



Land north of Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, & Biodiversity Statement

Prepared by
Griffin Ecology Ltd.

Instructed by
Framptons Town Planning

On behalf of
Mr Richard Taylor

Project: GE0889

We assist our clients to deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

Quality Management

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Griffin Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by the client to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land north of Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire (hereafter referred to as “the site”), in support of a forthcoming planning application for the erection of a single detached dwelling with associated access, parking and landscaping.

Griffin Ecology Ltd. previously prepared a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Feasibility Study for the same land, dated 2 March 2024. The subsequent planning appeal was dismissed on living conditions / outlook grounds rather than ecological grounds. This updated appraisal has therefore been prepared to provide an up-to-date assessment of the ecological baseline within the current red line boundary, identify habitats and features of ecological value, assess the potential for protected and notable species to be present, and identify any ecological constraints relevant to the current proposals.

For the purposes of this report, the site comprises the land within the red line boundary shown on the proposed site plan (drawing number 1800-0203-01) and Figure 1 overleaf.

1.2 Site description

The site is located north of Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire, centered approximately on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference SK30560373. The site extends to approximately 948 m² (0.095 ha).

Orton-on-the-Hill is a small rural settlement in western Leicestershire, located on elevated ground within a predominantly agricultural landscape near the Warwickshire boundary. The village has a historic core and a dispersed pattern of built development along narrow rural lanes, with the surrounding landscape characterised by farmland, hedgerows, scattered trees and small woodland / smallholding parcels.

The site itself comprises a small enclosed parcel associated with adjacent residential curtilage. The interior is dominated by short-mown amenity grassland / lawn. A mature horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) is located within the site and represents the principal ecological feature. Boundary treatments are predominantly domestic in character and include a wall with ivy to the western boundary, post-and-rail fencing adjoining residential curtilage to the northern boundary, ornamental conifer screening and young trees to the eastern boundary, and a rough mixed roadside boundary along Pipe Lane to the south comprising ruderal vegetation, bramble and scattered woody growth.

The site is enclosed within the village fabric and does not form part of an open field system. Ecological connectivity is therefore largely provided by the mature horse chestnut and the peripheral boundary vegetation rather than by the mown grassland parcel itself.



Figure 1. Site boundary and surrounding habitats (Google 2026).

1.3 Survey Purpose

The purpose of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is to establish the baseline ecological conditions of the site and to identify any ecological constraints, sensitivities, or opportunities that may influence the proposed development of land at Pipe Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill.

The assessment is informed by an ecological survey of the site and considers habitats, protected and notable species, and the site's function within the wider ecological network.

Specifically, the objectives of the survey are to:

- Identify and classify the broad habitat types present within the site, with reference to UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) and Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodologies;
- Assess the suitability of habitats and on-site features for protected and notable species, including bats and nesting birds;
- Evaluate the ecological value of the site at both a local and landscape-scale context;
- Determine the need for further, species-specific surveys (e.g. bat activity or emergence surveys) to inform subsequent assessment;
- Identify potential ecological constraints and risks relevant to site design, construction timing, and mitigation strategies;
- Highlight opportunities for ecological enhancement, consistent with the principles and objectives of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG);
- Provide initial recommendations for mitigation, precautionary measures, and habitat management, where appropriate.

This PEA has been prepared to support the planning process by providing early-stage ecological advice in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017) and current best practice.

1.4 Proposed Plans

The following plans have been provided by the client and have informed this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal:

- Site Location and Block Plan, Drawing No. 1800-0203-01, dated 05/02/2026;
- Proposed Plans and Elevations - Land to the north of Pipe Lane, Drawing No. 1800-0509-01, dated 05/02/2026;
- Proposed Site Plan (and Parking Plan) - Land to the north of Pipe Lane, Drawing No. 1800-0510-01, dated 05/02/2026.

It is understood that the proposals comprise the construction of a detached dwelling with associated access, parking, retaining walls, patio and landscaping.

The latest planning drawings indicate retention of the mature horse chestnut and existing site boundaries where feasible, with development concentrated within the identified developable area.

This assessment considers the likely ecological implications of the proposed development with reference to the submitted plans and the baseline ecological conditions recorded during the site walkover survey undertaken in March 2026. Should the proposals be materially amended, particularly where changes affect retained vegetation, site boundaries or construction footprint, the findings and recommendations of this report may require review and update.

1.5 Relevant Planning Policies

Ecological considerations are a material consideration within the planning process. The requirement to identify and assess the presence of protected species, habitats, and wider biodiversity interests at an early stage is established through national legislation, planning policy, and best practice guidance.

National Policy

ODPM Circular 06/05

ODPM Circular 06/05 confirms that the presence of protected species is a material consideration in determining planning applications. It requires that sufficient ecological information, including appropriate surveys, is provided prior to the determination of planning applications where protected species may be affected. The Circular also promotes the use of planning conditions and obligations to secure appropriate mitigation, compensation, and long-term protection of biodiversity.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (updated 2024) section 15 sets out applications to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

Paragraph 187 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*

- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."*

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states:

"When 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 Site of Special Scientific Interest, 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 Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- 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; and*
- 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."*

Environment Act 2021

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% will apply to most developments under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 from January 2024. This appraisal is consistent with emerging requirements under the Act.

Local Policy:

The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Plan 2006 - 2026 sets out local policies of relevance to biodiversity as provided below.

"Policy DM6 Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest

Development proposals must demonstrate how they conserve and enhance features of nature conservation and geological value including proposals for their long term future management.

Major developments in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services.

Proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity or geological interest will be permitted where they comply with other relevant policies in the plan.

On site features should be retained, buffered and managed favourably to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. The removal or damage of such features shall only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated the proposal will result in no net loss of biodiversity and where the integrity of local ecological networks can be secured.

If the harm cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against or appropriate compensation measures provided, planning permission will be refused.

In addition to the above, where specific identified sites are to be affected the following will be taken into account:

Internationally and Nationally

Designated Sites International and Nationally Designated Sites will be safeguarded.

Development which is likely to have any adverse impact on the notified features of a nationally designated site will not normally be permitted.

In exceptional circumstances, a proposal may be found acceptable where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) A suitable alternative site with a lesser impact than that is proposed not available; and*
- b) The on-site benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the impacts on the notified features of the site and where applicable, the overall SSSI or habitat network; and*
- c) All appropriate mitigation measures have been addressed through the development management process; and*
- d) Development likely to result in a significant effect on internationally designated sites will be subject to assessment under the Habitats Regulations and will not be permitted unless adverse effects can be fully avoided, mitigated and/or compensated.*

Irreplaceable Habitats

Proposals which are likely to result in the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat would only be acceptable where:

- e) The need and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss; and,*
- f) It has been adequately demonstrated that the irreplaceable habitat cannot be retained with the proposed scheme; and*
- g) Appropriate compensation measures are provided on site wherever possible and off site where this not is feasible.*

Locally Important Sites

Development proposals affecting locally important sites should always seek to contribute to their favourable management in the long term.

Where a proposal is likely to result in harm to locally important sites (including habitats or species of principal

importance for biodiversity), developers will be required to accord with the following sequential approach:

- h) Firstly, seek an alternative site with a lesser impact than that proposed;*
- i) Secondly, and if the first is not possible, demonstrate mitigation measures can be taken on site;*
- j) Thirdly, and as a last resort, seek appropriate compensation measures, on site wherever possible and off site where this is not feasible."*

2. Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

A desk-based data review was undertaken to inform the baseline ecological assessment and to identify any ecological receptors, constraints, or statutory and non-statutory designations that may influence the proposed development.

Local Biological Records Search

A biological record search was undertaken by Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC); Environmental Information Search reference LR/E04127, dated 2nd March 2026. The LRERC data search sought to gain an understanding of the presence of priority habitats, Statutory and Non-statutory designations as well as historic records of protected species.

The data search covered a 2km radius from the central site grid reference (SK 30590 03775) and included records of:

- Statutory and non-statutory designated sites (e.g., SSSIs, LNRs, Local Wildlife Sites);
- Records of legally protected and notable species, including those listed under:
 - Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended),
 - Section 41 species of principal importance under the NERC Act 2006,
 - UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);
- Habitats of principal importance and local habitat networks.

MAGIC Map Review

In addition to the records search, publicly available datasets were consulted via the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online resource, maintained by Natural England. This included a review of:

- Statutory designated nature conservation sites within a 2km radius, including:
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs),
 - National Nature Reserves (NNRs),
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNRs);
- Habitats of Principal Importance (e.g., deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, lowland meadow) and their spatial relationship to the site;
- Historic records of European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) granted within a 2km radius,

The information obtained from these sources was used to supplement the results of the field survey, inform the assessment of likely species presence, and determine the requirement for further survey, mitigation, or precautionary measures.

2.2 Site Visit

The site was visited by Robert Halcrow BSc (Hons), MSc, Consultant Ecologist, on 26th March 2026.

The site had also been surveyed previously by Griffin Ecology Ltd. in connection with the earlier 2024 PEA (Griffin Ecology Ltd, 2024). The March 2026 survey was undertaken to provide an updated appraisal of the correct red line site and current ecological baseline.

The survey comprised an extended walkover of the site and accessible adjoining context. Habitats were classified in accordance with UKHab and assessed for their suitability to support protected and notable species. Field signs of protected species were searched for where relevant and visible from accessible areas.

Weather conditions at the time of survey have been recorded and presented in the results section.

2.2.1 UK Habitat Classification Survey

A walkover habitat survey of the Site was undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (CIEEM, 2017). Habitats were classified and mapped using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) system (Version 2.01, July 2023). The survey covered all areas within the Site boundary, together with adjacent habitats where accessible, to inform the ecological context of the Site.

The survey sought to identify, describe and map habitats present within the Site. Habitat types were recorded using UKHab codes and described, with dominant and characteristic plant species noted where appropriate. A UKHab habitat plan is provided in Appendix 2.

Habitats of Principal Importance, as listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, were identified where present or considered likely to occur. Habitats with the potential to support notable or species-rich plant communities were also noted.

A habitat condition assessment was undertaken to inform the ecological appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain assessment. Condition was assessed in the field based on observable structural and compositional characteristics, including species diversity, vegetation structure, management, and the presence of negative indicators such as nutrient enrichment or physical disturbance. Where relevant, condition assessments were informed by the Natural England Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Supplement, supported by professional judgement.

Habitats were subsequently evaluated in accordance with the CIEEM *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment* (2018) to determine their ecological value within an appropriate geographic context. Evaluation considered habitat extent, condition, connectivity, species diversity, and the potential to support notable or protected species.

Habitat Condition Assessment

During the walkover survey undertaken in March 2026, all relevant habitats and linear features within the site were subject to a habitat condition assessment in accordance with Natural England's Statutory Biodiversity Metric methodology (Natural England, 2025).

The assessment considered the following parameters:

- Habitat type and distinctiveness, classified using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) system;
- Extent, recorded as area (hectares) or length (kilometres), calculated using QGIS mapping software informed by GPS field data;
- Condition, assessed against the published habitat condition criteria tables contained within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (July, 2025) User Guide and Technical Supplement.

Habitats were mapped in the field using a combination of up-to-date aerial imagery, base mapping layers, and real-time GPS tracking. Each habitat parcel and linear feature (including hedgerows and ditches, where present) was digitised within a Geographic Information System (GIS) environment. This approach enabled the accurate calculation of baseline habitat units, and where applicable, hedgerow and watercourse units, in accordance with the Metric.

Condition assessments were undertaken with reference to the relevant habitat condition sheets, with each feature assessed against the required number of condition criteria to determine whether it met Poor, Moderate, or Good condition status.

The resulting baseline data provide the foundation for any future Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations and inform the identification of potential habitat retention, enhancement, and creation opportunities, as well as appropriate mitigation measures to be incorporated into the site's ecological design.

2.2.2 Protected Species Survey

The informing walkover survey has also sought to enable the surveying ecologist to search for any evidence of protected species activity or the potential for the site to support protected and/or notable species.

Bats – A ground based inspection of trees, by the surveying ecologist, sought to assess their suitability to support roosting bats. The wider site has been assessed for suitability to support foraging and commuting bats, in accordance with the BCT guidelines (BCT, 2023). The inspection was aided by binoculars where necessary.

Nesting birds – the site and buildings have been searched for areas of habitat that could be used for constructing a nest or for foraging, as well as any evidence of current or historic nesting.

Reptiles – the site has been searched for areas that could be used for sheltering, hibernating, basking, foraging and breeding (Froglife, 1999).

Amphibians – A review of aerial imagery and Ordnance Surveys maps for ponds within a 250m radius of the site has been undertaken. It is also possible that smaller ponds may exist locally and not be recorded on aerial imagery or map resources.

[REDACTED]

Western European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) – the site has been searched for evidence of this species including droppings, foraging signs and footprints. The habitats on site have also been assessed for their suitability to support this species.

Notable mammals – the site has been searched for evidence and suitable habitat for BAP/Priority Species mammals (Cresswell et al., 2012).

Invertebrates – the site has been searched for areas of habitat that may be used for shelter, basking and egg laying. An assessment of food plants present and species suitable for egg-laying has been undertaken.

Invasive species – the site has been searched for evidence of species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Other protected and notable species have been scoped out of this assessment due to an absence of records and lack of suitable habitat within the surrounding area.

The potential of the site to support protected or notable species has been assessed through field observations and desk study information. The likely presence of a species is ranked as follows:

Negligible – while presence cannot be absolutely discounted, the site supports very limited or poor-quality habitat for a species or species group.

Low – habitats within the site are of poor to moderate quality for a given species or species group, but presence cannot be discounted based on the national distribution, opportunities within the surrounding landscape and the results of the desk study.

Moderate – habitats within the site are of moderate quality and provide opportunities for a given species or species group. The desk study has returned historic records and suitability is identified within the surrounding landscape.

High – habitats within the site are of high quality for a given species or species group. The desk study returns historic records of local occurrence.

Ground Level Tree Assessment

Trees within the site were inspected from ground level for Potential Roost Features (PRFs) that may be used by roosting bats. The assessment followed the methodology outlined in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Trees were visually inspected for features such as cavities, rot holes, lifted bark, woodpecker holes, cracks, splits and dense ivy growth which may provide suitable roosting opportunities. Observations were made using binoculars where necessary.

Trees were assigned to one of the following categories:

Table 1. Tree suitability categories

Category	Roosting habitat present in trees
None	No potential roost features present.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if potential roost features are present.
PRF	A tree with at least one confirmed potential roost feature present.

Trees assigned FAR or PRF categories may require further assessment should they be impacted by the proposed development.

2.3 Survey limitations

Ecological surveys can only provide an assessment of site conditions at the time they are undertaken. As such, the findings of this report represent a snapshot in time and are subject to the inherent limitations associated with ecological field surveys and desk-based data sources.

Desk Study Limitations

The desk study relied on ecological records obtained from third-party sources. These data are dependent on survey effort, reporting accuracy, and temporal coverage, and therefore may not represent a complete record of all species or habitats present within the study area. The absence of records for a particular species does not confirm absence from the site or its surroundings.

Field Survey Limitations

As is typical of ecological assessments, the observations made during the site walkover reflect conditions present at the time of survey and may not capture seasonal variation in habitat quality, species presence, or species behaviour. Mobile or transient species, such as bats, breeding birds, and badgers, may use the site intermittently and were not necessarily present or detectable during the survey period.

Survey Scope

No invasive inspection techniques were employed, and no building elements were dismantled as part of this assessment. The results and recommendations of this report should therefore be interpreted in the context of the survey scope and stage of the project.

Tree Recording and BNG Assessment Limitations

All trees within the red line boundary were surveyed during the site walkover and recorded individually. Each tree was identified to species, its location mapped using Geographical Information System (GIS) software, and its size class and condition assessed in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

Tree measurements were undertaken using diameter at breast height (DBH) and field-based condition assessment criteria, as defined within the Statutory Metric. Data collected in the field were used both to inform the UKHab baseline mapping and to populate the baseline calculation within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

Tree condition assessments were undertaken from ground level only. No climbing inspections, decay detection equipment, or invasive investigation techniques were used. Assessments therefore rely on visible external characteristics and may not identify internal structural defects or decay not apparent from ground level.

Species identification and condition assessment were undertaken at a single point in time and reflect site conditions on the date of survey. Seasonal constraints may limit the ability to identify certain deciduous species with absolute certainty where distinguishing features were absent.

The data presented represent a reasonable and proportionate baseline in accordance with CIEEM guidance for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Natural England's Statutory Biodiversity Metric methodology.

3. Results

3.1 Desk Study

The LRERC search for Land north of Pipe Lane (SK30560373) returned 59 records / entries representing 18 unique taxa and identified local wildlife site / historic site context within 50m of the search location.

No statutory designated sites were identified within 2 km of the site. The wider desk study nevertheless indicates a non-statutory ecological resource in the surrounding landscape, including local wildlife site and candidate / potential local wildlife site features associated with meadow, veteran trees, hedgerows and ponds. These are listed within table 2, below:

Table 2. Non-statutory designations within 1km search radius

Site	Designating feature	Distance in relation to the site
90164 – Murray’s Meadow	This potential Local Wildlife Site Supports uncut and ungrazed species rich hay meadow, bordered by woodland and species poor hedgerows with trees.	Located c.574m to the north east of the site boundary.
90165 – Twycross Lane Oak	Veteran tree representing a candidate Local Wildlife Site.	Located c.796m to the north east of the site boundary.
90232 – Hedgerows, Orton Lane	Potential Local Wildlife Site comprising species-rich hedgerows.	Within wider 2km desk study area
90253 – Parish boundary Oak	Mature oak standard coated within a hedgerow – potential Local Wildlife Site.	Located c.821m to the south of the site.
90961 – Pipe Lane Horse Chestnut	Mature horse chestnut recorded as candidate / notable wildlife site feature.	In close proximity to, and likely corresponding with, the on-site mature horse chestnut.
11215 / 11223 Sheepy pond	Potential / historic pond sites.	Within wider 2 km desk study area.

Protected and Notable Species

Records obtained from LRERC indicate the presence of a diverse assemblage of legally protected and notable species within the wider 2 km study area.

Bats:

The LRERC data search identified records of four bat taxa within the local search area: common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and whiskered/Brandt’s bat (*Myotis mystacinus/brandtii*).

Desk study records include confirmed roosts of common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat at 4 Pipe Lane, located approximately 16m from the Site. These records are considered highly relevant given their proximity and indicate that roosting bats are present within the immediate local area.

Additional records within the search area indicate bat foraging and commuting activity within the surrounding landscape, supporting the suitability of the Site and its environs for bat use.

A review of publicly available planning information indicates that 4 Pipe Lane (Planning Ref: 18/00680/FUL – Ashcroft, Orton on the Hill) supports roosts of brown long-eared bat and common pipistrelle, corroborating the desk study findings.

A review of the MAGIC website did not identify any granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences associated with the Site. However, it is noted that the MAGIC dataset includes granted EPS licences only and does not represent a complete record of all bat-related licence activity within the area.

Reptiles:

The data search returned one reptile records within the 2 km search area; Grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*). No further records were returned within the 2km search area by LRERC or via MAGIC datasets.

Notable birds:

The data search reveals a good number of records for notable bird species locally. These include species listed as UK priority species within Section 41 of NERC, 2006. Species include mash harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), yellowhammer (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*), willow tit (*Parus montanus*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), corn bunting (*Emberiza calandra*), spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*), house martin (*Delichon urbicum*), linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*), dunnoek (*Prunella modularis*), fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) and brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*).

Although no records relate directly to the site, the surrounding landscape supports suitable habitat for a range of breeding and foraging bird species. As such, nesting birds are considered a potential ecological constraint.

Amphibians:

Records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*), common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) were returned from the surrounding area. No Great Crested Newt (GCN) licence records were identified via MAGIC within 2km. No ponds were mapped within the site. Review of OS and aerial mapping identified one potential pond c.89m north-east of the site and a second historical / probable former pond c.108m west of the site (See Appendix 3).

Notable mammals:

The LRERC reported western European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and badger (*Meles meles*) within the 2km search area. None of these records are associated with the site.

3.2 UK Habitats Classification Survey

The site was surveyed on 26th March 2026. An annotated habitat plan is provided in Appendix 2 of this report. This illustrates the location of all habitat types recorded at the site together with target notes depicting features of ecological interest.

3.2.1 Weather Conditions

The weather conditions recorded during the site visit were suitable for undertaking a habitat survey and ground level tree assessment. Details are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Weather conditions at the time of the survey – 26th March 2026

Parameter	Recorded Figure
Temperature	7°C
Cloud cover	10%
Precipitation	None
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	2

3.2.2 Habitats

Habitats were classified in accordance with UKHab v2.01. The site is best characterised as a small parcel of garden-associated grassland with domestic boundary features and one ecologically important mature tree.

g4 Modified grassland within vegetated garden (828; 108)

The main body of the site is formed by a close-mown, species-poor grass sward associated with residential curtilage. The sward is tightly managed and lawn-like in character, with clear evidence of frequent mowing and a generally uniform, low structure. Species recorded within the interior sward during the March 2026 walkover included fescue species (*Festuca* spp.), perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), buttercup (*Ranunculus* sp.) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.). Along the margins, the grassland grades into a narrow fringe of taller and more ruderal vegetation, including false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and ivy (*Hedera helix*).



Figure 2. Photo overview encompassing majority of site.



Figure 3. photo showing species composition of grass sward.

The present survey findings are consistent with Griffin Ecology's earlier assessment of the site (Griffin, 2024), which noted that the grassland had a uniform sward height and showed a strong indication of having been subject to seeding and management as lawn, with rye-grass (*Lolium* spp.) dominant and only limited broadleaved diversity recorded. That earlier report also acknowledged that the parcel may historically have formed part of a larger paddock, but its current condition is clearly domestic and managed rather than pastoral.

In UKHab terms, the parcel lacks the structure, floristic diversity and management regime associated with semi-improved pasture or other neutral grassland. It is therefore best classified as g4 Modified grassland, with the secondary codes 828 Vegetated garden and 108 Frequently mown. The habitat is of low intrinsic ecological value and contributes relatively little to local ecological connectivity compared with the mature horse chestnut and boundary vegetation.

A condition assessment of the interior grassland parcel was undertaken with reference to the low distinctiveness grassland condition sheet used alongside the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. On the basis of the March 2026 survey, the habitat is considered to be in **Poor condition**, for the following reasons:

Table 4. Grassland Habitat Condition Assessment results

Criterion	Pass / Fail	Notes
A 6–8 vascular plant species per m ² , including at least 2 forbs (essential criterion)	Fail	Although a small number of grasses and low-growing forbs were recorded across the parcel, the closely managed lawn-like sward is species-poor and there is no evidence that 6–8 vascular species are consistently present within a representative square metre.
B Varied sward height	Fail	The parcel is closely and frequently mown, with little structural variation.
C Scrub less than 20% cover	Pass	Scrub is absent from the main parcel, being confined to boundary zones.
D Physical damage evident in less than 5% of the grassland area	Pass	No material physical damage such as heavy poaching, erosion, vehicle damage or storage impacts was evident within the main grassland parcel at the time of survey.
E Bare ground between 1% and 10%:	Pass	The sward appeared largely closed and closely cut; with no significant bare ground observed within the parcel.
F Bracken less than 20% cover	Pass	Bracken was absent.
G Absence of invasive non-native plant species	Pass	No Schedule 9 invasive non-native plant species were identified within the parcel during the walkover survey.

On this basis, the parcel passes 5 criteria, but does not meet the essential species-richness criterion. In accordance with the low distinctiveness grassland condition sheet, it should therefore be regarded as being in **Poor condition**.

This condition assessment is preliminary and based on a March walkover survey. However, given the habitat's clearly close-mown, species-poor and domestic character, the conclusion of Poor condition is unlikely to be materially altered by survey in the main growing season.

In accordance with the CIEEM *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment* (2018), this habitat is considered to be of **low ecological value within a local context**. The grassland is species-poor, intensively managed and of limited structural diversity, and does not represent a Habitat of Principal Importance. While it may provide some limited foraging opportunities for common and widespread species, its overall contribution to biodiversity and ecological connectivity is negligible.

Individual urban trees

Trees within the site were mapped individually where relevant. The mature horse chestnut is the most important ecological feature within the site.

T1 - Mature veteran horse chestnut (203, 204)

A substantial horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) is present within the site and represents the principal ecological feature (Figure 4). The tree is recorded as an individual point feature within the grassland parcel, using the secondary codes 203 Mature tree and 204 Veteran tree. While there is insufficient evidence to classify the tree as ancient, it displays a substantial amount of significant decay features relative to its size and species, including cavity formation, rot holes, historic pruning wounds with exposed decaying wood, and fissure features at major unions. In accordance with Woodland Trust guidance (2024), these attributes are sufficient to distinguish a veteran tree from an otherwise mature tree, even where the tree is not demonstrably ancient. The tree is therefore treated as a veteran tree for the purposes of this assessment.

136cm diameter at breast height (dbh); very large size class and irreplaceable habitat feature in the BNG metric



Figure 4. Mature veteran horse chestnut tree – irreplaceable habitat feature

T2 - Mature Ash (203)

A mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) is present on the southern boundary. Accurate dbh measurement was constrained by dense ivy growth, but field estimation indicates a dbh of approximately 37cm. The tree provides some local structural and ecological value.



Figure 5. Mature Ash tree on southern boundary

T3 – Norway Spruce (203)

A mature Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) occurs on the southern boundary. This is a non-native ornamental tree of lower ecological value than native broadleaved species, although it contributes some screening and limited bird nesting cover. Estimated dbh is approximately 35cm.



Figure 6. Mature Norway Spruce (T3) and close-up photo of leaves.

T4 and T5 – Small Ash trees

Two small ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*) are present in the north-eastern corner of the site and are of limited individual ecological value. A third smaller ash (T6) is present but falls below the minimum dbh threshold for inclusion in the BNG metric and has not been included as a separate metric feature.



Figure 7. Three small Ash trees in the north eastern corner of the site.

Condition assessment – Individual trees

A condition assessment of individual trees was undertaken where relevant to the BNG baseline.

Table 5. Individual trees Habitat Condition Assessment

Criterion	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
A Tree is a native species	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
B Tree canopy predominantly continuous, with gaps <10% of total canopy area and no individual gaps >5 m wide	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
C Tree is mature	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
D Little or no evidence of adverse impacts on tree health from human activities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
E Presence of natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates (e.g. cavities, rot holes, deadwood)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
F >20% of tree canopy oversailing vegetation below	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Overall condition score	Good	Good	Moderate	Moderate	Poor
Impacted by development	Retained	Retained	Retained	Retained	Retained

Hedgerows and linear features

Eastern ornamental hedgerow (h2b)

The eastern boundary includes ornamental conifer (*Cypress Sp.*) screening, together with self-seeded young Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). This feature is best classified as h2b Non-native and ornamental hedgerow.

In accordance with the CIEEM *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment* (2018), the eastern boundary hedgerow is considered to be of **low ecological value within a local context**. The feature is dominated by ornamental and non-native species and is limited in structural and floristic diversity. While it provides some shelter and limited nesting opportunities for common species, its contribution to wider habitat connectivity and biodiversity is restricted

Southern roadside boundary to Pipe Lane (h2a)

The southern frontage to Pipe Lane comprises a mixed native hedgerow boundary, transitioning eastwards into bramble scrub. This feature is classified as native hedgerow (h2a) along the western and central sections, with the eastern extent better described as bramble scrub (h3d).

Along the western half of the southern boundary (Figure 8), the hedgerow is formed predominantly of young native woody species. A laid cherry is present within the central section (Figure 9), while a large gap in the hedgerow supports two mature standard trees. The eastern half becomes increasingly scrubby in character and transitions into dense bramble-dominated vegetation (Figure 10).

The roadside hedgerow has an average height of less than 1.5 m, although the presence of an earth bank increases its apparent height and screening function when viewed from Pipe Lane. Species recorded within the western section included abundant hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), with occasional buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), willow (*Salix sp.*), elm (*Ulmus sp.*) and cherry (*Prunus sp.*). Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and laburnum (*Laburnum anagyroides*) were recorded rarely, the latter being restricted to the far western corner. The eastern scrubby section, where accessible to survey, was characterised by abundant bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) with dominant ivy (*Hedera sp.*).



Figure 8. *Western section of hedgerow along Pipe Lane.*



Figure 9. *Central section of hedgerow showing a single mature laid cherry.*



Figure 10. *Eastern section of hedgerow along Pipe Lane.*

In accordance with the CIEEM *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment* (2018), the southern boundary hedgerow is considered to be of **ecological value at the local level**. The feature comprises predominantly native woody species and provides structural connectivity along the roadside corridor. Despite its relatively low height and sections of reduced condition, it offers suitable habitat for nesting birds and commuting/foraging bats, and contributes to the ecological network within the local landscape.

Hedgerow Condition Assessment

A Hedgerow Condition Assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The results are summarised in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Hedgerow Condition Assessment results

Number	Criteria	H1 – Southern boundary	H2 – Eastern boundary
A1	Height >1.5m average along length	No	Yes
A2	Width >1.5m average along length	No	Yes
B1	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% of length	Yes	Yes
B2	Gaps make up <10% of the total length, no gaps >5m	Yes	Yes
C1	>1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial vegetation for 90% of length	Yes	No
C2	Plant species indicative of enrichment of soils dominate <20% of the area of undisturbed ground	Yes	Yes
D1	>90% of hedgerow and undisturbed ground free from invasive, non-native species	Yes	Yes
D2	>90% of hedgerow and undisturbed ground free from damage caused by human activities	Yes	Yes

The southern native hedgerow is assessed as **Moderate condition**.

The eastern ornamental hedgerow is assessed as **Good condition**.

3.2.3 Ground Level Tree Assessment

A ground-based assessment of all on-site trees was undertaken in accordance with BCT guidance. Binoculars were used to aid inspection where necessary.

T1: Mature horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)

This tree represents the principal bat feature on site. Ground-level inspection identified several confirmed PRFs, including knot holes, rot features, partially occluded cavities associated with historic pruning wounds, tear-out wounds and crevice features at unions (Figures 11 and 12). The tree is considered to offer moderate suitability for roosting bats and is categorised as PRF.

T2: Mature ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

The mature ash supports dense ivy growth and associated hidden deadwood (Figure 13). Dense ivy can provide roosting opportunities and may conceal additional features not visible from ground level. On a precautionary basis, this tree is categorised as PRF.

T3, T4, T5, and T6

These trees do not support confirmed PRFs and are considered to offer negligible bat roost suitability. They are categorised as None.



Figure 11. PRFs in T1 – knot hole

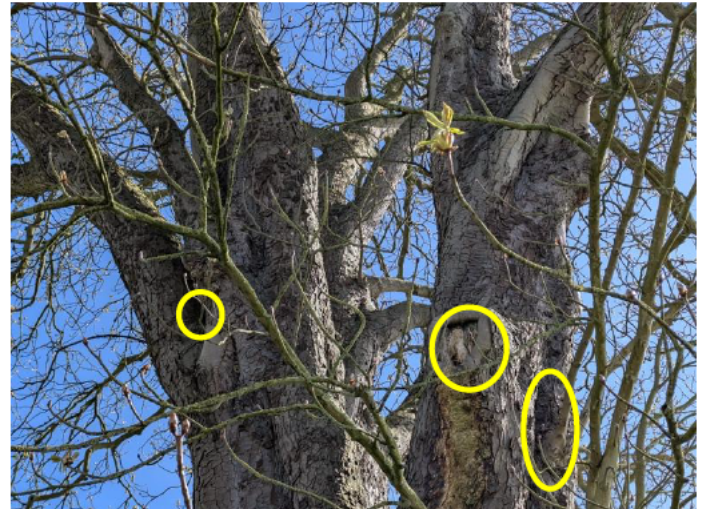


Figure 12. PRFs in T1 – tear-out wound, compression fork, and fluting



Figure 13. PRFs in T2 – Dense ivy growth and dead wood

3.2.4 Other Protected Species

Bats – foraging, commuting and roosting

The desk study identified several bat taxa within the surrounding area, including records associated with nearby Pipe Lane properties. Notably, confirmed roost records of common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat are present approximately 16m from the Site, indicating that bats are active within the immediate local landscape. These roosts are likely to rely on a network of surrounding habitats for foraging and commuting, within which the Site is expected to form a small component.

The site survey confirmed that the Site provides limited foraging habitat overall, as the main grassland parcel is closely mown and species-poor. However, boundary vegetation and the southern hedgerow offer some opportunities for commuting and edge foraging.

The mature horse chestnut (T1) provides features with moderate suitability for roosting bats, while T2 presents lower suitability but retains some limited potential to support roosting bats. No evidence of bat roosting, such as staining, droppings or feeding remains, was observed from ground level during the survey; however, this does not preclude the presence of roosting bats within identified Potential Roost Features (PRFs).

Overall, the Site is considered to have **Moderate suitability for roosting bats** associated with T1, and **low suitability** associated with T2; and **Low suitability for foraging and commuting bats**, although local features may be used opportunistically by common and widespread species.

Nesting birds

The desk study identified a range of notable bird species in the wider landscape. The site itself supports suitable nesting habitat for common bird species within the mature horse chestnut and the southern and eastern boundary vegetation. The mown grassland offers little nesting opportunity, although it may provide limited foraging habitat for common birds.

On this basis, the site is considered to have **Low ecological value for nesting birds**, with nesting bird potential concentrated in the tree and shrubby boundaries.

Amphibians

The desk study identified records of common amphibians within the surrounding area. No ponds are present on site. A potential pond feature may occur c.89m north-east of the site within nearby woodland, although this could not be confirmed from the site during survey. A second historical pond feature to the west appears likely to have been lost. (Appendix 3)

The site itself comprises predominantly close-mown grassland with limited shelter, limited moisture retention and a strongly domestic character. The southern boundary offers only minor rougher habitat and does not materially elevate suitability.

Given the absence of breeding habitat on site, the limited quality of terrestrial habitat, and the weak functional connectivity to any likely amphibian breeding habitat, the site is considered to have **Negligible ecological value for amphibians**, including great crested newt. No further amphibian survey is considered necessary.

Reptiles

The desk study returned a single grass snake record within the wider 2km area. The site survey identified generally poor reptile habitat. The close-mown lawn offers negligible basking, refuge or foraging opportunity, and the site is too small and domestic in character to support a reptile population. The rougher southern edge provides only very limited marginal habitat.

The site is therefore considered to have **Negligible ecological value for reptiles**, and no further reptile survey is recommended.

Badger

The desk study returned records of badger and badger setts within the wider search area, indicating local presence in the surrounding landscape. During the site walkover, no evidence of badger activity was recorded within the site itself. However, fresh badger faeces were noted approximately 20m east of the site beneath roadside hedgerow vegetation on Pipe Lane.

The site is small, enclosed and domestic in character and does not provide suitable sett-building habitat. While occasional passage by badger through the wider local landscape cannot be ruled out, badger use of the application site is likely to be limited and opportunistic.

The site is considered to have **Low ecological value for badger**.

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Should any evidence of badgers be encountered during future works, activities should cease and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Hedgehog and other notable mammals

The desk study identified hedgehog records within the wider area. The interior of the site has limited value for hedgehog owing to the close-mown lawn and generally open, managed character. Boundary vegetation, particularly along Pipe Lane, may provide some limited sheltering and dispersal opportunity.

The site is considered to have **Low ecological value for hedgehog**, with potential for occasional opportunistic use rather than regular occupation.

Invertebrates

The site supports limited habitat diversity overall. The closely managed grassland is of low value for invertebrates due to poor floral diversity and low structural variation. However, the mature horse chestnut, ivy-clad wall, hedgerow vegetation, bramble and scrubby boundary sections provide some local invertebrate interest through shelter, nectar, deadwood microhabitats and structural diversity.

No habitat features of particular value for rare or specialist invertebrate assemblages were identified. The site is therefore considered to have **Low ecological value for invertebrates**.

No further invertebrate surveys are considered necessary. Nevertheless, opportunities exist within the proposed development to enhance invertebrate value through habitat creation and landscaping, in line with the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain.

Invasive Species

No invasive non-native plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were identified during the survey.

4. Biodiversity Statement

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) requires most development proposals in England to deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This requirement applies to development proposals granted planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, unless they fall within a defined exemption.

The BNG requirement applies to all habitats within the red line boundary of a development site, regardless of whether those habitats are directly affected by the proposed works. Biodiversity value is measured using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric published by Natural England, with gains required to be secured for a minimum period of 30 years.

The proposed development of a single detached dwelling with associated access, parking, patio, retaining walls and landscaping is not considered exempt from the statutory BNG requirement and is therefore subject to the biodiversity gain condition.

Site Context and Habitat Value

In accordance with the BNG Good Practice Principles, the mitigation hierarchy, and national planning policy, development proposals should seek first to avoid impacts on higher value and irreplaceable habitats, before considering mitigation, compensation and enhancement.

The application site is small and predominantly domestic in character. The principal baseline habitats comprise vegetated garden (comprising modified grassland), scattered trees, a native roadside hedgerow, an ornamental hedgerow, and minor artificial boundary features. The majority of the site is of low distinctiveness and low ecological value, being dominated by species-poor, frequently mown lawn associated with residential curtilage.

Notwithstanding the generally low-value character of the site, several habitats and features have elevated ecological importance within the local context. In particular, the mature horse chestnut (T1), identified as a veteran tree for the purposes of this assessment, represents an irreplaceable habitat feature and is also of relevance to bats. The southern native hedgerow (H1) also provides local ecological function for nesting birds, invertebrates and small mammal movement, and contributes to the vegetated roadside corridor along Pipe Lane.

The current layout seeks to retain the mature horse chestnut and the eastern ornamental hedgerow, together with a reduced retained section of the southern native hedgerow. This is consistent with the general principle of retaining ecologically valuable features where feasible. However, the current proposals would still result in the loss of the majority of the modified grassland parcel and part of the native roadside hedgerow.

Applicability of the BNG Condition

The proposed development does not meet the criteria for exemption from the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement and will therefore be subject to the mandatory biodiversity gain condition.

A preliminary assessment of the scheme using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been undertaken and is presented separately within the *Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Study (Ref: GE0889BFS)*.

The findings of that assessment indicate that, under the current layout, the scheme would result in a loss of area habitat units and hedgerow units in the absence of further habitat creation and enhancement. The shortfall is primarily associated with the replacement of baseline vegetated garden habitat (modified grassland) by built development and hardstanding, together with the partial loss of the native roadside hedgerow required to facilitate the proposed access.

The results demonstrate that the current post-development scenario would not, in isolation, meet the statutory requirement to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain. Additional measures will therefore be required to ensure compliance with the biodiversity gain condition.

5. Assessment of Potential Ecological Impacts

Summary of the Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the construction of a single detached dwelling with associated vehicular access, parking, turning area, hardstanding, patio, retaining structures and landscaping. The proposals include the retention of the mature horse chestnut (T1), the eastern ornamental hedgerow, and a reduced central section of the southern roadside hedgerow. Development is primarily confined to the existing vegetated garden (modified grassland) and part of the southern boundary to facilitate access.

Having regard to the ecological baseline established during the March 2026 survey, the key ecological receptors and potential impacts associated with the proposed development are identified below.

Table 9. Principal potential ecological impacts

Receptor	Potential impact	Summary assessment
Amenity grassland / vegetated garden	Direct loss of the majority of the closely mown lawn within the development footprint.	Negligible to low ecological value; loss is not considered ecologically significant.
Mature horse chestnut (T1)	Potential direct or indirect effects from excavation, level changes, compaction, pruning, lighting or construction activity in proximity to the tree and its root protection area.	Potentially significant in the absence of mitigation, given its classification as a veteran tree and moderate bat roost suitability.
Boundary vegetation (including native hedgerows)	Partial loss or degradation of scrubby roadside and domestic boundary vegetation during access / landscaping works.	Of ecological value at the local level; impacts are locally relevant but secondary to those affecting T1.
Bats	Potential disturbance, habitat degradation or lighting impacts affecting locally recorded bats, particularly in relation to T1 and boundary features.	Precautionary approach required; significant effects are avoidable through retention and appropriate protection of key features.
Nesting birds	Vegetation clearance or pruning during the bird nesting season could damage active nests.	A standard legal constraint; impacts are avoidable through appropriate timing and supervision.
Badger / amphibians / reptiles / hedgehog	Low risk of accidental harm during site clearance or groundworks, particularly within boundary vegetation.	Low likelihood; manageable through proportionate precautionary working methods.

The ecological assessment has been undertaken to identify these potential impacts at an early stage and to inform the requirement for further survey, mitigation, and enhancement measures to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, planning policy, and the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Designations:

The desk study confirmed that there are no statutory designated nature conservation sites located within the site or within the 2 km study area. The nearest statutory designation is Birches Barn Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located approximately 2.7km south-west of the site (Figure 15).

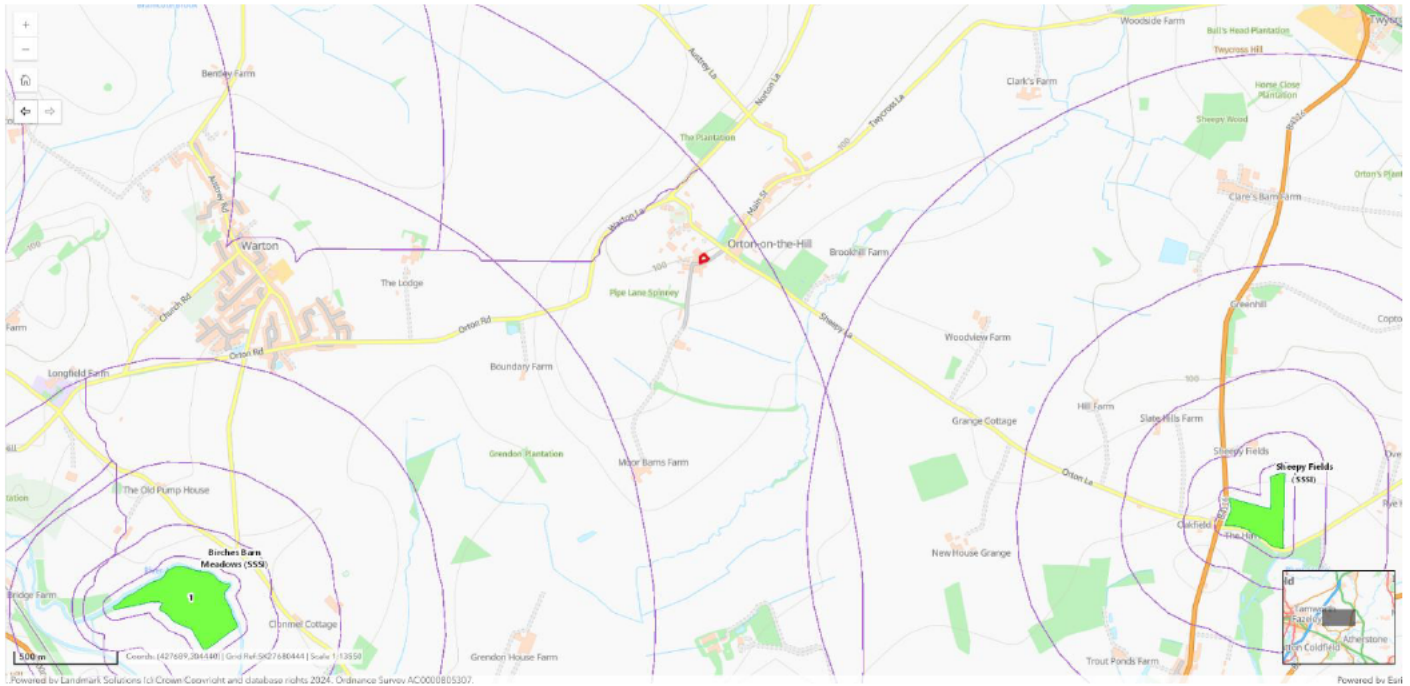


Figure 15. Screenshot of MAGIC map output (2026), showing nearest SSSIs to the site and zone of influence.

Given the distance of Birches Barn Meadows SSSI from the site, the absence of any direct hydrological or functional ecological connectivity, and the scale and nature of the proposed development, no direct or indirect impacts on statutory designated sites are anticipated. As such, the proposed development is not expected to give rise to any significant effects on statutory designated sites, either alone or in combination with other developments.

The site does not fall within, nor is it adjacent to, any Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, or other locally designated biodiversity assets. Accordingly, the proposed development is not considered likely to result in the loss, fragmentation, or degradation of designated sites.

Given the scale and nature of the proposals, together with the absence of direct habitat connectivity to any designated site likely to be affected by the development, no significant impacts on designated sites are anticipated.

Habitats:

Modified grassland (vegetated garden)

The proposed development would result in the direct loss of the majority of the modified grassland within the site. This habitat comprises closely mown, species-poor lawn associated with residential curtilage and is best characterised as vegetated garden under the UKHab classification.

The habitat is subject to frequent management, including regular mowing, and lacks the structural diversity, species richness and management regime associated with semi-natural or semi-improved grassland. Its ecological value is therefore inherently limited and is effectively capped by its domestic context and ongoing management.

As such, the habitat is of low ecological value within the local context, and its loss is not considered likely to represent a significant ecological effect in itself. However, its removal contributes to the reduction in baseline area habitat units identified through the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment.

This impact is considered to be of **low ecological significance**.

Mature veteran horse chestnut (T1)

The mature horse chestnut represents the most important ecological feature within the Site. It qualifies as a veteran tree and therefore constitutes an irreplaceable habitat. The tree also supports confirmed Potential Roost Features (PRFs) and is of relevance to bats.

The proposals include the retention of T1. However, the proximity of the proposed dwelling, associated landscaping, level changes, retaining structures, access arrangement and construction activity introduces a risk of direct and indirect impacts if works encroach into the root protection area (RPA) or otherwise affect the tree's condition. Potential impacts include root damage during excavation, soil compaction, changes in drainage, pruning, vibration, accidental damage, and inappropriate lighting or disturbance affecting bat roost features.

In accordance with national planning policy, there is a strong presumption against the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including veteran trees. As such, any direct or indirect impacts on T1 must be avoided through sensitive design, appropriate stand-off distances, arboricultural protection measures, and controlled construction practices.

Subject to full retention and the implementation of appropriate protection measures, significant adverse effects should be avoidable. However, this receptor is of **high ecological value (at least at the local level)**, and unmanaged impacts could give rise to significant adverse effects.

Other trees

The remaining trees on site are of lower individual ecological value than T1, although T2 has been identified as supporting bat roost potential on a precautionary basis due to dense ivy growth and associated hidden features. The current proposals indicate that these trees are to be retained.

Potential impacts are principally indirect and may arise through construction activity, pruning, disturbance or incidental damage. These impacts are considered avoidable through retention, root protection and a precautionary approach to works.

This impact is considered to be of **low ecological significance**, increasing to **moderate** only in the absence of appropriate protection measures.

Southern native hedgerow (H1)

The proposals would result in the partial loss of the southern native hedgerow to facilitate the new access and frontage arrangement, with only a central retained section remaining post-development. This hedgerow provides the principal boundary habitat on site for nesting birds, invertebrates and small mammal movement, and contributes to the vegetated roadside corridor along Pipe Lane.

Partial loss of this feature represents the principal direct habitat impact associated with the current layout. In addition to the direct reduction in hedgerow length, there is potential for degradation of the retained section through trimming, disturbance, storage of materials, or accidental damage during construction.

This impact is of **local ecological relevance** and is also important in BNG terms, as it generates the current hedgerow unit deficit identified by the metric (GE0889bfs). Compensation through like-for-like replacement native hedgerow associated with a bank or ditch is therefore required to ensure compliance with the BNG trading rules.

Eastern ornamental hedgerow (H2)

The eastern boundary hedgerow is proposed for retention. This feature is of lower ecological value than H1 and is dominated by ornamental and non-native species associated with residential curtilage. Its ecological value is therefore limited and effectively constrained by its domestic management and composition.

Provided it is retained and appropriately protected during construction, direct impacts are not anticipated. Any incidental damage or excessive trimming should be avoided.

This impact is considered to be of **low ecological significance**.

Protected species:

Bats

The desk study identified bat records in close proximity to the Site, including confirmed roost records associated with nearby properties on Pipe Lane. The site survey confirmed that the mature horse chestnut (T1) supports Potential Roost Features (PRFs) and offers moderate suitability for roosting bats. Tree T2 was also identified as having low suitability on a precautionary basis due to dense ivy growth and the potential presence of concealed features. The Site boundaries provide limited opportunities for commuting and edge-foraging, although the Site as a whole is of low suitability for foraging bats.

The proposed development does not include the removal of T1 or T2, and therefore direct loss of roosting habitat is not anticipated. However, there remains potential for indirect impacts, including root disturbance, pruning, inappropriate lighting, and construction-related disturbance in proximity to retained PRFs.

These risks can be effectively controlled through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), to include the establishment of protective fencing around T1 in accordance with arboricultural guidance, and the adoption of a sensitive lighting strategy to ensure that T1 and retained boundary features are not subject to artificial illumination.

Subject to these measures, significant adverse effects on bats are not anticipated. Should the proposals be amended such that T1 or T2 are subject to pruning, structural alteration, or other direct impacts, further bat survey and reassessment would be required.

Bats therefore represent a precautionary but manageable ecological constraint.

Nesting birds

The mature horse chestnut (T1), southern hedgerow, eastern hedgerow, ivy-clad wall and scrubby roadside vegetation all provide suitable habitat for nesting birds. The development therefore presents a risk of damage to active nests if vegetation clearance, pruning or works to retained vegetation are undertaken during the bird nesting season.

This risk can be avoided through standard precautionary measures secured via a CEMP, including the timing of vegetation clearance outside the main nesting bird season (typically March to August inclusive), or the completion of a pre-commencement check by a suitably qualified ecologist where works are required during this period.

Subject to these measures, no significant impacts are anticipated.

Amphibians

Common amphibian records were returned from the surrounding area, but no ponds are present on site and the terrestrial habitat within the red line is generally poor, comprising predominantly close-mown grassland and domestic boundary features. The site is therefore considered to have negligible ecological value for amphibians, including great crested newt.

The risk of harm during construction is low but can be further reduced through precautionary measures secured via a CEMP, including sensitive site clearance and the avoidance of leaving open excavations overnight where practicable.

No significant impacts on amphibians are anticipated.

Reptiles

The Site provides poor reptile habitat overall, being small, enclosed and strongly domestic in character. The rougher southern edge offers only limited marginal suitability. The site is therefore considered to have negligible ecological value for reptiles.

Any residual risk during site clearance can be addressed through precautionary measures secured via a CEMP, including a staged approach to vegetation clearance and the avoidance or management of open excavations.

The Site is therefore considered to have negligible ecological value for reptiles, and no significant impacts are anticipated.

Badger

Badger is present in the surrounding landscape, and incidental evidence was recorded nearby during survey. However, the site itself does not support suitable sett-building habitat and is only likely to be used, if at all, on an occasional opportunistic basis. The risk of direct impact is therefore low.

The risk of direct impacts is low, but a precautionary approach is appropriate. Measures secured via a CEMP should include appropriate supervision during clearance of boundary vegetation and the use of escape ramps (e.g. sloping boards) in any excavations left open overnight.

No significant impacts on badger are anticipated.

Hedgehog and other small terrestrial fauna

The Site provides limited boundary habitat that may be used opportunistically by hedgehog and other small terrestrial fauna. The principal risk is accidental injury during site clearance or groundworks, particularly within rough boundary vegetation and open excavations.

This risk can be effectively managed through precautionary measures secured via a CEMP, including a careful approach to site clearance and the provision of escape routes (e.g. sloping boards) within excavations left open overnight.

This represents a low-level and manageable constraint.

Enhancement Measures:

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and relevant local planning policy, development proposals should seek to provide measurable biodiversity enhancements, particularly where baseline ecological value is limited.

The proposed development presents opportunities to incorporate a range of proportionate enhancement measures for protected and Priority Species, integrated within the built fabric and retained site features. These measures are intended to provide additional nesting and roosting opportunities and to contribute to local biodiversity in a durable and long-term manner.

The following enhancements are recommended:

- Installation of integrated bird nesting features, including sparrow terraces and house martin cups, within suitable elevations of the proposed dwelling;
- Installation of at least one integrated bat roost feature (e.g. bat brick or bat box) within the fabric of the building at an appropriate height and location;
- Retention and sensitive management of boundary vegetation to support foraging and commuting wildlife.

All ecological enhancement features should be **integrated into the structure of the building wherever possible**, rather than relying on externally mounted boxes, in order to ensure their longevity and reduce the risk of removal or deterioration over time.

The precise specification, number, siting and installation details of these features should be secured by condition through the preparation and approval of an **Ecological Enhancement Strategy**. This strategy should include:

- A plan showing the location of all proposed enhancement features;
- Details of the type and specification of boxes/bricks to be installed;
- Installation methods and timing;
- Measures for ensuring long-term retention and functionality.

Subject to the implementation of these measures, the proposed development would deliver a net gain in opportunities for protected and Priority Species, in accordance with national and local policy requirements.

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Appendix 1 – Legislation

Legislation & Planning Policies

A number of UK and European policies and legislation deal with the conservation of biodiversity.

Protected habitats & species

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) Section 9 protects great crested newt and all UK species of bat and their resting places from disturbance, damage and destruction. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 additionally lists great crested newt and all UK species of bat as European Protected Species, and additionally prohibits killing or injury of individuals, as well as protecting their resting places from disturbance and destruction.

Common reptiles (grass snake, adder, common lizard and slow worm) are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and are protected from killing and injury.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 181 (as amended) provides protection to all species of wild bird and their nests. Under Section 1 it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly take, damage, destroy, or otherwise interfere with nests or eggs, or to obstruct or prevent any wild bird from using its nest.

Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence to disturb, kill, injure or take a badger or to disturb, damage, obstruct access to, allow a dog to access or destroy a sett.

Priority habitats & species

The NERC Act 2006 places a duty on public authorities to conserve biodiversity. Additionally, this Act states that a list of priority species and actions must be drawn up and published, to contain species and habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. These lists of Priority Species and Priority Habitats, which encompass the previous UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and species, are those identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action. Priority habitats and species were chosen based on international importance, rapid decline and high risk. The list contains over 1000 habitats and species in total.

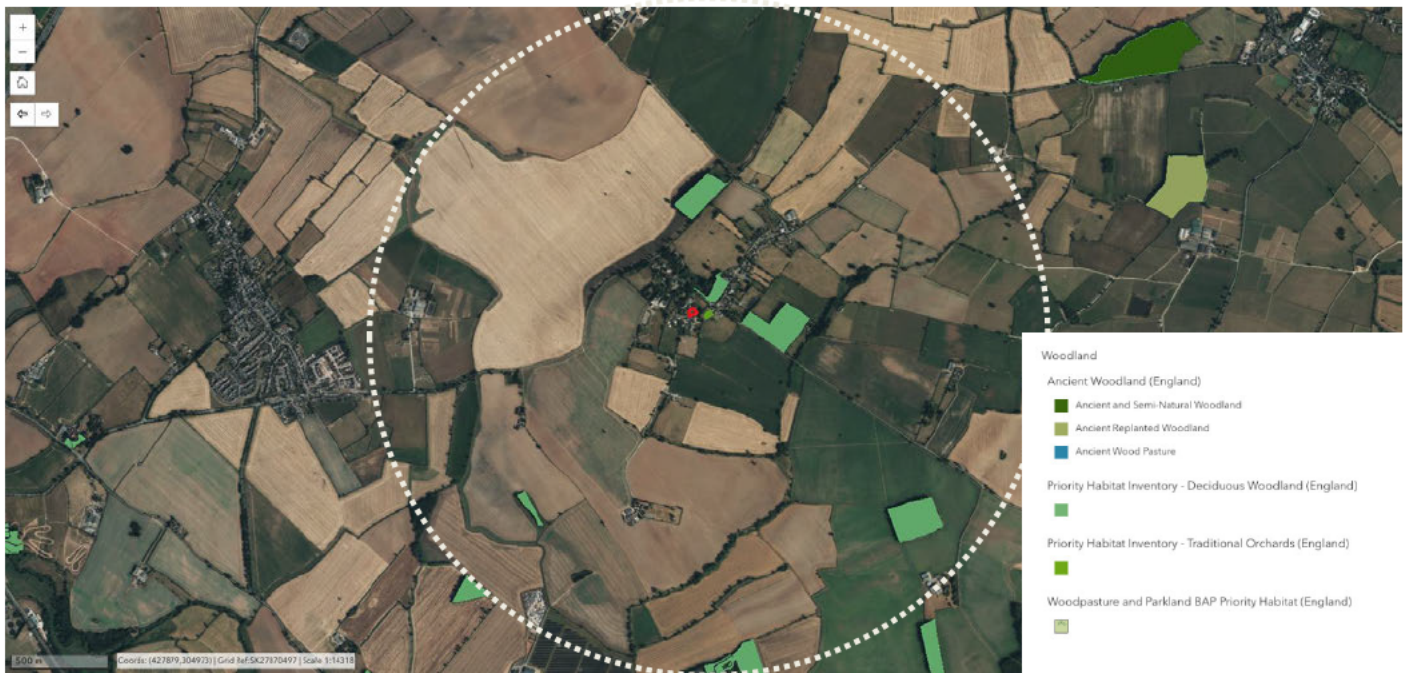
Invasive species

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains introduced species which have been identified as having a severe economic and ecological impact through their introduction. It is an offence to release or allow to escape into the wild any species which is listed under Part I or Part II of Schedule 9, or any species which is not native.

Appendix 2 – UK Habitat / BNG Map



Appendix 3 – Desk study observations



Screenshot from MAGIC map results (2026), showing woodland habitats within 2km of site (dotted line)



OS Map layer in MAGIC (2026) shows a pond c. 108m west from the site, however, recent Google Satellite images (2026) show the area has been excavated and the pond likely no longer exists.