively undertake the removal of the external tiles between the months of November to March when bats are unlikely to be present. In the absence of the former recommendations, it would be necessary to undertake an emergence/return survey of the section of hanging tiles to be removed between the months for bat activity (May-September) with peak months June-August to establish presence /absence.	Compliance with law protecting active birds' nests.
Birds – The site has some potential to support nesting birds, in trees and hedgerow on site therefore any clearance required should be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (February – September). If this is not possible a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to clearance.	Compliance with law protecting active birds' nests.
If there are any steep-sided excavations created during construction, please ensure they are covered overnight or provided with ramps to prevent any mammals becoming trapped. Re-fill such excavations as soon as feasible.	Prevention of cruelty.
Avoid unnecessary negative impacts of new lighting at night, e.g. on bats, invertebrates, plants, night sky. Minimise the hours when lighting is used, avoid "spillage" by using directional down-lighting, reduce brightness of necessary illumination and keep light from shining on any potential bat roost entries, mammal holes, etc. Avoid additional lighting that might affect the nearby woodland habitats.	Reducing ecological impact and compliance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 125.
Create new wildlife habitats appropriate to the site's context, e.g. through the use of log piles, "wild" corners and native planting; install bird, bat and invertebrate	Best practice and compliance with government policy on biodiversity protection and enhancement (see Biodiversity enhancement

FURTHER WORK LIKELY TO BE NEEDED

boxes and incorporate these into the project's landscape/building design scheme. (We can provide specific recommendations for models and siting on request, but they must be of good quality and durable.) Bat and bird boxes must be inspected annually and replaced when needed (usually after ten years). The development plans for the site should include the provision of 'hedgehog gates' at the bases of any boundary fencing to allow free movement of hedgehogs through the landscape.	below).
Use native planting (preferably of local origin and reflecting local botany) wherever feasible in all landscaping. Where exotic species are planted, always avoid invasive species and choose those with wildlife value such as for nectar or shelter.	Biodiversity enhancement and helping to assure "no net loss".
Embody Green Infrastructure protocols in landscaping and ensure ecological linkage out from and into the site.	Ecological connectivity and biodiversity protection/ enhancement.
Ensure that the "carbon footprint" of all aspects of the project and its future operation is compliant with current best practice. This may include taking appropriate steps to avoid or reduce the use of fossil fuels, employing scientifically sound carbon offset/CO ₂ sequestration and instating renewable energy technologies. Ensure the measures agreed are quantified, independently verified and monitored.	To follow government and international policy on climate change.
Wherever possible, retain mature trees and established native hedgerows on site and at the periphery by designing around them. Protect trees in line with BS5837 and do not remove ivy, mistletoe, standing dead wood, snags or rot unless there is a clear and material safety risk or presence of a serious pathogen. (Ask for advice on pathogens from a qualified silvicultural ecologist if in doubt.)	Tree and biodiversity protection; BS5837: 2012 <i>Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction</i> .

6. BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS

Ecological enhancements should where possible be included in the proposed development plans to contribute towards the intended objectives of planning legislation below:

The UK Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged—(Para 118). The design and implementation of habitat enhancements can also be used to contribute towards the "Home Quality Mark" or similar accreditation, should this be a consideration for this site?

Generic Biodiversity Enhancements for the site could include some of the following:

- Provision of ready-made bird boxes a mix of open-fronted and hole-nesting boxes constructed from woodcrete suitable for starlings and other hole nesting species).
- Provision of bat boxes on buildings and trees.
- Provision of reptile / amphibian hibernacula (as stand-alone or within new walls by creating recesses into wall structures).
- Provision of log piles for invertebrates (including stag beetles), reptiles and amphibians.
- Use native planting (preferably of local origin) in all landscaping. Where exotic species are planted, always avoid invasive species and choose those with wildlife value such as for nectar or shelter
- Priority should be given to species present on the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan species list, and where there is the potential for that species to occur on site.
- The list includes great crested newt, common toad, viviparous lizard, slow-worm, grass snake, adder, house sparrow, tree sparrow, hedgehog, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, brown hare, water vole, harvest mouse, dormouse, otter as well as many more species.
<http://sxbrc.org.uk>

7. REFERENCES

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