



# Ecological Impact Assessment

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Agricultural Barns, Westhouse  
Farm, Sayers Common

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|                      |                                                                                                  |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report</b>        | Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)                                                              |
| <b>Site Name</b>     | Agricultural Barns, Westhouse Farm, Sayers Common, Hassocks                                      |
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| <b>Client</b>        | Riverdale Developments Limited                                                                   |
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## Executive Summary

Ecosupport Ltd was instructed by Riverdale Developments Limited to conduct ecological surveys in support of an EclA of a parcel with agricultural buildings at Westhouse Farm, Sayers Common, Hassocks. This was required in order to identify any potentially important ecological features that may be affected by the proposed development. As part of this assessment, the following surveys were undertaken:

- 2km desktop search submitted to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) (December 2024)
- Walkover survey assigning UK Habs habitat types and assessing for protected / notable species suitability (November 2024)
  - Updated Walkover Survey (May 2025)
- Bat emergence survey of the buildings present on site (May - July 2025)
- Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment (February 2025)

The following ecological constraints have been identified within the site:

- Soprano Pipistrelle day roost present in B4
- Low potential for foraging and commuting bats
- Potential for foraging and commuting Badgers
- Low potential for reptiles
- Low potential for Great Crested Newts
- Moderate potential for breeding and nesting birds
- Low potential for Hedgehog

Measures for mitigation, compensation and ecological enhancements are proposed in **Section 6.0** to ensure there will be no residual adverse impacts and to ensure the proposed development will result in a net gain for biodiversity.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Brief

Ecosupport Ltd was commissioned by Riverdale Developments Limited to conduct an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of a parcel with agricultural buildings at Westhouse Farm, Sayers Common, Hassocks (here after referred to as 'the site'). The purpose of this survey was to assess any ecological impacts that may arise as a result of a proposed residential development. The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- Identify and classify any priority habitats;
- Assess the ecological value of the site;
- Identify any signs of protected species and potential features that may support them
- Make recommendations for further survey work as necessary;
- Make recommendations for any necessary ecological avoidance and mitigation where possible.

***NB. If the works do not take place within 18 months of this report<sup>1</sup> then the findings of this survey will no longer be considered valid and certain aspects may require updating.***

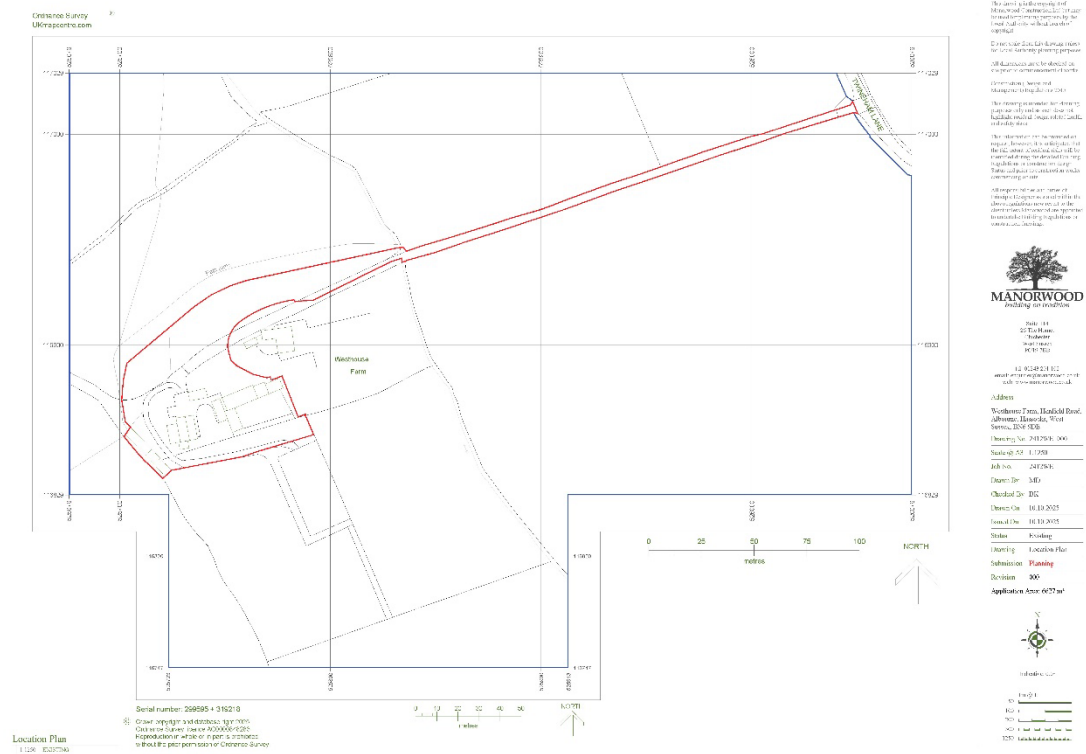
### 1.2 Site Description & Location

The site comprises a number of buildings used for agricultural and storage purposes, with the surrounding grassland, hedge and access track at Westhouse Farm, Sayers Common, BN6 9DE (centred on OS grid reference TQ 25753 16878) (**Fig 1**). The site is bound by large fields of modified grassland, some of which are used for grazing horses, with hedgerows present throughout these fields. Along the eastern boundary, the site is bound by Henfield Road (B2116) at the access track while the main site area is bound by the residential dwelling and garden to the east associated with Westhouse Farm. The surrounding environment consists of agricultural fields and occasional areas of developed land, with the village Albourne situated southeast and Sayers Common situated northeast.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

**Figure 1.** Redline boundary of the site



### 1.3 Proposed Development

The proposals entail the renovation of existing agricultural barns into modern units (**Figure 2**).

**Figure 2.** Proposed site layout (Manorwood, 2025) (Drawing No. 2412WE\_002)



## 2.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY

### 2.1 Legislation

#### 2.1.1 *The Environment Act (2021)*

The Environment Act 2021 is the UK's new legislation for environmental protection in the UK, which includes protection of water quality, clean air, and biodiversity among other key protections. This Act provides the government power to set targets to reach long-term aims relating to the environment, which will be periodically reviewed and updated. This legislation also establishes a new environmental watchdog organisation, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), which will hold the government accountable on environmental issues.

Part 6 of The Environment Act relates to nature and biodiversity. This section makes provision for biodiversity net gain to be a condition of planning permission in England and a requirement for nationally significant infrastructure projects. Biodiversity net gain will require maintenance for a period of at least 30 years after the completion of enhancement works to be achieved.

The legislation also includes updates to existing environmental legislation, such as the NERC Act 2006, to strengthen biodiversity enhancement rather than just conservation and includes a requirement for local, or relevant, authorities to publish biodiversity reports. Further, The Environment Act places a requirement on responsible authorities to prepare local nature recovery strategies, which will outline nature conservation sites and priorities and opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity within the local area. Within England, the legislation also provides Natural England with the power to publish 'species conservation strategies' and 'protected site strategies' to identify activities that may affect a species or site's status and outline their opinions on measures that would be appropriate to avoid, mitigate or compensate any adverse impacts.

#### 2.1.2 *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019)*

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transposes the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into UK domestic law. It provides protection for sites and species deemed to be of conservation importance across Europe. It is an offence to deliberately capture, kill or injure species listed in Schedule 2 or to damage or destroy their breeding sites or shelter. It is also illegal to deliberately disturb these species in such a way that is likely to significantly impact on the local distribution or abundance or affect their ability to survive, breed and rear or nurture their young.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (EU Exit) makes changes to the three existing instruments which transpose the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives so that they continue to work (are operable) upon the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). These include The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This instrument also amends section 27 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ensure existing protections continue. The intention is to ensure habitat and species protection and standards as set out under the Nature Directives are implemented in the same way or an equivalent way when the UK exits the EU.

In order for activities that would be likely to result in a breach of species protection under the regulations to legally take place, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence must first be obtained from Natural England.

### *2.1.3 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)*

This is the primary piece of legislation by which biodiversity is protected within the UK. Protected fauna and flora are listed under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. They include all species of bats, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost or to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost. Similarly, this Act makes it an offence to kill or injure any species of British reptiles and also makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy their eggs and nests (whilst in use or being built).

The Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) states that it is an offence to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9 art II of the Act. This list over 30 plants including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Parrots Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*).

### *2.1.4 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)*

This Act strengthens the Wildlife & Countryside Act by the addition of "reckless" offences in certain circumstances, such as where there is the likelihood of protected species being present. The Act places a duty on Government Ministers and Departments to conserve biological diversity and provides police with stronger powers relating to wildlife crimes.

### *2.1.5 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)*

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires that public bodies have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. This means that Planning authorities must consider biodiversity when planning or undertaking activities. Section 41 of the Act lists species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the *UK Post – 2010 Biodiversity Framework*.

### *2.1.6 Protection of Badgers Act*

The Protection of Badgers Act (1992) relates to the welfare of Badgers (*Meles meles*) as opposed to nature conservation considerations. The Act prevents:

- The wilful killing, injury, ill treatment or taking of Badgers and / or
- Interference with a Badger sett
- Damaging or destroying all or part of a sett
- Causing a dog to enter a set and
- Disturbing a Badger while it is occupying a sett

Provisions are included within the Act to allow for the lawful licensing of certain activities that would otherwise constitute an offence under the Act.

## 2.2 Policy

### 2.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity, the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, minimising impacts on and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity including by incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

The NPPF states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and land should be allocated with the least environmental or amenity value and take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale.

To protect and enhance biodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The NPPF states determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a SSSI, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSIs;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Potential SPAs and possible SACs listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites required as compensatory measures for the previous should be given the same protection as habitats sites.

#### *2.2.2 Local – Mid Sussex District Council (2018)*

Adopted in March 2018 the District Plan states nearly 50% of the District is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and over 10% is within the South Downs National Park. Mid Sussex is the tenth most wooded District in the South East and two-thirds of this woodland is classified as 'ancient'. It also has many sites valued for their biodiversity including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

Strategic Objectives to protect and enhance the environment include:

1. To promote development that makes the best use of resources and increases the sustainability of communities within Mid Sussex, and its ability to adapt to climate change
2. To promote well located and designed development that reflects the District's distinctive towns and villages, retains their separate identity and character and prevents coalescence
3. To protect valued landscapes for their visual, historical and biodiversity qualities
4. To protect valued characteristics of the built environment for their historical and visual qualities
5. To create and maintain easily accessible green infrastructure, green corridors and spaces around and within the towns and villages to act as wildlife corridors, sustainable transport links and leisure and recreational routes
6. To ensure that development is accompanied by the necessary infrastructure in the right place at the right time that supports development and sustainable communities. This includes the provision of efficient and sustainable transport networks

#### **DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows**

The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected.

Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/ or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted.

Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and
- prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and
- where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and
- has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and
- takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and
- does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets.

Trees, woodland and hedgerows form part of the District's green infrastructure, and in particular, are important for health and well-being, biodiversity, and increasing resilience to the effects of climate change. Ancient woods are irreplaceable wildlife habitats with complex ecological conditions that have developed over centuries. They contain a wide range of wildlife including rare species, however, because the resource is limited and highly fragmented, ancient woodland and their associated wildlife are particularly vulnerable and must be protected from damaging effects of adjacent and nearby land uses that could threaten the integrity of the habitat and survival of its special characteristics.

The District Plan recognises this contribution and will support the protection of trees, woodland and hedgerows, as well as encouraging new planting. Development will be required to incorporate trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design and landscaping scheme.

All hedgerows on farmland and open land are protected and consent is required from the District Council to remove them. The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 also define 'important' hedgerows as being of particular archaeological, historical, wildlife or landscape value.

#### DP38: Biodiversity

Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development:

- Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance, manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and
- Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological

enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and

- Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and
- Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and
- Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation; nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas. Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.

Policy DP38 'Biodiversity' reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (section 11) where it relates to biodiversity and the natural environment. It takes into account the duty on the District Council to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Development proposals should be informed by local ecological and geological evidence and national guidance. Local ecological evidence should include protected and notable species as well as considering the potential effects of the development on the habitats and species on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 section 41 list.

DP17: Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC)  
In order to prevent adverse effects on the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC, new development likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other development, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Within a 400 metres buffer zone around Ashdown Forest, mitigation measures are unlikely to be capable of protecting the integrity of the SPA and, therefore, residential development will not be permitted.

Within a 7km zone of influence around the Ashdown Forest SPA, residential development leading to a net increase in dwellings will be required to contribute to mitigation through:

- 1) The provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to the minimum level of 8Ha per 1,000 net increase in population; or a financial contribution to SANGs elsewhere; or the provision of bespoke mitigation; and
- 2) A financial contribution to the Ashdown Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy.

Large schemes proposed adjacent or close to the boundary of the 7km zone of influence may require mitigation for the SPA. Such proposals for development will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Where bespoke mitigation is provided, these measures will need to be in place before occupation of development and must be managed and maintained in perpetuity. The effectiveness of such mitigation will need to be demonstrated prior to approval of the development. Bespoke mitigation will need to be discussed and agreed by the District Council as the competent authority following advice from Natural England.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Desk Study

##### 3.1.1 Data Request

A data request was submitted to the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) to ascertain any records held of nature conservation designations and protected species within 2km of the boundary of the site.

The data search covered:

- Statutory designated sites.
- Non-statutory designations such as Local Wildlife Sites.
- Records of protected and notable species.

*NB the data request was submitted as part of the larger wider development that will be part of a separate application. Therefore, the boundary on the data maps is shown larger. As this application site lies approximately in the centre of the wider site it is still considered accurate and the data only encompasses a larger search area.*

##### 3.1.2 Waterbodies

Any ponds located within 250m of the proposed development were searched for using Ordnance Survey maps and available aerial images.

#### 3.2 Field Survey

##### 3.2.1 Habitats

The field survey work which forms the basis of the findings of this report was carried out by Adam Jessop MSc MCIEEM (Principal Ecologist with Ecosupport Ltd) and Louise Davies BSc (Hons) (Project Ecologist with Ecosupport Ltd) on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024, with an Updated Walkover Survey later conducted on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Habitats on site pre-development were identified in accordance with the categories specified for a UK Habitats survey, using Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). This was chosen as an appropriate habitat categorisation system as it fits within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation.

UKHab represents a method for classifying habitats which has been produced to provide an up-to-date replacement for the current industry standard phase 1 survey method. One of the main benefits of UKHab is that it supports the evaluation of habitats for EclA and no net loss/net gain analysis, providing a more detailed interpretation of habitat types, which is important for assessing the distinctiveness and condition of habitats against which biodiversity net gain is measured.

The standard survey methodology has been 'extended' in this report to include the following:

- Floral species lists for each identified habitat;
- Descriptions of habitat structure, the evidence of management and a broad assessment of habitat condition;

- Mapping of additional habitat types (e.g. hardstanding);
- Identification of Priority Habitats under Section 41 of the NERC Act;
- Evidence of, or potential for, the presence of certain species/groups

### 3.2.2 Badger

#### 3.2.2.1 Walkover Survey

The site was thoroughly searched for evidence of use by Badgers (*Meles meles*) with the specific aim of identifying the presence and location of any setts. In accordance with the *Badgers and Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing* (Natural England, 2011) guidance, the survey accounted for a 30m from the site's boundary (observed where possible i.e. does not conflict with private dwellings). Evidence of Badgers could include latrines, dung pits, feeding remains and foraging evidence, trails and setts.

### 3.2.3 Bats

#### 3.2.3.1 PRA (Buildings)

An assessment of all buildings on site was undertaken by Adam Jessop during the initial walkover survey under class level 2 survey licence number (2015-13366-CLS-CLS). This followed BCT (Collins, J. (ed), 2023) best practice survey guidelines searching for any PRFs / evidence of bat occupation and assigning a roost potential assessment as outlined in **Table 1** below.

**Table 1.** Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of a built structure for roosting bats (reproduced from BCT (Collins, J. (ed) 2023)).

| Suitability       | Description of Roosting Habitats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Negligible</b> | No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Low</b>        | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions <sup>2</sup> and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a large number of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats). |
| <b>Moderate</b>   | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).                                                                |
| <b>High</b>       | A structure 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. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.                                                                                                      |

### 3.2.3.2 Emergence Surveys

A number of dusk emergence and dawn re-entry surveys were undertaken for the various buildings on site.

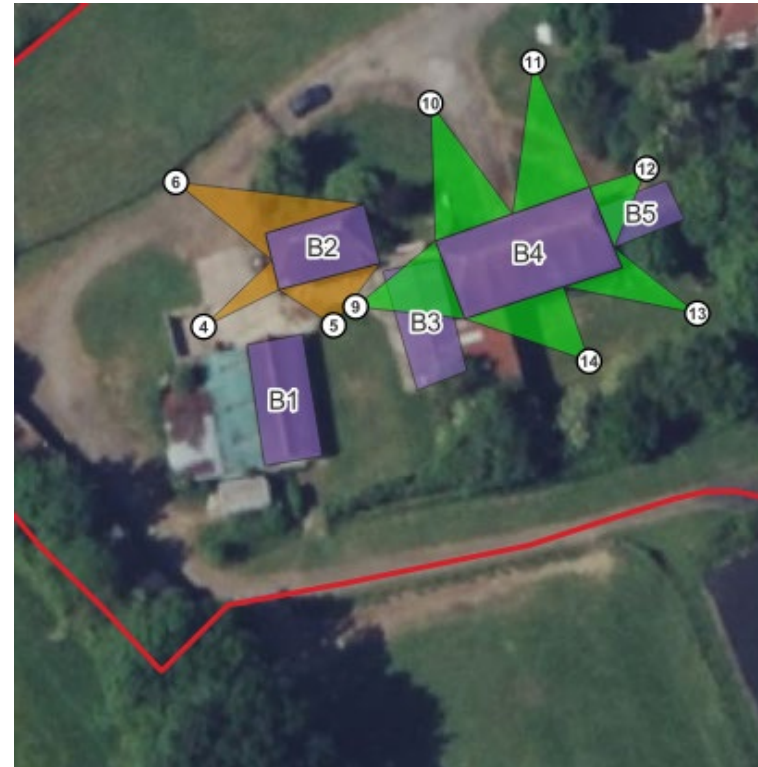
An Elekon Batlogger and Batscanner were utilised for identifying species calls / analysis of calls via sonogram (where required), with 2 Nightfox Whisker Night Vision Binoculars used to record each surveyor's field of view for the duration of the survey and to assist in identifying bat activity. The dusk emergence surveys began approximately 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued until approximately 1.5 hours after. The dawn re-entry surveys began approximately 1.5 hours before sunrise and continued until approximately 15 minutes after sunrise.

Survey sheets were used to record the following information:

- Time of call registration
- Species (if possible to identify using heterodyne detector)
- Location / activity
- Direction of flight (if seen)

The surveyor locations are shown below in **Fig 3**, with the accompanying surveyor fields of view appended to this report in **Appendix A**.

**Figure 3.** Location of the bat surveyors positioned around the buildings being surveyed for bat emergences on site



### 3.2.4 Great Crested Newts

#### 3.2.4.1. Habitat Suitability Index

Five ponds were identified within 250m of the site and three of these were subject to a HSI assessment. These assessments were conducted on the 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2025 by Thomas Lane BSc (Hons) MRes, following the guidance provided with ARG (2010). This considers the following factors when calculating the ponds suitability to support GCN:

- Location of Pond,
- Surface Area,
- Permanence,
- Water Quality,
- Shade,
- Presence of Waterfowl and Fish,
- Number of Ponds within 1km,
- Quality of Terrestrial Habitat,
- Macrophyte Cover.

These criteria are used to calculate a score according to ARC Guidelines (ARC 2010) using the Oldham (2000) calculation formulae. This gives a score between 0 and 1 of the suitability of the pond for GCN with:

0.40 – 0.50: Poor suitability for GCN

0.51 – 0.59: Below average suitability for GCN

0.60 – 0.69: Average suitability for GCN

0.70 – 0.79: Good suitability for GCN

0.80 – 1.00: Excellent suitability for GCN

#### 3.2.4.2 eDNA Survey

Following the HSI assessment, only one pond (P4) could be successfully sampled for eDNA survey.

An eDNA assessment was undertaken on Pond 4 in April 2025 by Adam Jessop BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM (GCN licence number 2016-21153-CLS-CLS) and Louise Davies BSc (Hons). The survey was undertaken in full compliance with best practice guidance published by Defra (Biggs et al., 2014). A total of 20 water samples were taken from the pond, spaced as evenly as possible around the pond margin and targeting in particular areas where suitable egg-laying vegetation was present, as well as areas of open water which could facilitate displaying male GCN. 30ml samples were taken at each survey point and mixed together in a sterile bag. Six individual 15ml samples of this water were then mixed thoroughly with ethanol to preserve the eDNA sample. These samples were then refrigerated at 2-4° C prior to being sent for analysis. Analysis of the eDNA samples was undertaken by Surescreen Scientifics, a recognised 'quality supplier' by Natural England.

### **3.3 Assessment Methodology**

#### *3.3.1 Introduction*

The methodology for the assessment of the likely ecological effects of the proposed development is based on CIEEM's *Guidelines for Ecological Assessment in the UK* (CIEEM, 2018). This includes establishing the likely Zone of Influence (Zoi) for the project.

#### *3.3.2 Valuation*

Features of ecological interest are valued on a geographic scale. Value is assigned on the basis of legal protection, national and local biodiversity policy and cultural and/or social significance.

### **3.4 Limitations**

It is not considered there are any limitations to the survey. While the initial survey was carried out outside the optimal season, an updated survey was carried out in May 2025 in the optimal season botanical season for identifying species. All further survey work was carried out as per best practice guidance.

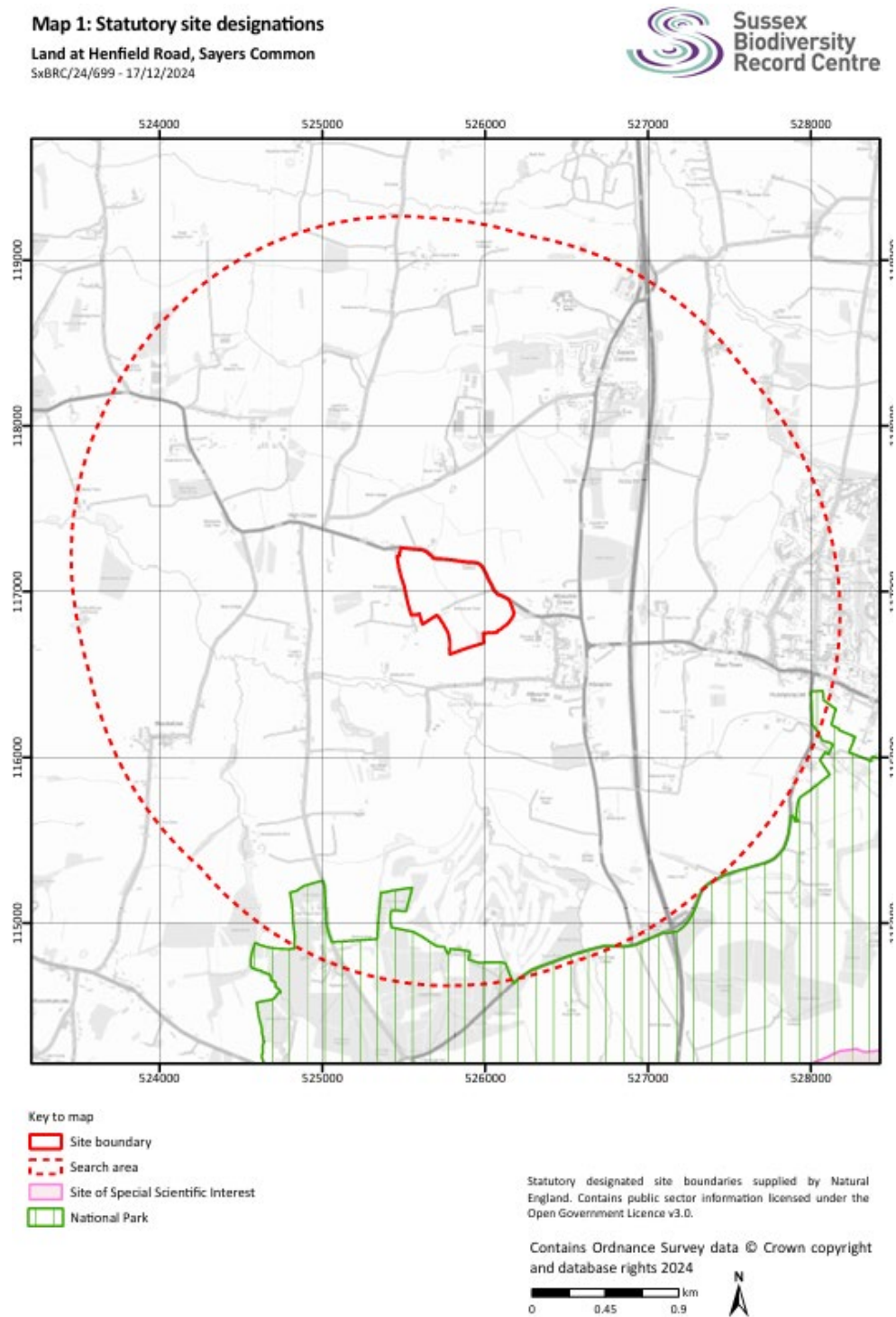
## 4.0 ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

### 4.1 Designated Sites

#### 4.1.1 Statutory Designated

SxBRC identified that the site lies approximately 1.63 km to the north of the South Downs National Park (Fig 4).

**Figure 4.** Statutory Designated Sites situated within a 2km radius of the site as provided by SxBRC



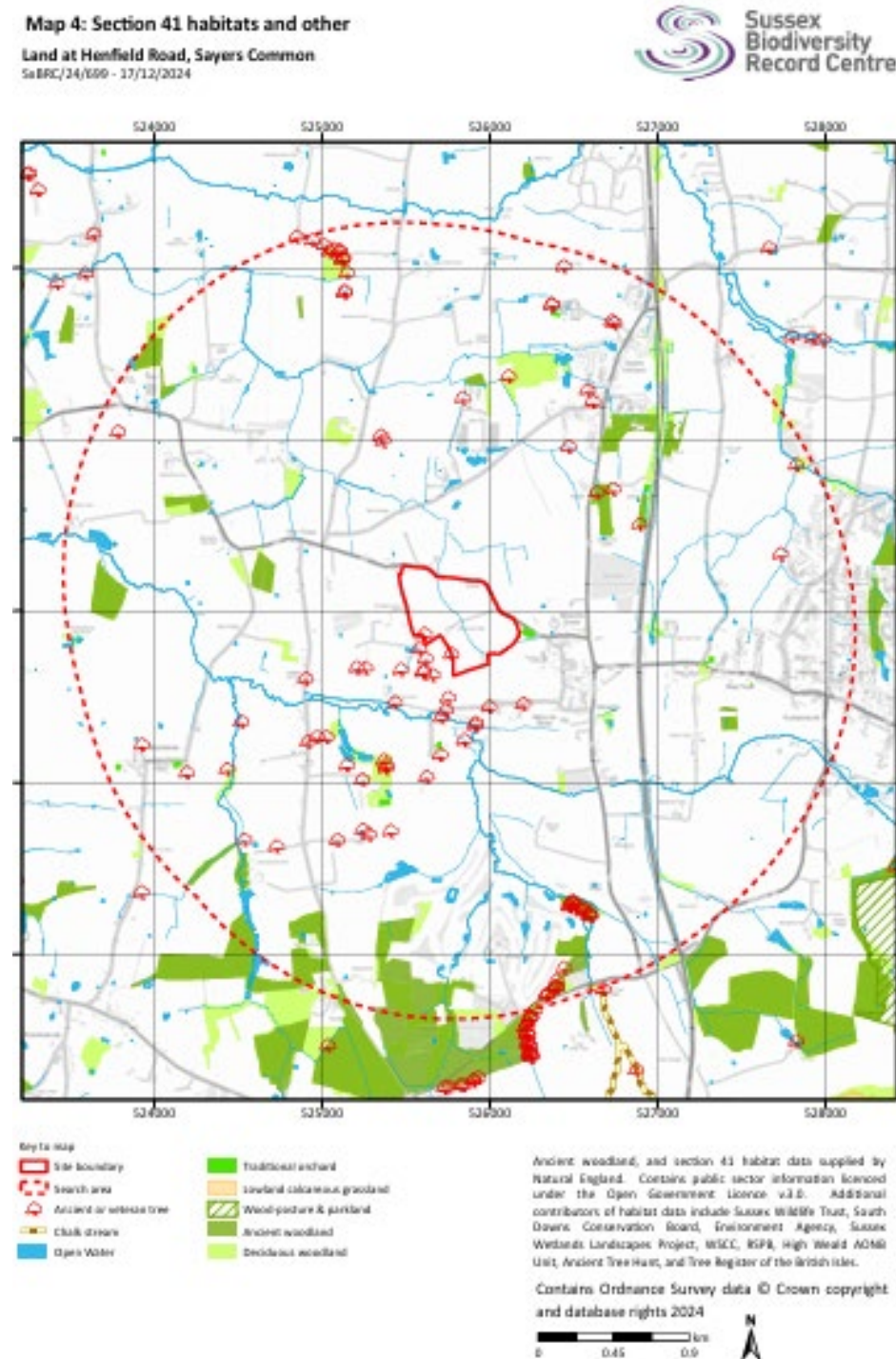
#### 4.1.2 Non-Statutory Designated

SxBRC did not identify any Non-Statutory Designated sites within a 2km radius of the site.

#### 4.1.3 Section 41 Habitats

SxBRC also identified a number of Section 41 habitats within a 2km radius of the site as per **Fig 5** below. These habitats include Traditional Orchards, Chalk Streams, Deciduous Woodland and Ancient Woodland. Numerous Ancient or Veteran Trees are noted to be within a close proximity to the site, situated to the southwest.

**Figure 5.** Section 41 habitats located within 2 km of the site as provided by SxBRC.



## 4.2 Vegetation Survey Results

The vegetation within the site has been described below using the UK Habs Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). The below species noted should not be considered an exhaustive list and instead refer to dominant, characteristic and other noteworthy species associated with each community within the survey area. The habitat types on site comprise (approximate spatial extent shown in the **habitat map appended**):

- Modified grassland (g4) – secondary codes: (16) tall forbs, (108) frequently mown, (828) vegetated garden
- Native hedgerow (h2a) - secondary codes: (11) hedgerow with trees, (50) ditch
- Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface (u1c) with culvert (851)
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (w1f)
- Mixed scrub (h3h)
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Other rivers and streams (r2b)

### 4.2.1 Modified Grassland (g4) – secondary codes: (16) tall forbs, (108) frequently mown, (828) vegetated garden

Throughout the main developed area of the sites lies a number of frequently mown (108) modified grassland parcels, all kept to a short sward length (**Fig 6**). Species present within these parcels are dominated by grasses including Perennial Rye Grass (*Lolium perenne*) and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), with limited forb diversity including Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), with additional species including Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and Nettles (*Urtica dioica*). The very edge of the grassland to the east of the agricultural buildings is considered to form part of the grassland lawn in the vegetated garden (828) for the residential portion of the property.

Additionally, two parcels of tall forbs (16) were identified around the developed area of the site and were dominated by Nettles.

**Fig 6.** View of the modified grassland present on site (taken November 2024).



**4.2.2 Native Hedgerow (h2a) – secondary codes: (11) native hedgerow with trees, (50) ditch**  
Several different native hedgerows were identified in the south of the site, separating the buildings from fields. Across the different hedgerows, species present include Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Oak (*Quercus robur*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).

These were all native hedgerows with trees and additionally, directly south of the agricultural buildings and barns, the native hedgerow with trees has an associated dry ditch (**Fig 7**).

**Fig 7.** View of the native hedgerow with trees and associated dry ditch situated directly south of the agricultural buildings on site (taken November 2024).



#### 4.2.3 Artificial Unvegetated; Unsealed Surface (u1c) with culvert (851)

A dirt track access road runs from the easternmost point of the site through to the existing buildings on site.

The stream running perpendicular to the track flows under the access through a culvert.

#### 4.2.4 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (w1f)

There is one small parcel of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland located along the northern boundary of the site, amongst an area of mown grassland. Only two species are present within this parcel, Oak and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). Furthermore, brambles and nettles dominate the understory of this parcel with some Blackthorn also present (**Fig 8**).

**Fig 8.** View of the small woodland parcel present on site (taken November 2024).



#### 4.2.5 Mixed scrub (h3h)

The edge of the redline boundary overlaps with a section of mixed scrub (**Fig 9**), which is largely present in the residential portion of the property. Species noted primarily comprised of Bramble with some Blackthorn and Hawthorn as well as some non-native species

**Fig 9.** View of the mixed scrub present on site, just slightly encroaching the boundary from the neighbouring redline (taken November 2024).



#### 4.2.6 Buildings (u1b5)

Seven buildings were identified on site, consisting of multi-purpose agricultural buildings and residential properties. These buildings are all described in more detail in **Section 4.3** below.

#### 4.2.7 Other rivers and streams (r2b)

There is a small non-priority stream running perpendicular to the site to the north and south of the access track. Only 3m of this is within the redline boundary but it flows offsite within the wider property.

### 4.3 Bat Survey Results

#### 4.3.1 Pre-Existing Data

The data request from SxBRC returned the following bat records within 2 km of the site (**Table 2**).

**Table 2.** List of bat records within 2 km of the site provided by SxBRC.

| Taxon Name                      | Species Name            | Number of Records |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Barbastella</i>              | Barbastelle Bat Species | 1                 |
| <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> | Barbastelle             | 2                 |
| <i>Chiroptera</i>               | Bats                    | 12                |
| <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>      | Serotine bat            | 54                |
| <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>       | Bechstein's Bat         | 2                 |

|                                   |                         |    |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|----|
| <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>         | Daubenton's Bat         | 2  |
| <i>Myotis mystacinus</i>          | Whiskered Bat           | 4  |
| <i>Myotis mystacinus/brandtii</i> | Whiskered/Brandt's      | 3  |
| <i>Myotis nattereri</i>           | Natterer's Bat          | 1  |
| <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>           | Noctule Bat             | 4  |
| <i>Pipistrellus</i>               | Pipistrelle bat species | 12 |
| <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>  | Common Pipistrelle      | 25 |
| <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>      | Soprano Pipistrelle     | 9  |
| <i>Plecotus</i>                   | Long-eared bat species  | 4  |
| <i>Plecotus auritus</i>           | Brown Long-eared Bat    | 5  |

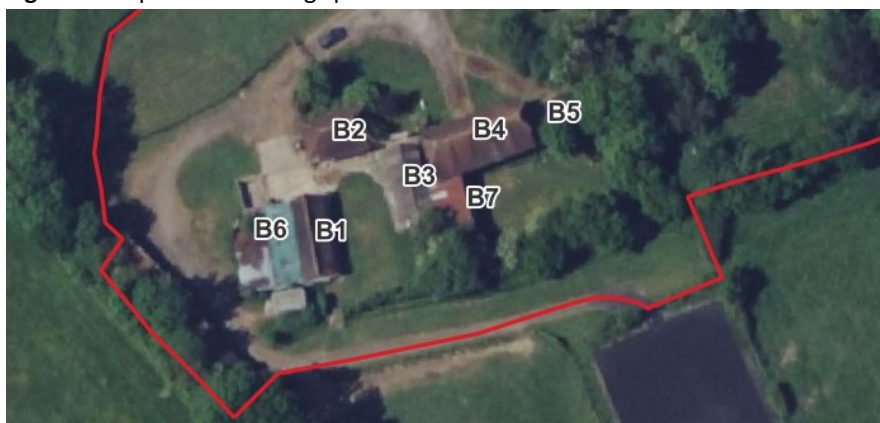
Additionally, further ecology surveys are currently being undertaken throughout the surrounding land parcels of the site – as part of a separate planning application. Bat activity noted within the surrounding environment has consisted of species such as Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, *Myotis* species, Noctule, Leisler's Bat, Barbastelle and small numbers of Greater Horseshoe bat. Particularly of note from this list are light sensitive Barbastelle, which have been recorded in relatively close proximity to the Barn Application.

#### 4.3.2 Roosting Bats (Buildings)

##### 4.3.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

7 buildings were identified on site and labelled as according to **Fig 10** below. These buildings were subject to Preliminary Roost Assessment, with the results summarised below.

**Fig 10.** A map of the buildings present on site



B1 (**Fig 11**) is a stable constructed of breeze blocks, with a tiled roof and wooden cladding lining the gable ends of the building. A number of gaps between the roofing tiles were noted, as well as a slight lifting in the wooden cladding, and gaps between the base of the roof and

the guttering. Therefore, the building is considered to be of ***moderate potential*** for roosting bats.

B2 (**Fig 12**) is a stable constructed of brick and stone with a tiled roof. Lifted roofing tiles were noted, along with gaps between the guttering and the base of the roof. Therefore, the building is considered to be of ***moderate potential*** for roosting bats.

B3 (**Fig 13**) is a stable constructed of breeze blocks with a corrugated asbestos roof. Gaps between the corrugated roof were the only features noted on this building. Therefore, the building is considered to be of ***low potential*** for roosting bats.

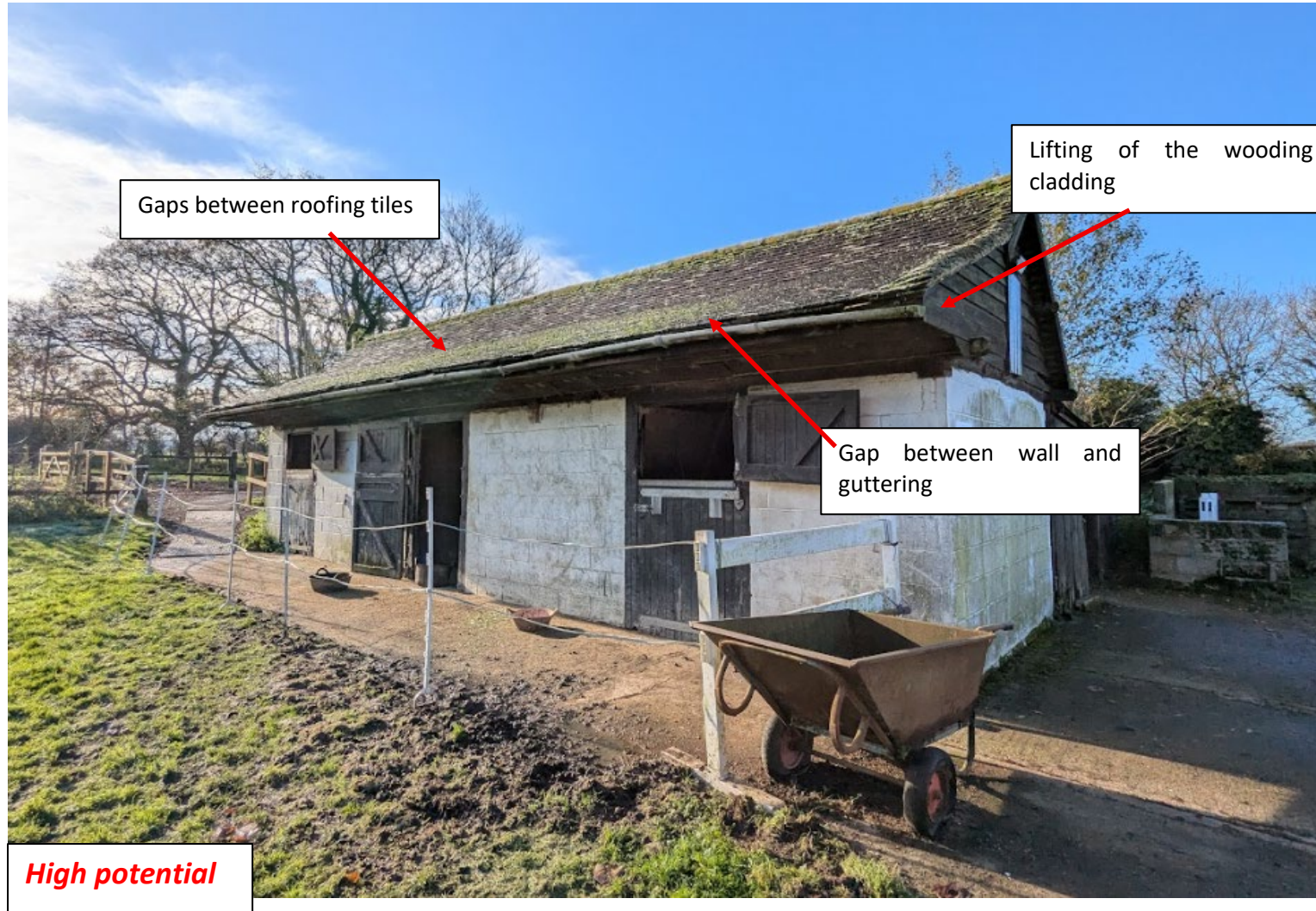
B4 (**Fig 14**) is a timber barn with a tiled roof, supported by a number of internal beams and platforms. The exterior wooden cladding has been warped and created numerous gaps in the walls, the guttering has come away slightly from the roof exposing gaps and crevices, and a number of gaps have been created in the roof by lifted tiles. The large interior void of the barn provides additional roosting potential. Therefore, the building is considered to be of ***high potential*** for roosting bats.

B5 (**Fig 15**) is a small timber structure functioning as both a garage and stable, featuring a felt roof. At the gable end of the building, there are some exposed crevices between the timber roof eaves, and some small gaps under the lifted roofing felt. Therefore, the building is considered to be of ***low potential*** for roosting bats.

B6 (**Fig 14**) is a small storage facility, constructed of timber and corrugated sheets, with internal timber supports and breeze blocks along the base. The structure is tightly sealed and provides no potential roosting features. Therefore, the building is considered to be of ***negligible potential*** for roosting bats.

B7 (**Fig 15**) is an additional small storage facility constructed of timber, breeze blocks and corrugated sheet. With the east wall of the building absent, the interior of the structure is completely exposed to the elements, making it unsuitable for bat roosting. Therefore, the building is considered to be of ***negligible potential*** for roosting bats.

**Figure 11.** Preliminary Roost Assessment of B1 on site (taken November 2024, facing southwest)



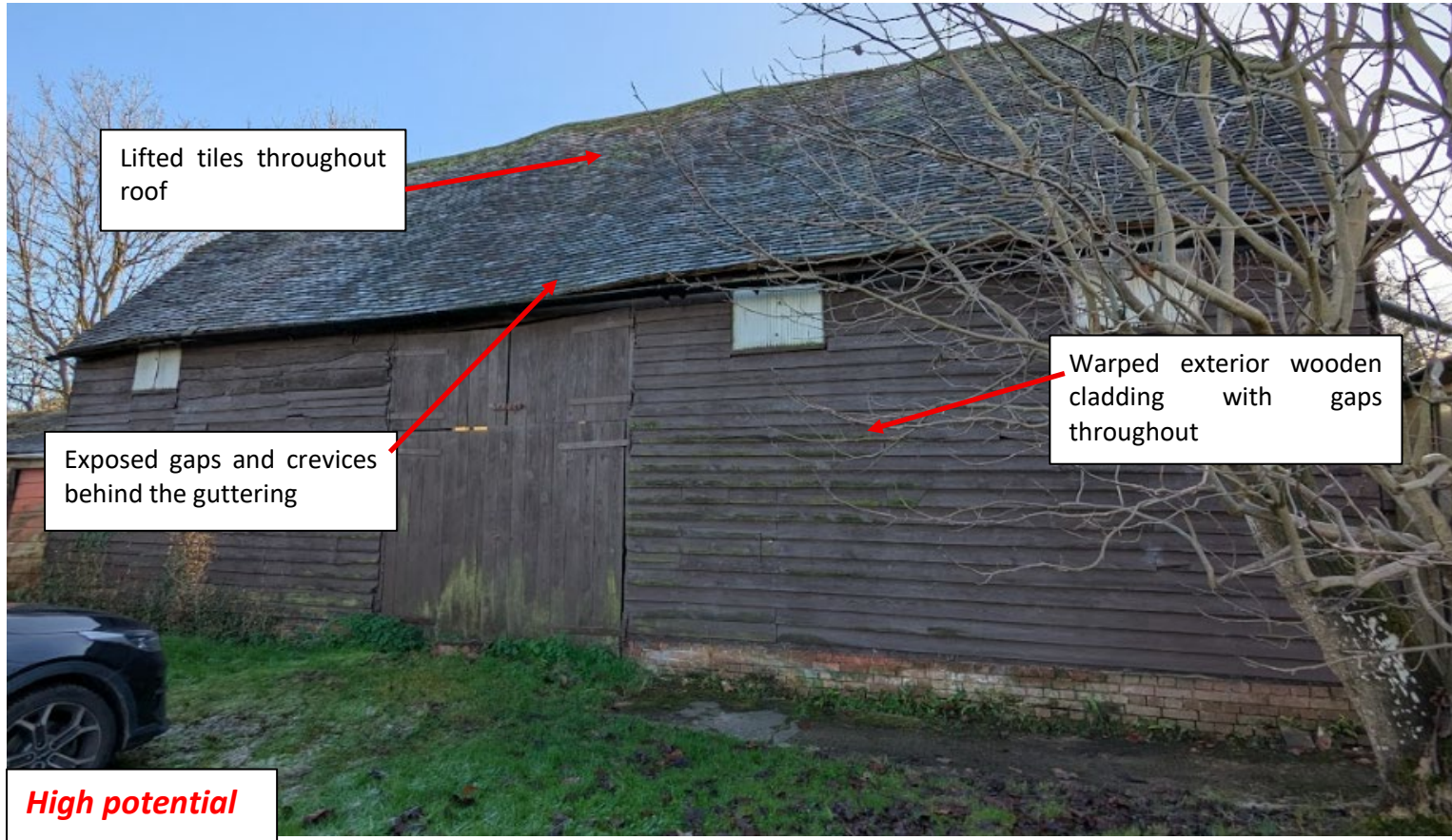
**Figure 12.** Preliminary Roost Assessment of B2 on site (taken November 2024, facing north)



**Figure 13.** Preliminary Roost Assessment of B3 on site (taken November 2024, facing east)



**Figure 14.** Preliminary Roost Assessment of B4 on site (taken November 2024, facing south)



**Figure 15.** Preliminary Roost Assessment of B5 on site (taken November 2024, facing southeast)



**Figure 16.** Preliminary Roost Assessment of B6 on site (taken November 2024, facing south)



**Figure 17.** Preliminary Roost Assessment of B7 on site (taken November 2024, facing west)



***Negligible potential***

#### 4.3.2.2 Emergence Survey

A total of 6 bat emergence surveys were undertaken on the buildings situated on site. The results of this are provided in **Tables 3 & 4** below. No bats were recorded to emerge from the buildings and therefore no further survey work / mitigation will be required.

**Table 3.** Relevant information on survey conditions recorded. Surveys conducted on the 30/05 was a dawn survey.

| Buildings     | Date     | Temp (°C) | Cloud (%) | Cover | Wind (Beaufort scale) | Sunset / Sunrise Time | Start Time | Finish Time |
|---------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|
| B1, B2 and B4 | 08/05/25 | 13        | 10        |       | 0                     | 20:33                 | 20:17      | 22:03       |
| B3 & B5       | 12/05/25 | 17        | 30        |       | 0                     | 20:39                 | 20:24      | 22:09       |
| B1 & B2       | 29/05/25 | 12        | 95        |       | 1                     | 21:03                 | 20:48      | 22:33       |
| B4            | 30/05/25 | 13        | 100       |       | 3                     | 04:54                 | 03:24      | 05:09       |
| B4            | 26/06/25 | 18        | 30        |       | 1                     | 21:18                 | 21:03      | 22:48       |
| B1 & B2       | 30/07/25 | 21        | 30        |       | 2                     | 20:49                 | 20:34      | 22:19       |

**Table 4.** Results from the emergence surveys (HNS = Heard Not Seen).

| Survey Date | Buildings Surveyed | Recorded Bat Roost(s) | Bat Activity on Site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |             |             |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 08/05/25    | B1, B2 and B4      | No emergences         | Species                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | First Pass  | Last Pass   |
|             |                    |                       | Soprano Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 20:58       | 20:58       |
|             |                    |                       | Common Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 21:00       | 21:35       |
|             |                    |                       | Serotine                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 21:50 (HNS) | 21:50 (HNS) |
|             |                    |                       | <p><u>Summary:</u></p> <p>Activity during this survey was considered to be low with individual bats noted occasionally foraging and commuting. Species diversity was considered to be low with a total of 3 species recorded throughout the survey.</p> <p>The first registration was from a Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>) which was recorded just once during the survey at 20:58, commuting east across the site.</p> <p>The second recorded species was a Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>) which was recorded foraging around the site at 21:00. Individual Common Pipistrelles were then noted occasionally</p> |             |             |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |             |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | commuting and foraging around the site, with the final recording of the species at 21:35 commuting south.                                                                                                                    |             |             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | The third and final species recorded was a Serotine ( <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> ) which was recorded just once during the survey at 21:50 as HNS).                                                                          |             |             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | The NVAs were reviewed on the 9th May 2025 and no emergences or additional bats were identified.                                                                                                                             |             |             |
| 12/05/25                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | B3 and B5 | No emergences | Species                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | First Pass  | Last Pass   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Noctule                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 21:00 (HNS) | 21:45 (HNS) |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Common Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 21:06       | 21:44 (HNS) |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Soprano Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 21:12       | 21:46 (HNS) |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Summary:                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |             |             |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Activity during this survey was considered to be moderate with individual bats noted frequently foraging and commuting. Species diversity was considered to be low with a total of 3 species recorded throughout the survey. |             |             |
| The first species recorded was a Noctule ( <i>Nyctalus noctula</i> ) which was recorded as HNS at 21:00. Individual Noctules were occasionally recorded as HNS around the site during the survey, with the last recording at 21:45, also as HNS.                                                                      |           |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |             |             |
| The second recorded species was a Common Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> ) which was recorded foraging around the site at 21:06. Individual Common Pipistrelles were then noted occasionally commuting and foraging around the site, with the final recording of the species at 21:44 as HNS.          |           |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |             |             |
| The third and final species recorded was a Soprano Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> ) which was recorded as commuting around the site at 21:06. Individual Soprano Pipistrelles were recorded occasionally commuting and foraging around the site, with the final recording of the species at 21:46 as HNS. |           |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |             |             |
| The NVAs were reviewed on the 13th April 2025 and no emergences or additional bats were identified.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |           |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |             |             |
| 29/05/25                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | B1 and B2 | No emergences | Species                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | First Pass  | Last Pass   |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Noctule                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 21:20       | 22:15 (HNS) |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Common Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 21:25       | 22:26 (HNS) |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Soprano Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 21:28 (HNS) | 22:23 (HNS) |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | <i>Plecotus spp.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 22:13 (HNS) | 22:13 (HNS) |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |           |               | Summary:                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |             |             |

|                      |             |               | <p>Activity during this survey was considered to be high with individual bats noted consistently foraging and commuting. Species diversity was considered to be moderate with a total of 4 species recorded throughout the survey.</p> <p>The first species recorded was a Noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>) which was recorded commuting south at 21:20. Individual Noctules were occasionally recorded as HNS around the site during the survey, with the last recording at 22:15, also as HNS.</p> <p>The second recorded species was a Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>) which was recorded commuting east at 21:25. Individual Common Pipistrelles were then noted consistently commuting and foraging around the site, with the final recording of the species at 22:26 as HNS.</p> <p>The third species recorded was a Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>) which was recorded as HNS at 21:28. Individual Soprano Pipistrelles were recorded frequently commuting and foraging around the site, with the final recording of the species at 22:23 as HNS.</p> <p>The fourth and final species recorded was a <i>Plecotus</i> bat (<i>Plecotus spp.</i>), which was recorded just once on the site a 22:13 as HNS.</p> <p>The NVAs were reviewed on the 2nd May 2025 and no emergences or additional bats were identified.</p> |         |            |           |                      |             |             |                    |             |       |         |             |             |                     |       |             |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------|---------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|-------------|
| 30/05/25             | B4          | No emergences | <table><tr><th>Species</th><th>First Pass</th><th>Last Pass</th></tr><tr><td><i>Plecotus spp.</i></td><td>03:28 (HNS)</td><td>04:19 (HNS)</td></tr><tr><td>Common Pipistrelle</td><td>04:12 (HNS)</td><td>04:26</td></tr><tr><td>Noctule</td><td>04:13 (HNS)</td><td>04:13 (HNS)</td></tr><tr><td>Soprano Pipsitrelle</td><td>04:23</td><td>04:26 (HNS)</td></tr></table> <p><u>Summary:</u></p> <p>Activity during this survey was considered to be low with individual bats noted infrequently foraging and commuting. Species diversity was considered to be moderate with a total of 4 species recorded throughout the survey.</p> <p>The first species recorded was a <i>Plecotus</i> bat (<i>Plecotus spp.</i>), recorded at 03:28 as HNS. Individual <i>Plecotus</i> bats were then infrequently recorded as HNS around the site, with the final recording for the species at 04:19, also as HNS.</p> <p>The second species recorded was a Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>) which was recorded as HNS at 04:12. Individual Common</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Species | First Pass | Last Pass | <i>Plecotus spp.</i> | 03:28 (HNS) | 04:19 (HNS) | Common Pipistrelle | 04:12 (HNS) | 04:26 | Noctule | 04:13 (HNS) | 04:13 (HNS) | Soprano Pipsitrelle | 04:23 | 04:26 (HNS) |
| Species              | First Pass  | Last Pass     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |         |            |           |                      |             |             |                    |             |       |         |             |             |                     |       |             |
| <i>Plecotus spp.</i> | 03:28 (HNS) | 04:19 (HNS)   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |         |            |           |                      |             |             |                    |             |       |         |             |             |                     |       |             |
| Common Pipistrelle   | 04:12 (HNS) | 04:26         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |         |            |           |                      |             |             |                    |             |       |         |             |             |                     |       |             |
| Noctule              | 04:13 (HNS) | 04:13 (HNS)   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |         |            |           |                      |             |             |                    |             |       |         |             |             |                     |       |             |
| Soprano Pipsitrelle  | 04:23       | 04:26 (HNS)   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |         |            |           |                      |             |             |                    |             |       |         |             |             |                     |       |             |

|          |    |                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |            |               |
|----------|----|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
|          |    |                                   | <p>Pipistrelles were then infrequently recorded as HNS around the site, with the final recording of the species at 04:26, commuting east.</p> <p>The third species recorded was a Noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>), which was recorded a singular time during the survey as HNS at 04:13.</p> <p>The fourth and final species which was recorded was a Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>) which was recorded commuting east across the site at 04:23. One additional Soprano Pipistrelle was later recorded at 04:26 as HNS.</p> <p>The NVAs were reviewed on the 2nd May 2025 and no emergences or additional bats were identified.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |            |               |
| 26/06/25 | B4 | One Soprano Pipistrelle emergence | Species                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | First Pass | Last Pass     |
|          |    |                                   | Noctule                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 21:38      | 22:33 (HNS)   |
|          |    |                                   | Soprano Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 21:45      | 22:30 (HNS)   |
|          |    |                                   | Common Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 21:51      | 22:25 (HNS)   |
|          |    |                                   | <u>Summary</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |            |               |
|          |    |                                   | <p>Activity during this survey was considered to be moderate with individual bats noted frequently foraging and commuting – additionally, <b>one emergence</b> was recorded during the survey. Species diversity was considered to be low with a total of 3 species recorded throughout the survey.</p> <p>The first species recorded was a Noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>) which was recorded foraging around the site at 21:38. Individual Noctules were occasionally recorded as HNS around the site during the survey, with the last recording at 22:33, as HNS.</p> <p>The second species which was recorded was a Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>) which was recorded at 21:45 <b>emerging</b> from building B4 (<b>Fig 18</b>). Individual Soprano Pipistrelles were occasionally seen foraging around site over the rest of the survey, with the final Soprano Pipistrelle recorded at 22:30 as HNS.</p> <p>The third and final species which was recorded was a Common Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>) which was commuting around the site at 21:51. Common Pipistrelles were occasionally heard commuting and foraging around the site for the remainder of the survey, with the final recording taken at 22:25 as HNS.</p> <p>The NVAs were reviewed on the 27th June 2025, confirming the emergence recorded during the survey, with no additional emergences or bats identified.</p> |            |               |
|          |    |                                   | 30/07/25                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | B1 and B2  | No emergences |
|          |    |                                   | Soprano Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 21:07      | 22:06 (HNS)   |

|  |  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |             |             |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
|  |  |  | Common Pipistrelle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 21:13       | 22:08 (HNS) |
|  |  |  | Noctule                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 21:17 (HNS) | 21:35 (HNS) |
|  |  |  | <u>Summary:</u><br><br>Activity during this survey was considered to be moderate with individual bats noted occasionally foraging and commuting. Species diversity was considered to be low with a total of 3 species recorded throughout the survey.<br><br>The first species recorded was Soprano Pipistrelle as HNS. Individual Soprano Pipistrelles were frequently recorded both commuting and foraging during the survey, with the last recording at 22:06 as HNS.<br><br>The second recorded species was a Common Pipistrelle recorded commuting at 21:13 toward the east. Individual Common Pipistrelles were then noted consistently commuting and foraging around the site, with the final recording of the species at 22:08 as HNS.<br><br>The third and final species recorded was a Noctule, first recorded as HNS at 21:17 and then again a second time at 21:35 as HNS with no further registrations.<br><br>The NVAs were reviewed on the 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2025 and no emergences or additional bats were identified. |             |             |

**Figure 18.** Location of emergence from B4



#### 4.3.2.3 Roost Characterisation / Evaluation

Only a single Soprano Pipistrelle emerged from the wooden cladding on the eastern elevation of B4. This is considered to be a non-breeding '**day roost**'. The BCT guidelines (Collins (ed), 2023) describe such roosts as:

*'A place where individual bats, or small groups, rest or shelter in the day during the summer.'*

#### 4.3.2.4 Site Status Assessment

In accordance with the *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (Reason & Wray, 2025), the Soprano Pipistrelle ('widespread in all geographies') day roost is considered to be of **Site value**, using the 'Assessing importance of roosts' (Table 3.2) for bat roosts (Reason & Wray, 2025).

#### 4.3.2.5 Implications

***Due to the presence of a bat roost within B4, any works to the building that will result in damage or disturbance to the roosts (i.e. internal / external works to the roof, roof tiles, cladding, loft, eaves, etc) would likely constitute an offence under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations (2017). In order for works that may result in such an offence (including demolition) to legally take place, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from Natural England will be required. To inform an EPSL, mitigation is provided in Section 6.0.***

#### 4.3.3 Roosting Bats (Trees)

A hedgerow and an individual tree on site are proposed to be removed. These were inspected during the initial survey visit. It is considered all trees proposed for removal are too immature to support PRFs for bats. A non-exhaustive visual inspection was carried out and no features were noted. Therefore, the trees are considered to have **negligible potential** for roosting bats and no further inspection is necessary.

#### 4.3.4 Foraging and Commuting Bats

The vegetation present on site has the potential to support small populations of invertebrates, with hedgerows, woodland and individual trees offering potential niches for invertebrate species – this directly increases the opportunities for foraging bats on site. Additionally, the habitats on site are relatively well connected to the wider area, which would provide ample commuting pathways. Despite this, however, the suitable habitat on site is limited, with managed grassland and hardstanding/buildings being the dominant habitats. Based on this, the site is considered to be of **low potential** for foraging and commuting bats.

### 4.4 Badgers

#### 4.4.1 Pre-Existing Data

Due to confidentiality of records, SxBRC did not disclose any information on Badgers within 2km of the site.

#### 4.4.2 Site Assessment

The habitats on site provide sub-optimal potential for Badgers. The initial site walkover – and subsequent site walkovers – identified no evidence of badger setts on site. Considering this lack of evidence found, along with the suitability of habitats on site, the site is considered to have **potential** to support foraging and commuting badgers.

### 4.5 Reptiles

#### 4.5.1 Pre-Existing Data

SxBRC returned records for Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*, 44 records), Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*, 12 records), Adder (*Vipera berus*, 4 records) and Grass Snake (*Natrix Helvetica*, 27 records) from within the 2 km search radius.

Additionally, further ecological surveys have been undertaken throughout the surrounding land parcels of the site – as part of a separate planning application. A maximum count of 2 grass snakes and 6 slow worms were found within the surrounding environment.

#### 4.5.2 Site Assessment

Whilst there are a number of reptile records in the local area and a small number of reptiles identified in the wider site, the habitats on site are dominated by a short sward length modified grassland and hardstanding – both inappropriate for reptiles. However, the hedgerows on site do offer some potential for sheltering/hibernating potential. Therefore, the site is considered to be of **low potential** for reptiles (**NB. This assessment will only be valid if the management practices of the grassland remain the same**).

### 4.6 Great Crested Newt

#### 4.6.1 Pre-Existing Data

SxBRC returned 37 records of GCN presence within 2 km of the site, with the nearest record, taken in 2019, situated approximately 0.25km east of the site (**Fig 19**).

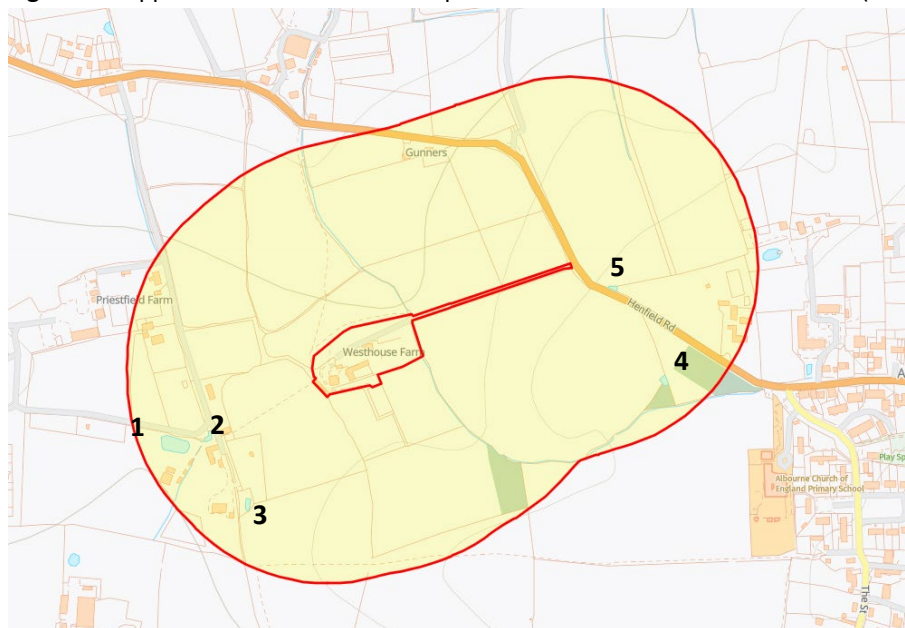
**Figure 19.** Location of the GCN records within 2 km of the site (SxBRC, 2024)



#### 4.6.2 Waterbodies within 250 m

Five waterbodies were identified within 250m of the site boundary as shown in **Fig 20**.

**Figure 20.** Approximate locations of the ponds located within 250m of the site (OS Maps, 2024)



#### 4.6.3 HSI Assessment

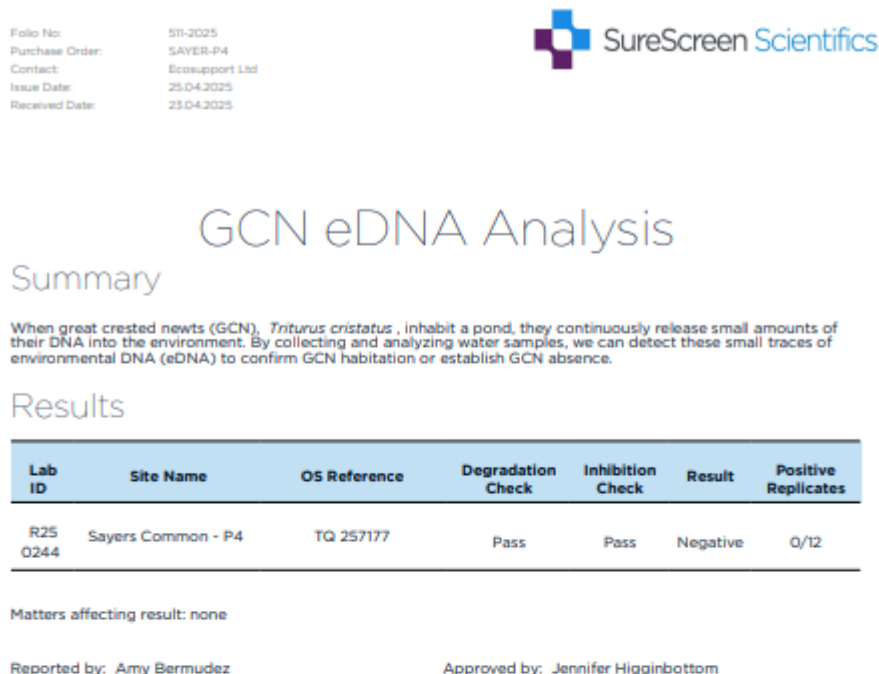
A HSI assessment was conducted on Ponds 1, 3 and 4, with the results of these assessments demonstrated in **Table 5**. When attempting to conduct these assessments of the ponds, Pond 2 could not be found, and access to Pond 5 was denied by the landowner, so no assessment was conducted on these ponds.

**Table 5.** HSI Assessments of Ponds 1, 3 and 4.

| Pond                       | Pond 1            | Pond 3               | Pond 4             |
|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Geographic Location</b> | Zone A            | Zone A               | Zone A             |
| <b>Pond Area</b>           | 200m <sup>2</sup> | 50-100m <sup>2</sup> | 1200m <sup>2</sup> |
| <b>Permanence</b>          | Rarely Dries      | Rarely Dries         | Never Dries        |
| <b>Water Quality</b>       | Moderate          | Moderate             | Moderate           |
| <b>Shade</b>               | 86-90%            | 86-90%               | 66-70%             |
| <b>Water Fowl</b>          | Absent            | Absent               | Absent             |
| <b>Fish</b>                | Absent            | Absent               | Minor              |
| <b>Pond Count</b>          | 10                | 10                   | 10                 |
| <b>Terrestrial Habitat</b> | Poor              | Poor                 | Moderate           |
| <b>Macrophytes</b>         | 1-5%              | 1-5%                 | 21-25%             |
| <b>HSI Score</b>           | <b>0.6413</b>     | <b>0.5583</b>        | <b>0.7434</b>      |
| <b>Suitability</b>         | <i>Average</i>    | <i>Below Average</i> | <i>Good</i>        |

Following the HSI assessment of the above ponds, eDNA sampling was planned for all 3 ponds. However, only Pond 4 was successfully sampled, as access to Ponds 1 and 3 could not be arranged for the following eDNA testing. **Figure 21** shows the results of the eDNA analysis of Pond 4, confirming a **Negative result** for Great Crested Newts.

**Figure 21.** Results of eDNA analysis for Pond 4, confirming a negative result for GCN.



#### 4.6.4 Site Assessment

Similar to reptiles, the grassland on site has been managed to a short sward length which would be inappropriate terrestrial habitat for GCN, however the woodland at the north and hedgerows to the south would provide potential habitat for the species albeit limited area. The site does not feature any waterbodies within the site boundaries, with the nearest ponds

to the site all disconnected by country roads. The site is connected to other potentially suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN.

#### 4.6.5 Evaluation

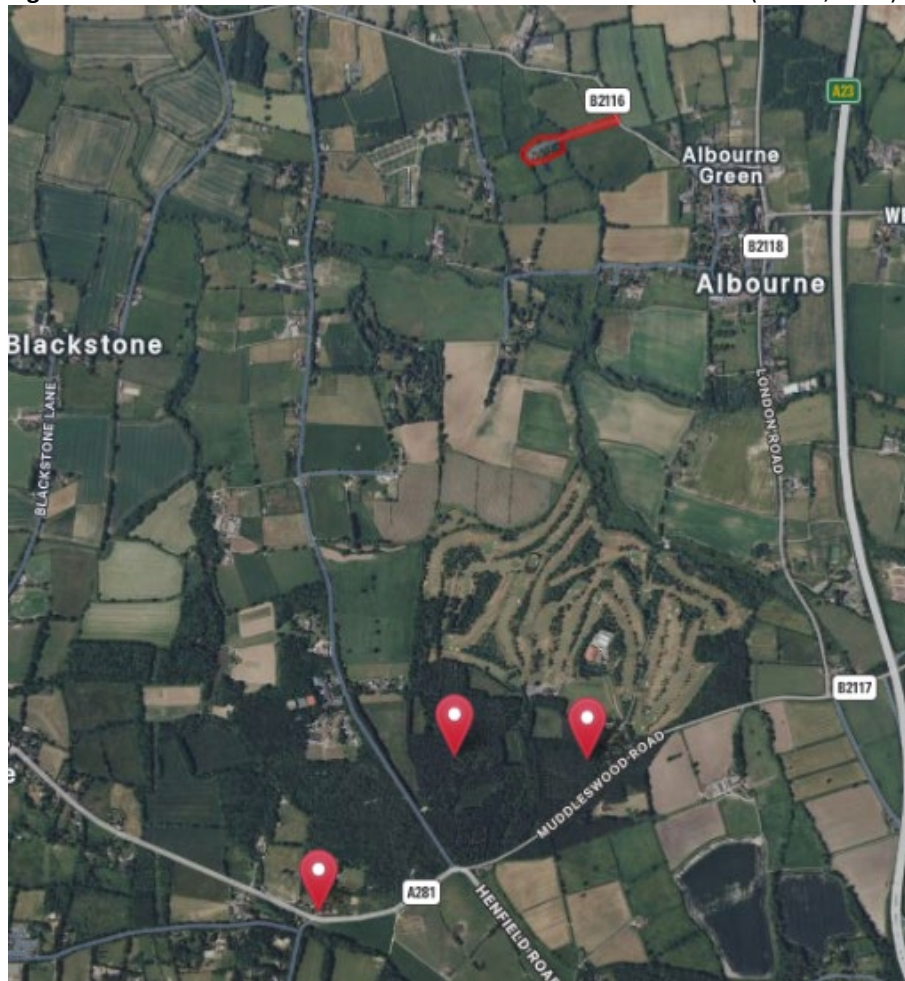
The site supports very little suitable habitat for GCN, with the dominant habitats on site being short sward modified grassland and hardstanding. Furthermore, the most suitable habitat on site for GCN - the hedgerows - will not be impacted by the development. However, using the NatureSpace Partnership (2022) 'Horsham District Council - Impact Risk Zones' map, the site is shown to lie between amber and green zones for GCN. Additionally, the high number of GCN records within 2km of the site, including a number of records in close proximity east of the site, further increases the potential for GCN to be found in the limited suitable terrestrial habitat on site. Therefore, considering this, the site is considered to be of **low potential** for GCN.

### 4.7 Hazel Dormouse

#### 4.7.1 Pre-existing Information

SxBRC returned 3 records of Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) presence within 2 km of the site, with the most recent records in 2011 situated approximately 2km south of the site, in more established woodland (Fig 22).

**Figure 22.** Location of the 3 dormouse records in relation to the site (SxBRC, 2024)



Additionally, further ecological surveys were undertaken throughout the surrounding land parcels of the site, as part of a separate planning application, between April and September 2025. However, no evidence of Hazel Dormice was found in the surrounding habitats during any of the survey months and surveys have now concluded.

#### 4.7.2 Site Assessment

The hedgerow habitats present in the south of the site offer potential habitat for dormice, with hedgerows on site well connected, offering a network of habitat for the species. The woodland is considered to be isolated and small and likely unsuitable. A complete suite of dormouse surveys was completed on all surrounding habitat as part of a separate application and dormice were considered absent after no evidence of dormouse was found. Therefore, given the negative results combined with no close records identified, it is similarly considered that dormice are **likely absent** on site.

### 4.8 Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) / Notable Birds

#### 4.8.1 Pre-Existing Data

SxBRC returned a high number of notable bird records (51 different species) from within 2 km of the site including: Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*), Corn Bunting (*Emberiza calandra*), Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*), Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*), Green Woodpecker (*Picus viridis*), Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Lesser Spotted Woodpecker (*Dryobates minor*), Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*), Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Marsh Tit (*Poecile palustris*), Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), Mutee Swan (*Cygnus olor*), Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*), Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*), Short-Eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*), Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*), Swift (*Apus apus*), Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*), Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*), Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*), Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*), Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*), White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*), Whitethroat (*Curruca communis*), Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), and Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*).

#### 4.8.2 Site Assessment

The hedgerows, individual trees and woodland are considered to provide suitability for nesting birds. In the wider area, woodland and large areas of grassland provide good quality foraging habitat for birds. Furthermore, the buildings present on site have been identified to hold potential for nesting birds. Considering this, the site is considered to be of **moderate potential** for breeding and nesting birds.

## 4.9 Hedgehogs

### 4.9.1 Pre-existing Data

SxBRC returned 51 records of Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within a 2km radius of the site.

### 4.9.2 Site Assessment

The site is a part of a well-connected network of hedgerows and grassland parcels, providing Hedgehogs with opportunity to create nests and forage. However, the site itself does not offer optimal foraging conditions, with frequently mown grass. Accounting for the connectivity of the site, the site is considered to be of **low potential** for foraging and commuting hedgehogs.

## 5.0 LIKELY ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS IN ABSENCE OF MITIGATION

### 5.1 Introduction

The CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM, 2018) require that the potential impacts of the proposals should be considered in absence of mitigation. In order for a significant adverse effect to occur, the feature being affected must be at least of local value. However, in some cases, features of less than local value may be protected by legislation and/or policy and these are also considered within the assessment. Although significant effects may be identified at this stage of the assessment, it is often possible to provide appropriate mitigation.

### 5.2 Site Preparation and Construction

#### 5.2.1 Impacts to Habitats

The proposals for the site entail the demolition and conversion of buildings and other hardstanding. As per the site plans, impacts will involve loss to tall forbs, hedgerows, some individual trees and grassland. Furthermore, if unmitigated against, construction on site has the potential to impact retained trees, hedgerows and woodland, through damage by machinery and air pollution and water pollution may impact on the stream through run-off during works to the track. Therefore, it is considered that the loss of habitat and potential indirect effects across the site would have an **adverse impact** to habitats of up to **Local** value.

#### 5.2.2 Impacts to Wildlife

##### 6.2.2.1 Bats

##### 5.2.2.1.1 Roosting Bats

A single Soprano Pipistrelle day roost was identified in B4 on site. In the absence of mitigation, impacts to this building could result in the death or injury to roosting bats and the permanent loss of a day roost. Therefore, there will be **certain adverse impacts** at the **site level**.

##### 5.2.2.1.2 Foraging and Commuting Bats

The wider environment of the site has been recorded to support nationally rare Barbastelle bats foraging and commuting - which would be highly likely to frequent the area on site within the Barn Application for further foraging and commuting. The works, however, should not impact any commuting routes on site, and have a minor impact on the foraging habitat offered on site. Therefore, a **minor impact** is **possible** at the **Local level**.

##### 5.2.2.2 Badgers

There is potential for foraging and commuting Badgers on site. If mitigation is not taken during excavation works as part of the development, there is potential for them to become entrapped. Therefore, an **adverse impact is possible** at the **local level**.

##### 5.2.2.3 Reptiles and GCN

The proposed site layout indicates that the woodland, mixed scrub and hedgerows on site will be retained, with habitat loss on site restricted to individual trees, hedgerow and short sward length grassland. These habitats are considered sub-optimal for reptiles and GCN. However, should these species be present, clearance of these habitats could result in the harm or

potential death of these species. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, it is considered that a **minor adverse impact** is **possible** at the **local level**.

#### 5.2.2.4 Breeding and Nesting Birds

The buildings present on site have high potential to support breeding and nesting birds, as the internal void spaces within buildings are easily accessible to birds. As these buildings will be either renovated or demolished, it could result in the direct impact on any nests present within the buildings or create disturbance. Additionally, the hedgerows on site offer potential for nesting birds, one of which will be removed. In the absence of mitigation, an **adverse impact** is **possible** at the **local level**.

### 5.3 Site Operation

#### 5.3.1 Impacts to Nocturnal Wildlife

The works may result in an increase in lighting within the general area from external lighting on the new dwellings / street lighting. This can affect the behaviour, particularly foraging, of nocturnal wildlife (i.e. bats, Badgers). Therefore, an **adverse impact is possible** on nocturnal species.

## **6.0 MITIGATION, COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENTS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The below sections outline the recommended measures to mitigate against any identified impact and where required provide proportionate compensation. In addition to this, measures to provide species specific ecological enhancements are provided with recommendations for habitat enhancements outlined in the BNG report that will accompany this application.

### **6.2 Protection of Hedgerows & Trees**

The hedgerows, trees and woodland to be retained will be protected using Heras fencing or similar to prevent access by machinery. Where large mature trees are present, they will be protected using standard arboricultural tree protection measures which include protection of the canopy and prevents root compaction. Access will not be permitted behind this fencing by construction personnel.

This will also provide protection for wildlife species that may be using the margins of the site including bats, amphibians, Hazel Dormice and other mammals. No vehicles will enter the protective ring fencing and no materials will be stored within their circumference. All protective fencing must be in place prior to any construction machinery arriving on site, before any works on site get underway, and will remain in place until all work is completed. This will minimise the level of disturbance within the boundary habitats during the works and ensure the habitats and any wildlife species that may be using them are protected.

### **6.3 Bats**

#### *6.3.1 Roosting bats in B4*

##### *6.3.1.1 EPS Licence*

The demolition of the building must take place under an European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) obtained from Natural England, and the destruction of the roosts and capture of bats (if required) will need to be carried out under the supervision of a licensed Ecologist. All works would be detailed within the EPSL Method Statement required as part of the licence application.

##### *6.3.1.2 Timing*

Given the roost is a non-breeding summer roost with no suitability for hibernation, there are no particular restrictions for timings of works, but optimal time is generally considered to be in spring and autumn when bats are least vulnerable to disturbance, and it avoids the most active season (including maternity season) in summer (Reason & Wray, 2025). Works will take place in suitable weather conditions (i.e. it is dry/calm and temperatures are no lower than 8°C for at least an hour or two from dusk on 3-4 consecutive nights prior to works) (Reason & Wray, 2025).

##### *6.3.1.3 Supervision*

Prior to any works getting underway a licensed bat worker will give a Toolbox talk which will detail best practice methods of sensitive stripping/removal of wooden cladding and any material around the roosts. The construction personnel will be educated on signs of bats and

that, in the unlikely event a bat is found whilst the licensed ecologist is not on site, that all works should stop immediately until the licensee returns to site.

The licensed bat worker will then assist contractors with the removal of construction materials surrounding the roost, if safe to do so, and any other areas which are considered to be high risk for roosting bats. In areas deemed too high risk to assist directly, personnel will be instructed on how to safely proceed, with the ecologist nearby.

#### *6.3.1.4 Capture (if required)*

If during the sensitive removal of construction materials bats are discovered, the supervising ecologist will place the individual(s) into a clean holding bag (Reason & Wray, 2025) to ensure the bat keeps calm and will not take flight during daylight hours. They will then immediately transport the bat to the mitigating bat box where the bat will be released and left undisturbed. During this time, the licensed bat worker will be wearing appropriate bat handling gloves to ensure the bat does not come to any harm. The licensed bat worker will have ample experience in handling a variety of bats and is confident in doing so.

#### *6.3.1.5 Mitigation bat box*

Prior to works getting underway, one large multi-chamber bat box will be erected onto a suitable retained tree nearby (**Fig 23**). This bat box is designed as summer roosting spaces for bats. With the internal wooden grooved boards it provides two 28mm wide crevices suitable for crevice-dwelling species such as Pipistrelle species.

The bat box will maintain a stable temperature inside and is painted black to absorb warmth. The box should be erected 3-6m high on a mature tree and in an open, sunny position (preferably facing a southern elevation). Once the works have been completed the box will be left in perpetuity to provide additional long-term enhancement for local bats.

The Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason & Wray, 2025) state that '*Where small roosts of low conservation status are present (e.g. day roosts of common species) in properties where living space is limited, bat boxes are often the most appropriate and reasonable solution.*'. As such, the bat box is considered feasible compensation for the loss of the roost on site.

***NB: If this model is unavailable, an alternative box may be used, to be selected by the licensed ecologist.***

**Figure 23.** Location of the proposed bat box to be erected onto a suitable retained tree, showing an image of the large multi-chamber bat box (Google Satellite, 2025).



#### 6.3.1.6 Roost Compensation

To compensate for the loss of the Soprano Pipistrelle day roost, the mitigation bat box will be left *in situ* to provide long term alternative roosting opportunities for the bats on site.

#### 6.3.1.7 Monitoring and Maintenance

A compliance check must be undertaken to ensure that all proposed mitigation and compensation has been carried out.

#### 6.3.2 Site Design

The site design has retained all the most valuable features on site including nearly all hedgerows and the woodland parcel. These will remain in use as features that may be used by bats. The majority of impacts within the site for the development will be to habitats of limited / low value for bats.

In addition, habitat creation on site will include newly planted trees, enhanced grassland, and a new hedgerow with trees. These will provide further features within the site that may be used by foraging and commuting bats.

#### 6.3.3 Lighting Strategy

Some external lighting is anticipated to be introduced with the development of the site, however this will comply with the sensitive lighting guidance below. Additionally, the Barbastelle bats present in the local area are light sensitive. Therefore, light spill onto retained hedgerows on site will be avoided and those habitat kept in darkness.

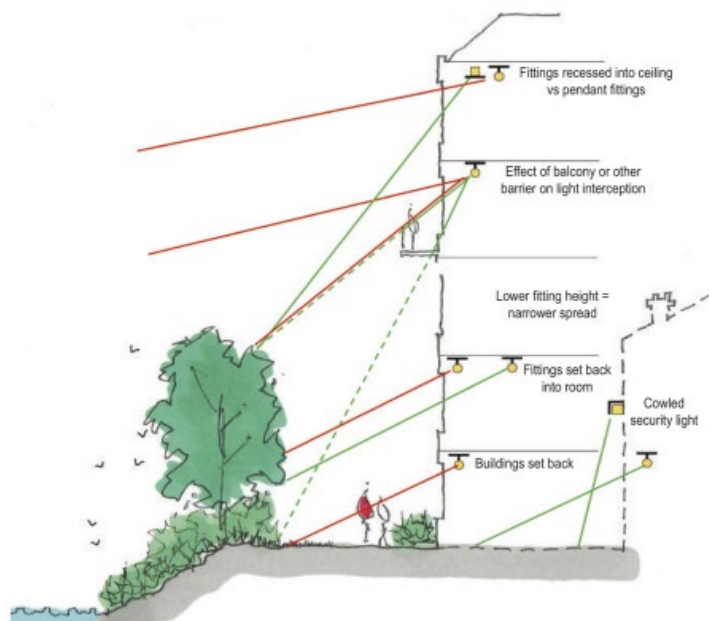
Any new lighting to be implemented on site will need to comply with the *Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at night* (ILP / BCT, 2023) produced via a collaboration between the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) and the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), which outlines

the latest recommendations to minimise the impacts of increased artificial lighting on bats. The key recommendations within this document have been outlined below and will be implemented as far as is practicable:

*'Light sources, lamps, LEDs and their fittings come in a myriad of different specifications which a lighting professional can help to select. However, the following should be considered when choosing luminaires and their potential impact on Key Habitats and features:*

- *All luminaires will lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources should not be used*
- *LED luminaires will be used where possible due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability*
- *A warm white light source (2700Kelvin or lower) will be adopted to reduce blue light component*
- *Light sources will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone, 2012)*
- *Internal luminaires can be recessed (as opposed to using a pendant fitting - See **Fig 24**) where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill*
- *Waymarking inground markers (low output with cowls or similar to minimise upward light spill) to delineate path edges (see Case Study 1)*
- *Column heights will be carefully considered to minimise light spill and glare visibility. This should be balanced with the potential for increased numbers of columns and upward light reflectance as with bollards*
- *Only luminaires with a negligible or zero Upward Light Ratio, and with good optical control, should be considered - See ILP GN01*
- *Luminaires will always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt*
- *Where appropriate, external security lighting will be set on motion sensors and set to as short a possible a timer as the risk assessment will allow. For most general residential purposes, a 1 or 2 minute timer is likely to be appropriate*
- *Use of a Central Management System (CMS) with additional web-enabled devices to light on demand Use of motion sensors for local authority street lighting may not be feasible unless the authority has the potential for smart metering through a CMS*
- *The use of bollard or low-level downward-directional luminaires is strongly discouraged. This is due to a considerable range of issues, such as unacceptable glare, poor illumination efficiency, unacceptable upward light output, increased upward light scatter from surfaces and poor facial recognition which makes them unsuitable for most sites. Therefore, they should only be considered in specific cases where the lighting professional and project manager are able to resolve these issues.*
- *Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and so should not be relied upon solely'*

**Figure 24.** Internal lighting mitigation options (ILP, 2023)



## 6.4 Badgers

During the construction phase, any open excavations left overnight will either be covered to prevent commuting Badgers falling in or escape ladders will be used to prevent them from becoming trapped. Any open pipework will be checked and then capped nightly.

## 6.5 Reptiles

### 6.5.1 Passive Dispersal

The hedgerow and small areas of shrubs on site will be removed and therefore in these areas a precautionary approach for reptiles will be adopted.

This will involve all suitable habitat for reptiles which is scheduled to be removed to be strimmed in two phases under the supervision of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECOW). The first cut will be down to a height no lower than 30 cm with lines cut directionally towards retained habitat to encourage any reptiles into the retained boundary habitats, with a second cut (the following day) taking it right down to ground level. Any reptiles discovered during the sensitive works will be immediately moved to a retained boundary habitat away from the proposed works. This work will be done immediately before any ground works to prevent the habitats re growing and will be undertaken during the active reptile period (April – September) when temperatures are above 12°C with sunshine.

It is important that the central areas of the site continue to undergo regular management either through grazing or being regularly cut to ensure that these areas of the site do not become suitable for reptiles. If regular maintenance is not carried out and the central grass areas are left to grow, then a reptile capture programme will be required and further survey work for reptiles may be necessary.

## 6.6 Great Crested Newts (GCN)

### 6.6.1 Precautionary Working Method Statement

Given that the site has been assessed of holding low potential for Great Crested Newts, and only a minor adverse risk of impact to the species on site, a full survey and trapping is not considered proportionate and, instead, a precautionary working method statement (as outlined below) will be adhered to.

#### 6.6.1.1 Toolbox Talk

An ecologist holding a GCN licence must brief all site operatives, providing a Toolbox Talk. This briefing must include details of the legal protection of GCN, all precautionary steps that must be taken during the proposed works, an annotated key detailing the appearance, characteristics and optimal habitat of GCN as well as what actions need to be taken if a GCN is found on site.

#### 6.6.1.2 Sensitive Habitat Removal

Any hedgerow / scrub requiring removal will be reduced in height gradually (50cm and then 10cm) under the direct supervision of an ecologist which will encourage any sheltering amphibians to move out of the area prior to removal. An ecologist will undertake a fingertip search of the remaining scrub stalks / vegetation bases prior to clearance to ground level. Where common amphibians or reptiles are found, they will be moved to adjacent retained habitat (i.e. areas of public open space further east of site around the copse east of the residential dwelling).

#### 6.6.1.3 Destructive Search

Following sensitive habitat removal, the remaining vegetation can be gradually removed (to a depth of 1 to 2 inches) by a digger with a toothed bucket, which will allow any amphibians on site to be removed if discovered. This work must be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist searching each bucket of removed vegetation and must be undertaken during the GCN active period (between March and October depending on the weather).

***NB. If any GCN are found during the works, all works must immediately stop and the project ecologist must be informed with Nature Space or Natural England contacted in order to obtain a European Protected Species development licence or get the site registered to the DLL scheme.***

## 6.7 Breeding & Nesting Birds

To avoid disturbance of nesting birds or damage to their nests, clearance of any trees, hedge and shrubs on site – as well as any demolition or conversion of existing buildings on site – should be undertaken outside of the bird-nesting season (typically March – September, dependent on weather). If this is not possible, the area to be cleared should be thoroughly checked by an ecologist immediately prior to clearance. If any active nests are found they should be left undisturbed with a suitable buffer of undisturbed vegetation (ca. 5m) until nestlings have fledged.

## 6.8 Construction Method Statement

Due to their being sensitive habitats nearby the site, in particular a stream running near the access track that may be sensitive to pollution run-off during construction, it is recommended that a construction method statement is produced. This will include general good practice pollution measures during the construction to ensure pollution will not leave the site into the stream through run-off or air pollution.

## 6.9 Design Consideration & Ecological Enhancements

### 6.9.1 Bird nest boxes

All of the new extensions / buildings will include wood weatherboarding exterior and therefore integrated bricks are not considered suitable for the materials of the build and external-mounted boxes may be unsuitable.

As enhancement, 5no. general bird boxes, such as the Vivara Pro Seville (**Fig 25**) will be erected onto retained mature trees on site in order to provide additional nesting opportunities for the species identified in the wider environment around the site.

These boxes will be installed following the below guidance from the British Trust for Ornithology (2024) with indicative locations provided in the **appended Enhancement Plan**.

Bird boxes will be located:

- Independently to avoid aggression between neighbouring birds i.e. do not place the boxes in groups on a single tree.
- With shelter from the weather – place in a location with partial sunlight, angle slightly downwards to protect from rain, and avoid exposed locations with no wind protection.
- Approximately 3m off of the ground.
- Away from branches that could allow access by predators.

In addition, 6no. Swallow nest cups (**Fig 26**) will be installed on the stables to provide new opportunities for Barn Swallows around the farm buildings. These will be installed under the front lean-to in a sheltered location, such as on the timber frame.

**Figure 25.** Vivara Pro Seville nest box to be erected on site (NHBS, 2023).



**Fig 26.** Woodstone Swallow nest bowl, 6no. to be installed on the stables



#### 6.9.2 Bat boxes

As above, the new buildings are considered unlikely suitable for boxes due to the material use, although weatherboarding may provide new natural roosting opportunities for bats. As an alternative, 4no. Kent bat boxes (**Fig 27**) will be installed on retained trees around the property (some are proposed outside the redline boundary where there is greater suitable habitat).

These boxes will be installed on retained trees along the site boundary at a minimum height of 3 metres, but as high as possible, in a location that will ideally receive partial sun. The Kent-style bat box is open at the bottom to allow droppings to fall out of the box and does not require cleaning.

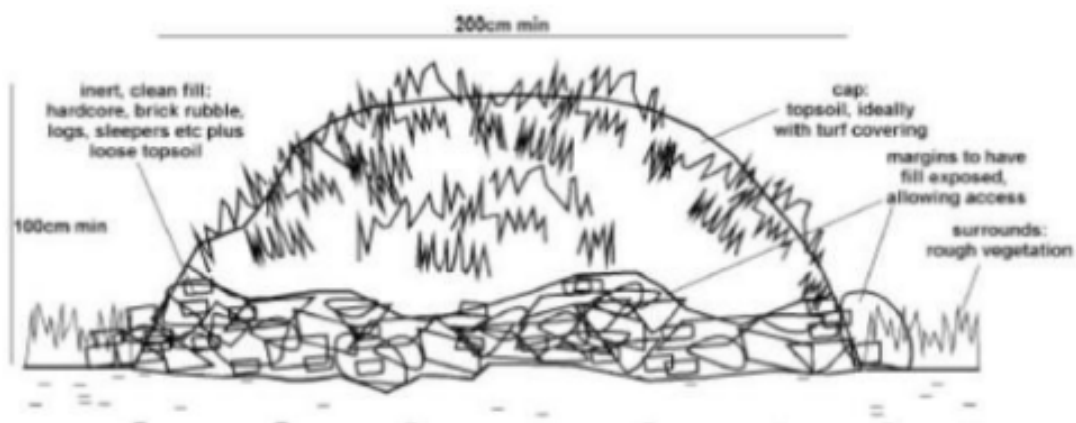
**Figure 27.** Kent-style bat box



#### 6.9.3 Log Pile

A single log pile will be created at the west boundary of site (see **appended Enhancement Plan** for indicative location) to provide shelter for any reptiles or amphibians, should they be present in the area. Log piles can also increase invertebrate biomass and have further positive impacts on site biodiversity. This log pile may use a combination of logs, branches, brash and grass cuttings from the sensitive clearance above and any tree surgery (**Fig 28**).

**Figure 28.** Reptile hibernaculum design as provided in HART (2009).



#### 6.9.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

A biodiversity net gain assessment is being provided for this site in a separate report. Native species and habitat will be used wherever possible. The BNG assessment will ensure that the proposed development will result in a net gain for habitats on site.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

An Ecological Impact Assessment was undertaken of a parcel of land with agricultural buildings at Westhouse Farm, Sayers Common, Hassocks in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the site. There is a confirmed Soprano Pipistrelle day roost present in B4 and low potential for foraging and commuting bats on site. There is also potential for nesting birds, foraging and commuting Badgers, reptiles, Great Crested Newts and hedgehogs to be present. Thorough mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures have been set out within this report including: impacts to B4 will be supervised and carried out under a bat mitigation licence with appropriate compensation; precautionary measures to avoid harm to reptiles, GCN and nesting birds; and enhancements have been specified to provide new opportunities within the site. Therefore, it is considered that the measures within this report suitably mitigate against any potential impacts to the above noted species as a result of the development.

## 8.0 REFERENCES

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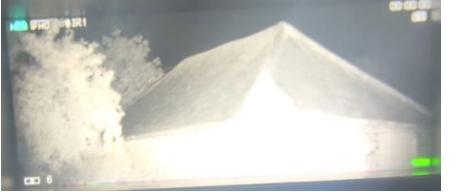
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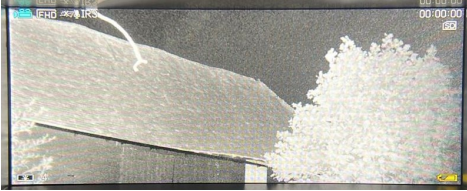
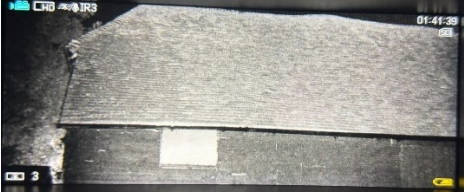
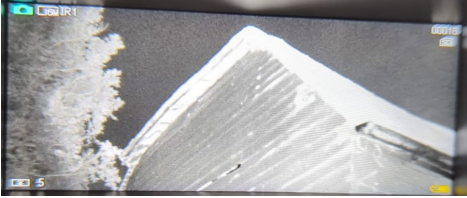
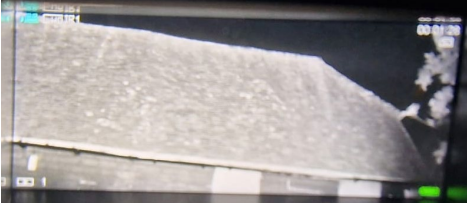
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Bat Emergence Surveyor Field of View

| NVA /<br>Surveyor<br>Location<br>* | Start Field of View                                                                 | End Field of View                                                                    |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                                  |    |    |
| 2                                  |    |    |
| 3                                  |   |   |
| 4                                  |  |  |
| 5                                  |  |  |
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| 7                                  |  |  |

|    |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |
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| 8  |    |    |
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| 10 |    |    |
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|    |                                                                                   |                                                                                    |
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| 15 |  |  |
| 16 |  | Image missing                                                                      |
| 17 |  |  |

\*Corresponds with **Figure 3** numbers

Appendix B. Baseline Habitats Plan



Appendix C. Enhancements Plan

