



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

of

Land to the rear of
48 Forresters Road
Burbage
Hinckley
Leicestershire

for

R. W. Harding Ltd

(10.09.2025)

2025-01(03)

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PROTECTED SPECIES

This report contains sensitive information relating to protected species. The information contained herein should not be disseminated without the prior advice of Ecolocation.

Survey date: 29th August 2025

Report Version	Date	Author:	Quality check by:	Approved by:
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This report has been prepared in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing Second Edition (2017) and the CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Second Edition (2017) and is compliant with the CIEEM Code of Professional Conduct and BS42020 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning & Development.

Summary

- A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was carried out at a site to the rear of 48 Forresters Road, Burbage in Leicestershire by a suitably qualified ecologist on 29th August 2025. The survey was undertaken in order to inform a future planning application for a minor residential development with domestic gardens and hardstanding.
- A dry, mown grassland comprised the north of the site, with a native hedgerow bordering the south-west and north-west boundaries, as well as cutting through the grassland in the centre of the site. An abandoned and derelict structure was present in the west of the site, with scrub and individual trees. A vegetated garden with introduced shrubs was present in the south-west corner of the site.
- The Sites potential for protected species was considered low. The Site offered suitable commuting and foraging habitat for small mammals, such as hedgehogs. The scattered trees on Site had the potential to support nesting birds, evidenced by a bird's nest, likely pigeon, present in the cherry tree in the vegetated garden. The site's linear features, as well as mixed scrub, provided good potential commuting corridors for birds. However, no signs of protected species were identified within the survey boundary. The Site's potential to support reptiles was considered to be low despite the availability of refuge opportunities and potential basking sites, due to the lack of connectivity to the wider environment. Similarly, the site's potential to support amphibians was considered to be low due to its enclosure by developed sites, lack of water bodies within the survey boundary, and the limited connectivity to waterbodies in the wider environment. Furthermore, the Site's potential to support roosting bats was limited. No potential roosting features were identified on the trees on site due to their small size and good condition. Bats could, however, use the site for commuting and foraging.
- All the habitats on Site were considered to have low to moderate ecological value that are likely to be commonplace within the locality, and therefore there is no significant anticipated biodiversity loss from the development of the Site. Recommendations such as nesting bird checks, as well as the removal of certain features such as log and brash piles have been made to safeguard wildlife during any construction on Site.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Instruction

Ecolocation was commissioned by R. W. Harding Ltd to undertake an ecological assessment of an area of land to the rear of 48 Forresters Road, Burbage, Hinckley in Leicestershire (hereafter referred to as the 'Site'). It was understood that the Site would be subject to a future planning application for the development of 5no. residential dwellings.

1.1.1 Site location

The Site (grid reference SP 43760 93000) was located off Forresters Road approximately 760m north-west of central Burbage, and 2km south-east of the town centre of Hinckley.



Figure 1: Survey boundary

1.1.2 Proposed Plans

Site Layout As Proposed, Drg No 4878/02, was kindly provided by George Burton Architecture & Ecology, for use in the production of this report.

1.2 Survey Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to:

- identify and provide a description of the habitats present on the Site;

- identify the potential for the presence of protected & priority habitats & species on the Site;
- determine the need for further ecological surveys;
- identify any ecological constraints or opportunities on the Site;
- identify likely mitigation measures for developing the Site; and
- identify potential ecological enhancements on the Site.

This report aims to provide general advice on ecological constraints identified with any development of the Site and includes recommendations for further survey.

1.3 Legislation & Planning Policies

A number of UK and European policies and legislation deal with the conservation of biodiversity. This section briefly outlines the legal and policy protection afforded to species and habitats scoped into this survey and described within the report.

1.3.1 Protected habitats & species

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) Section 9 protects otter (*Lutra lutra*), hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*), water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*), white clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) and all UK species of bat and their resting places from disturbance, damage, and destruction, with white clawed crayfish and water vole additionally protected from killing and injury. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) additionally lists otter, hazel dormouse, great crested newt, white clawed crayfish, 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 *Natrix natrix*, adder *Vipera berus*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, and slow worm *Anguis fragilis*) 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 (*Meles meles*) or to disturb, damage, obstruct access to, allow a dog to access or destroy a sett.

1.3.2 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.

1.3.3 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.

1.3.4 Planning policies

The ODPM Circular 06/05 makes the presence of a protected species a material consideration within the planning process. It states that it is essential for the presence of protected species and the extent they may be affected by proposed development be established through appropriate surveys before the planning permission is granted and encourages the use of planning conditions to secure the long-term protection of the species.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) section 15 outlines how applications need to conserve and enhance the natural environment. Paragraphs 187 to 195 includes provision that sites with biodiversity value should be protected and enhanced, minimising impacts on biodiversity and establishing ecological connectivity. Furthermore, the protection of priority sites and species through developments is outlined and states where significant harm is unavoidable through alternatives or mitigation, planning permission should be refused. Finally, this section concludes that developments with aims to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported and any improvement around developments should be encouraged to achieve net gains for biodiversity.

Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy (December 2009) contains Spatial Objective 10: Natural Environment and Cultural Assets, which aims to maintain and enhance areas of biodiversity importance and to deliver a linked network of green infrastructure, enhancing and protecting the borough's distinctive landscapes, woodlands, geology, archaeological heritage and biodiversity and encourage its understanding, appreciation, maintenance and development.

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

Prior to the site visit a desk-top data gathering exercise was undertaken. The MAGIC website was accessed to search for statutory designated sites within a 1km radius of the Site. The Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LERC) was contacted for information on non-statutory designated sites and protected and priority species records within a 1km radius of the Site.

2.2 Extended Habitat Survey

The Site was visited by suitably qualified ecologist Emily Tucker (Graduate Ecologist) on Friday 29th August 2025. The survey took approximately 2 hours and weather conditions at the time of survey were recorded.

2.2.1 UKHab Classification Survey

The walkover survey of the Site comprised an Extended Habitat Survey (formerly known as Phase 1 Habitat Survey) applying UKHab methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023). The survey covered all accessible areas of the Site including the boundaries. Habitats were identified, described, and mapped and a list of plant species was made, with relative abundances recorded using the DAFOR scale (see Appendix 2). Incidental sightings of fauna were recorded and included within the species list for the Site (Appendix 2).

2.2.2 Protected & Priority Species

The survey additionally included an assessment of the potential for protected and priority species to be present on the Site:

Badger – the Site was searched for areas that might be used for foraging and sett building. Incidental foraging signs, tree scratching, paths, latrines, and setts were recorded if found (Harris *et al.*, 1989). The Site itself and land immediately adjacent to the Site and visible from the Site boundaries were included within the survey.

Bats – the Site was searched for suitable trees and natural features for roosting and an assessment was made of potential foraging value. All trees found were assessed from the ground to determine the suitability for roosting bats (BCT, 2016).

Hazel dormouse – the Site was searched for suitable habitat including scrub, hedgerows, and woodland with fruiting and flowering species as well as any incidental evidence such as possible nests or feeding remains.

Otter – the Site was searched for evidence such as footprints and spraints, as well as suitable habitat for holt construction.

Water vole – the Site was searched for evidence of burrows, latrines and feeding remains and the suitability of the watercourse habitats for this species.

Notable mammals – the Site was searched for evidence and suitable habitat for BAP/Priority Species mammals (Cresswell *et al.*, 2012).

Nesting birds – the Site was searched for areas of habitat/structures that could be used for constructing a nest or for foraging and any evidence of current or historic nesting.

Amphibians – any water bodies within the Site and a 250m radius of the Site may have been scored for their suitability for use by breeding great crested newts using the Habitat Suitability Index (ARG UK, 2010). Terrestrial habitat on the Site was assessed for suitability to support amphibians.

Reptiles – the Site was searched for areas that could be used for insolation, shelter, foraging and breeding (Froglife, 1999).

White clawed crayfish – the watercourse was searched for suitable substrate such as a stony stream bed, as well as any evidence of D-shaped burrows.

Invertebrates – the Site was searched for areas of habitat that may be used for shelter, and include food plants and species suitable for egg-laying.

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

All other protected and notable species were scoped out of the survey work due to an absence of records and lack of suitable habitat within the surrounding area.

2.3 Limitations

There were no significant limitations at the time of survey other than the recent mowing of the field which may have limited the species identification.

3 Results

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Designated Sites

The Site had no statutory or non-statutory designation for nature conservation within or directly adjacent to its boundary. The site lies within the impact risk zone of several sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) but was considered a safe distance that the proposed works would not pose a risk. Eight statutory designated sites were identified within a 10km radius of the site:

- Burbage Common and Woods local nature reserve (LNR), 1.3km north-east;
- Burbage Woods and Aston Firs SSSI, 1.3km north-east;
- Kendall's Meadow SSSI, 6.6km north-west;
- Croft Pasture SSSI, 7.5km north-east;
- Croft and Huncote Quarry SSSI, 7.8km north-east;
- Croft Hill SSSI, 8.0km north-east;
- Griff Hill Quarry, 8.4km south-east;
- Ensor's Pool SSS, special area of conservation (SAC), LNR, 9.1km south-west of the site.

16 non-statutory designated sites were identified within a 1km radius of the site, all of which were local wildlife sites (LWS), including:

- Lash Hill path Ash tree, 0.16km north-east;
- Lash Hill path Willow tree, 0.28km east;
- Courting Stiles scrub extension, 0.51km north-west;
- Playing field hedgerow, 0.54km south-west;
- Courting Stiles, 0.60km north-west;
- Burbage Flood Retention Area, 0.66km north-west;
- Manor Lime tree, Aston Lane, 0.68km 0.85km south-east;
- Land at The Coppice/ Woodgate, Burbage, 0.72km north-east;
- Burbage, Aston Lane green lane hedge (north), 0.77km 0.85km south-east;
- Trees at The Coppice, Burbage, 0.79km north-east;
- Woodgate path grassland, 0.80km north-east;
- Aston Lane Ash trees, 0.85km south-east;
- Woodgate hedge, Burbage, 0.89km north-east;
- Outwoods grassland, 0.90km north-east;
- Hedgerow off Coventry Road, 0.97km south;
- Grassland E of Sherborne Road, 0.67km 0.85km south-east of the site.

3.1.2 Habitat Connectivity

The Site was situated within the urban setting of Burbage, Hinckley in Leicestershire. Hinckley acts as a significant, physical barrier to wider movement and dispersal of some fauna due to the infrastructure present, and lack of mature hedgerows which reduce foraging, sheltering, and commuting opportunities.

Residential properties and domestic gardens bordered all boundaries on the site. The south boundary was also bordered by Forresters Road. The M69 and A5 were located 1.60km south-east and 1.85km south-west respectively of the Site. The noise and light disruption from vehicles along these roads could deter some bat species (except perhaps for light-tolerant pipistrelle bats and high-flying noctule bats), as well as small and less mobile species from commuting between the Site and the wider landscape.

Deciduous woodland is a particularly valuable habitat, often supporting a diverse and complex understorey, providing hibernation, sheltering, and foraging opportunities for several species; and is likely to increase the density of populations within the locality of the Site. Small pockets of deciduous woodland were located 0.55km north-west from the Site. Whilst it was noted many species may use the woodland, many of the surrounding hedgerows were

defunct, and the immediate surrounding landscape comprised residential housing and infrastructure; therefore, limiting dispersal opportunities and deterring species from utilising the Site.

Amenity grassland was identified 0.20km north-east, 0.22km south-east and 0.51km south-west of the site. Amenity grassland is typically of low ecological value due to its intense management regime of frequent cutting, which reduces its botanical diversity to a few tolerant grass and herb species. Amenity grassland created from turf-laying and seed mixes are often made up of low numbers of botanical species. These conditions generally result in a reduction in opportunities for foraging species including pollinating invertebrates and its often short and uniform sward length can result in a lack of suitable sheltering opportunities for species.

Arable and pastureland was identified 0.70km south-east of the site. The intensity of arable farming can affect the ecological value of this resource. An arable field that is intensively farmed up to the boundary line has lower ecological value than that of a field that is surrounded by a field margin and is subject to minimal fertilizer/herbicide use.

Watercourses, such as rivers and streams, provide valuable shelter and foraging habitat for a range of species, such as otter and water vole, as well as providing valuable connectivity through the landscape. A small stream was identified 0.5km west of the site.

When considering the surrounding features, the foraging habitat around the Site was low due to the lack of habitats available. The connectivity between the Site and the wider landscape was also considered to be low due to the defunct hedgerows and physical barriers which would restrict movement to and from the Site.

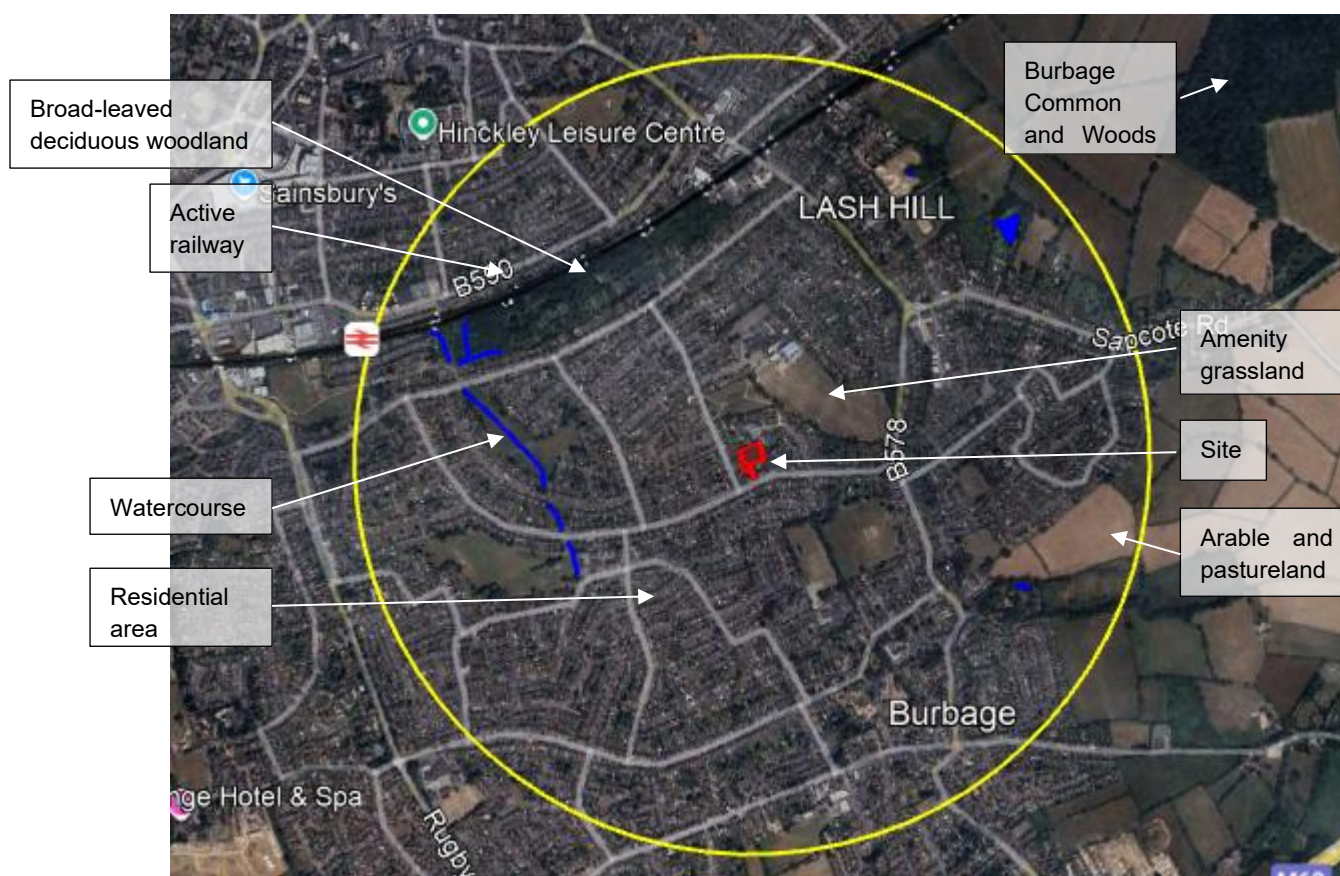


Figure 2: Habitat connectivity features within a 1km radius of the Site

3.2 Protected Species Records

3.2.1 Badger

***** All badger information should be kept confidential and remain out of the public domain*****

The data search returned 4 records of badger (*Meles meles*) sett with the closest and most recent record being 0.24km East of the site on 02/04/2020. 1 record of paw prints and snuffle marks was identified 0.24km East of the site on 12/02/2020.

3.2.2 Bats

The data search returned 30 records of Bats including: 9 records of Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) with the closest record being 0.61km Southwest of the site on 21/08/2017 and the most recent record being 0.67km Northeast of the site on 12/09/2023. 11 records of Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) with the closest record being 0.61km Southwest of the site on 21/08/2017 and the most recent record being 0.67km Northeast of the site on 12/09/2023. 3 records of Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) with the closest record being 0.61km Southwest of the site on 21/08/2017 and the most recent record being 0.80km Southeast of the site on 15/07/2019. 4 records of Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*) were identified with the closest and most recent record 0.67km Northeast of the site on 12/09/2023. 1 record of Bat (*Chiroptera*) was identified 0.76km North of the site on 20/07/2013. 1 record of a Myotis Bat (*Myotis*) was identified on 13/08/2020. This record is based on a broad grid reference with limited spatial precision. As a result, the exact distance from the site cannot be determined with confidence and should be treated as indicative only.

3.2.3 Hazel Dormouse

The data search returned no records of Hazel Dormouse.

3.2.4 Otter

The data search returned no records of Otter.

3.2.5 Water Vole

The data search returned no records of Water Vole.

3.2.6 Notable Mammals

The data search returned 34 records of Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) with the closest record being 0.04km East of the site on 01/03/2018 and the most recent record was 0.55km Southwest of the site on 20/11/2023.

3.2.7 Birds

The data search returned 182 records of 22 bird species including: Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*), Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*), Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*), Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*), Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*), Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*),

Marsh Tit (*Poecile palustris*), Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*), Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*), Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*), Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*), Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*).

3.2.8 Notable Birds

The data search returned 135 record of 11 notable bird species including: Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Swift (*Apus apus*) - within 0.04km of the site on 13/08/2022, House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Lesser Redpoll (*Acanthis cabaret*), Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) These species have been listed as notable due to being red-listed or because of their endangered status.

3.2.9 Amphibians

The data search returned 20 records of amphibians within a 1km radius of the site. This included 2 records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*), with the closest record identified 0.76km north-east of the site on 20/07/2013, and the most recent record on 09/04/2015, 0.81km north-east of the site. 1 record of smooth newt was identified 0.54km north-west of the site on 16/04/2022 (*Lissotriton vulgaris*). 15 records of common frog (*Rana temporaria*) were identified, with the closest record 0.72km north-east of the site on 10/05/2014 and the most recent record in March 2020, 0.84km north-east of the site. 2 records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) were identified 0.80km north-east of the site in April and May 2016.

3.2.10 Reptiles

The data search returned 10 records of grass snake (*Natrix Helvetica*) within a 1km radius of the site. The closest record was 0.62km north-east of the site in 2012, and the most recent record was 0.80km north-east of the site on the 16/06/2017.

3.2.11 Invertebrates

The data search returned 3 unique records including: Harlequin Ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*), Wall (*Lasiommata megera*), Cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*).

3.2.12 White-clawed Crayfish

The data search returned no records of White-clawed Crayfish.

3.2.13 Schedule 9 Species

The data search returned 8 records including: 4 records of Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) with the closest record being 0.24km East of the site on 04/06/2012 and the most recent record being 0.53km Southeast of the site on 16/07/2015. 2 records of Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) with the closest record being 0.69km Northeast of the site on 18/02/2014 and the most recent record being 0.74km Northeast of the site on 12/08/2017. 1 record of Curly Waterweed (*Lagarosiphon major*) was identified 0.83km Northeast of the site on 25/05/2016. 1 record of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) was identified 0.24km East of the site on 21/04/2011.

3.3 Extended Habitat Survey

3.3.1 Weather

The weather conditions during the Site visit on 29th August 2025 were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Weather conditions during the site visit.

Parameter	Recorded Figure
Temperature	18°C
Cloud cover	70%
Precipitation	None
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	2 – light breeze

3.4 Habitats

The Site comprised a dry, mown grassland in the north, with a native hedgerow bordering the south-west and north-west boundaries, as well as cutting through the grassland in the centre of the site. An abandoned and derelict structure was present in the west of the site, with scrub and individual trees. A vegetated garden was present in the south-west corner of the site with introduced shrubs present.

See the UKHab Classification Habitat Map below:

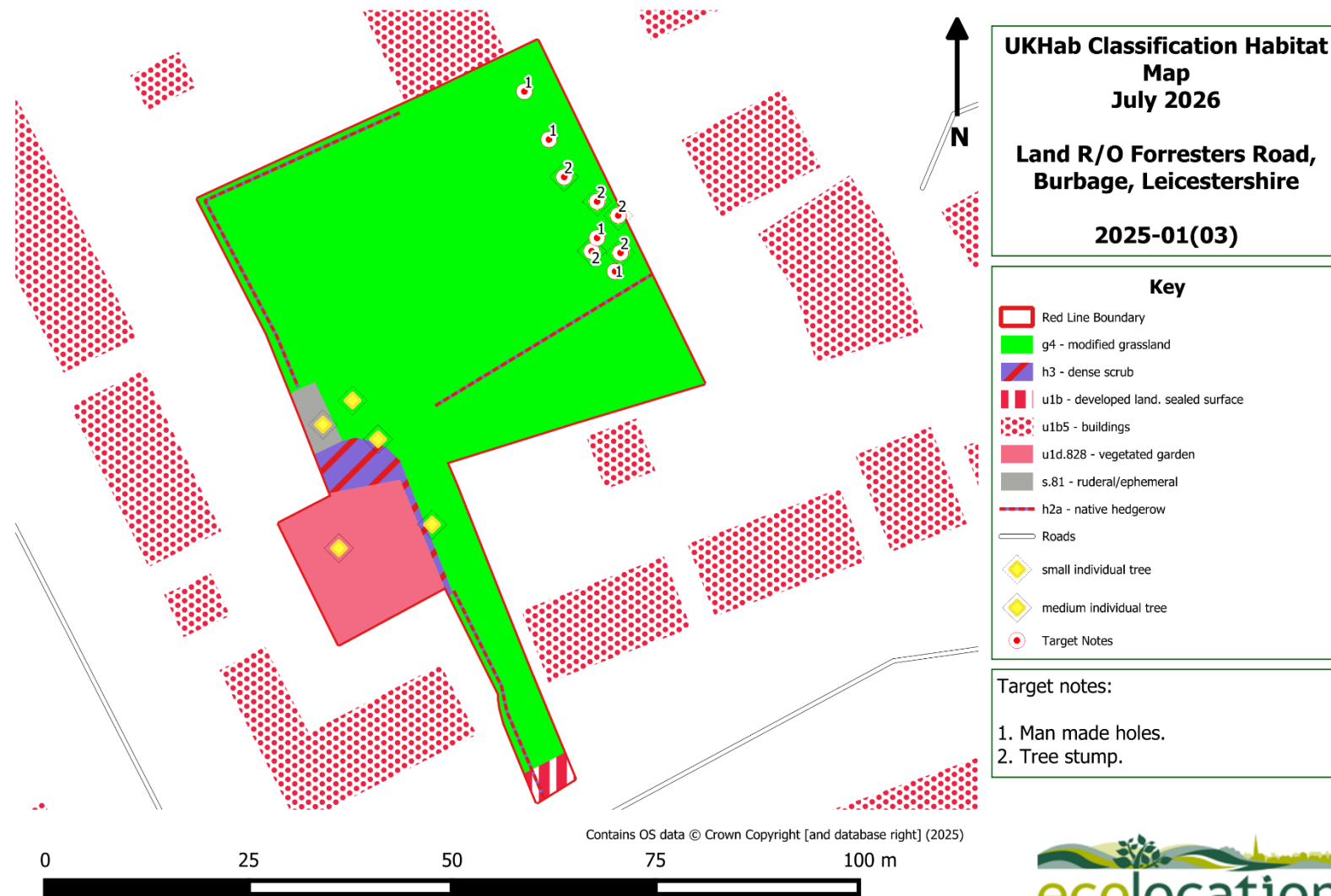


Figure 3: UKHabitat Classification Map.

3.4.1 g4 (106) – Modified grassland (mown)

The majority of the site comprised modified grassland, in the north of the site and on the track in the south of the site, which had been recently mown. Species included oat grass (*Arrhenatherum*) and fescue sp. (*Festuca*).



Photographs 1&2: modified grassland.

3.4.2 u1 (828; 846; 847) – Built up areas and gardens (vegetated garden; flower bed; introduced shrub)

A vegetated garden was present in the west of the site, with introduced shrubs, flower beds and 4no. individual trees. Species included perennial rye grass (*Lolium*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), heather sp. (*Calluna*), buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*), magnolia (*Magnolia*), cherry sp. (*Prunus* sp.), Aaronsbeard St. John's Wort (*Hypericum calycinum*), rose spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*).



Photographs 3&4: vegetated garden.

3.4.3 h2a6 – Other native hedgerow

Native hedgerows were present on the south-west and north-west boundaries, as well as through the centre of the site in the north, and present between the track and the vegetated garden in the south-west of the site. Species included hawthorn (*Crataegus*), holly (*Ilex*), ivy (*Hedera*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).



Photographs 5&6: left: hedgerow on the south-west boundary. Right: hedgerow cutting through the grassland in the north of the site.



Photograph 7: Hedgerow present between the vegetated garden and track.

3.4.4 s.81 (520) – Sparsely vegetated urban land (abandoned)

An abandoned and derelict structure was present in the west of the site, adjacent to the south-west boundary. Species such as bramble, ivy, buddleia and spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) were present inside this structure.



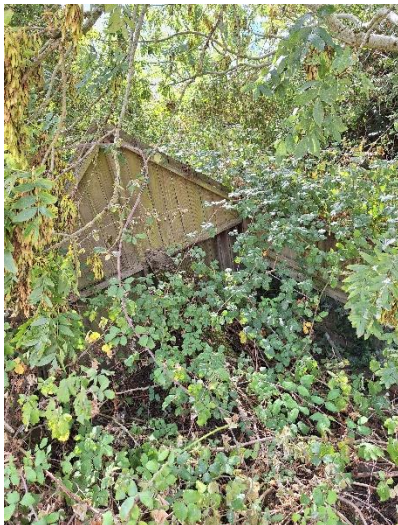
Photographs 8&9: Left: north-east elevation of the structure. Right: north-west elevation of the structure.



Photographs 10&11: vegetation growing inside the structure.

3.4.5 h3h (200) – Mixed scrub (trees)

A small pocket of mixed scrub was present in the west of the site, south of the structure, with 2no. individual trees present. Species included bramble, hawthorn, ivy, ash (*Fraxinus*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), geranium (*Geranium*), valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*). Old shed debris was also present within the scrub.



Photograph 12: Mixed scrub with shed debris.

3.4.6 Individual trees

Approximately 4no. individual trees were present within the vegetated garden, including buddleia and cherry. 3no. individual trees were present within the mixed scrub and structure in the west of the site including ash, field maple and buddleia. However, from ariel imaging, it was apparent that a group of approximately 6no. trees had been removed central to the north-east boundary.



Photographs 13&14: Left: ash tree present within mixed scrub. Right: buddleia present in the west of the site.

3.4.7 u1e – Built linear features

Timber panel fencing and brick walls were present on the south and north-east boundaries between the site and neighbouring residential properties.



Photographs 15&16: timber panel fences.

3.4.8 Building debris, brash pile, log pile

Building debris, such as timber panels, glass, and plastic debris, was present in the vegetated garden as well as a brash pile. A log pile mixed with rubble was also present within the derelict structure.



Photographs 17, 18 & 19: building debris, brash pile and a log pile.

3.5 Protected & Priority Species

3.5.1 Badger

***** All badger information should be kept confidential and remain out of the public domain*****

There was no evidence of badger recorded at the Site in the form of latrines, foraging signs, setts, etc.

3.5.2 Bats

The trees on the Site did not offer suitable rot holes, cracks or peeling bark for roosting bats, however the intact, native hedgerows and dense mixed scrub could offer commuting and foraging opportunities. The dilapidated structure did not offer any roosting potential for bats, despite its poor condition, as there was no roof nor sheltered crevices or voids.

3.5.3 Hazel dormouse

No evidence of hazel dormouse was identified on site during the site visit. The habitats on site would not provide suitable foraging or commuting for this species.

3.5.4 Otter

No evidence of otter was identified within the survey boundary. The habitats on site would not provide suitable foraging or commuting for this species.

3.5.5 Water vole

No evidence of water vole was identified during the site visit. The habitats on site would not provide suitable foraging or commuting for this species.

3.5.6 Notable mammals

No droppings, hairs or mammal tracks were identified during the survey; however, 4 no. holes, approximately 20cm in diameter, identified within the grassland were considered to be post holes, which, due to the size and shape arranged in a straight line, equally spaced, suggested a former fenceline. The brash pile, mixed scrub and native hedgerow could provide shelter and commuting for small mammals.



Photograph 20: potential manmade hole.

3.5.7 Birds

The potential for ground nesting birds was limited by the suburban location, limited size and poor structural diversity of the grassland sward. The scrub and hedgerows on site could be used by birds for nesting, commuting and foraging. A bird's nest comprised of twigs was present in the cherry tree in the vegetated garden, potentially woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*).

Incidental sightings of birds during the site visit in August included robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), pigeon sp., (*Columbidae*) and blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*).

3.5.8 Amphibians

There were no ponds on site or identified within 250m of the site. The closest pond was identified 0.70km south-east of the site.

The hedgerows, scrub, brash pile and modified grassland on Site offered potential shelter and commuting routes for amphibians, as well as supporting common invertebrates and in turn provide a foraging source for amphibians.

3.5.9 Reptiles

The hedgerows, introduced shrub, brash pile and mixed scrub could offer foraging, shelter and commuting routes for reptiles, however wider connectivity was considered poor due to a lack of hedgerows and suitable habitats surrounding the site. The rubble and log pile, as well as building debris could have provided limited basking opportunities.

3.5.10 Invertebrates

The mixed scrub could support invertebrates however it was of unsuitable scale, quality and diversity to support large numbers or populations of notable invertebrates. Incidental sightings of invertebrates recorded during the survey included lady bird sp., (*Coccinellidae*).

3.5.11 White clawed crayfish

No evidence of white clawed crayfish was identified within the survey boundary. The habitats on site would not provide suitable foraging or commuting for this species.

3.5.12 Invasive Species

No evidence of invasive species was identified within the survey boundary.

4 Evaluation

4.1 Designated Sites

No designated sites were identified on or adjacent to the Site. The closest confirmed statutory designated site was Burbage Common and Woods LNR, 1.3km north-east of the site. 16 non-statutory designated sites, all LWS, were identified within a 1km radius of the site, the closest of which was Lash Hill path Ash tree, 0.16km north-east of the site. Given the scale of the proposed works and the distance between the Site and any designated site, no impacts to designated sites are anticipated as a result of the proposals. Therefore, no further survey work or mitigation is required in this respect. Should the proposed plans change significant such as the scope and type of development, then advice should be sought from qualified ecologists to assess the potential impact.

4.2 Habitats

At the time of surveying the Site was considered to have habitats suitable for supporting small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates, breeding birds, and bats.

The vegetated garden including brash pile, as well as the derelict structure and modified grassland were considered to be of low ecological value, due to the size of the habitats within the red line boundary, the species diversity and poor structural diversity of the grassland. However, these habitats could provide limited shelter for small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles;

The mixed scrub, native hedgerows, and removed and retained trees were considered to be of moderate ecological value due to their potential to support nesting/roosting, commuting and foraging birds and bats, as well as provide shelter, commuting and foraging opportunities for small mammals, amphibians and reptiles. However, the connectivity to the wider environment was considered to be low due to the lack of connecting hedgerows and rural habitats.

Section 5 details mitigation measures that are required; in addition to enhancement opportunities which could help improve the ecological value of the habitat within the survey boundary and enhance species diversity post-development. Furthermore, the requirement for mitigation and compensation for loss of any habitat will be further assessed and secured through mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements.

4.3 Protected & Priority Species

4.3.1 Badger

***** All badger information should be kept confidential and remain out of the public domain*****

No evidence of active badger setts or activity, including banks suitable for sett building, were identified on site. It was considered unlikely that the site would be used for commuting by badgers due to the lack of suitable habitats for badgers in the wider area in all directions which comprised residential properties, acting as significant physical barriers and would restrict badgers commuting to and from the site.

The data search returned 4 records of badger sett with the closest and most recent record being 0.24km east of the site on 02/04/2020. 1 record of paw prints and snuffle marks was identified 0.24km East of the site on 12/02/2020, which suggests badgers are present within the wider area. No road traffic accidents were reported. No further survey work is required at this stage due to the low likelihood of badger being present on site.

Likelihood of foraging/commuting badger: LOW

4.3.2 Bats

No evidence of bats or potential roosting features were identified on any of the trees on site or in the derelict structure. It was considered likely that the site would be used by commuting and foraging bats.

The data search returned a total of 30 bat records within a 1km radius of the site, with the closest records of a noctule, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle 0.61km southwest of the site on 21/08/2017.

Overall, it was considered unlikely that bats would use the site for roosting, however bats could use the site for limited foraging and commuting. Suitable mitigation measures have also been recommended in section 5.

Likelihood of roosting bats: NEGLIGIBLE

Likelihood of bat foraging/commuting: LOW

4.3.3 Hazel dormouse

No evidence of hazel dormouse was recorded on site, and no records were identified during the data search.

Dormice were historically known from very few sites in Leicestershire, as they are limited to open deciduous woodland with a continually fruiting species rich understorey. A reintroduction programme at Bradgate Park appears to be the only currently known population.

Therefore, it is unlikely that this species would use the site and therefore no further survey work is recommended.

Likelihood of hazel dormouse presence: NEGLIGIBLE

4.3.4 Otter

No evidence of otter was recorded on site, and no records were identified during the data search. It is unlikely that otter would use the site due to the lack of watercourses or water bodies close by or connecting to the site, and therefore no further survey work is recommended.

Likelihood of otter presence: NEGLIGIBLE

4.3.5 Water vole

No evidence of otter was recorded on site, and no records were identified during the data search. It is unlikely that otter would use the site due to the lack of watercourses or water bodies close by or connecting to the site, and therefore no further survey work is recommended.

Likelihood of water vole presence: NEGLIGIBLE

4.3.6 Notable mammals

4no. holes were identified during the site visit in the north of the site, however these were considered to be manmade, and were likely where fenceposts had been previously removed. The hedgerows, mixed scrub and brash pile could have provided shelter and commuting opportunities for small mammals, such as hedgehog, as well as the dilapidated structure providing sheltering opportunities.

The data search returned 34 records of hedgehog with the closest record being 0.04km east of the site on 01/03/2018.

Overall, it was considered likely that hedgehogs could use the site. Vegetation that needs to be removed as part of any proposed works should be subject to precautionary mitigation and compensation as recommended in section 5.

Likelihood of notable mammal presence: MODERATE

4.3.7 Birds

Incidental sightings of pigeon sp., great tit and robin were recorded passing over the site during the survey. No signs of ground nesting birds were identified on site. A bird's nest comprising twigs, likely of a pigeon, was present in the cherry tree in the vegetated garden. The mixed scrub, hedgerows and dilapidated structure could be used by nesting birds, as well as foraging and commuting birds. Precautionary and compensatory measures are detailed in section 5 to safeguard wildlife.

Likelihood of nesting bird presence: MODERATE

4.3.8 Amphibians

No evidence of amphibians was identified on site, and the habitats on site were considered unlikely to support amphibians due to the lack of waterbodies on site and the limited connectivity to the wider landscape.

The data search returned 20 records of amphibians within a 1km radius of the site, including records of common toad, common frog, smooth newt, and great crested newt. The closest record was of a smooth newt, 0.54km north-west of the site on 16/04/2022. The closest record of a great crested newt was 0.80km north-east of the site in Burbage woods in 2016.

No further surveys are recommended for amphibians, however sensitive working practices and pre-works checks have been recommended in section 5 in order to safeguard wildlife.

Likelihood of amphibian presence: LOW

Likelihood of great crested newt presence: NEGLIGIBLE

4.3.9 Reptiles

No evidence of reptiles was identified on site, and the habitats on site were considered unlikely to support reptiles, despite the limited availability of basking opportunities within the log and rubble pile. The data search returned 10 records of grass snakes within a 1km radius of the site, with the closest record 0.62km north-east of the site in 2012. Overall, the habitats on the Site were considered to offer limited habitat for reptiles, and the connectivity from the site to the wider landscape was considered poor. Sensitive working practices and pre-works checks in order to safeguard wildlife have been recommended in section 5.

Likelihood of reptile presence: NEGLIGIBLE

4.3.10 Invertebrates

The data search returned 3 records of invertebrate species found within a 1km radius of the Site including Harlequin Ladybird, Wall, and Cinnabar. Incidental sightings recorded during the site visit included lady bird. The mixed scrub was of unsuitable scale, quality and diversity to support large numbers or populations of notable invertebrates. Therefore, the proposed development is not considered to significantly affect the conservation status of any invertebrate species, and no further survey work is recommended. Habitat creation/soft landscaping as part of

redevelopment works could provide an opportunity to replace the current habitat with that of higher biodiversity value for invertebrates which could lead to beneficial impacts (see section 5).

Likelihood of notable invertebrate presence: LOW

4.3.11 White clawed crayfish

No evidence of white clawed crayfish was recorded on site, and no records were identified during the data search. It is unlikely that this species would use the site due to the lack of suitable watercourses or water bodies close to the site, and therefore no further survey work is recommended.

Likelihood of white clawed crayfish presence: NEGLIGIBLE

4.3.12 Invasive Species

The data search returned 8 records of invasive species, including: Himalayan Balsam, Muntjac, Curly Waterweed, and Japanese. 3no. Buddleia were recorded on site, in the vegetated garden and to the west of the Site. No further survey work regarding invasive species is recommended.

Likelihood of invasive species presence: NEGLIGIBLE

5 Obligations and Recommendations

5.1 Obligations

5.1.1 Further surveys

- The need for further survey work has not been identified. Should evidence of any other protected species be discovered during works, works should temporarily be put on hold whilst Ecolocation or the local office of Natural England are contacted for advice on the best way to proceed.
- In order to ensure that the biodiversity net gain will be achieved on site, post development, in accordance with the Environment Act, 2021, a 'small sites' BNG calculation must be carried out for this site (see below).

5.1.2 Biodiversity Net Gain

The Environment Act 2021 made a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) mandatory for all but exemptions on 12th February 2024. For small sites, this requirement came into effect from 2nd April 2024. In England, BNG is mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%, meaning a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.

A small development means:

- residential development where the number of dwellings is between 1 and 9 on a site of an area 1 hectare or less, or if the number of dwellings is unknown, the site area is less than 0.5 hectares
- commercial development where floor space created is less than 1,000 square metres or total site area is less than 1 hectare
- development that is not the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits
- development that is not waste development

This project does qualify as a small development and the small sites metric could be applied. A suitably qualified ecologist should use the published statutory biodiversity metric tool current at the time of use to ensure that the development obtains a biodiversity net gain.

5.1.3 Mitigation

- No lighting should be directed towards the boundaries of the Site, particularly to the west where the woodland is present. This will minimise disturbance and maintain dark corridors for potential use by commuting and foraging bats. Where lighting is essential, such as emergency or security lighting, this should only be active when necessary and cowed to preclude extensive and upward light spillage as set out in the guidelines by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and Institution of Lighting Professionals (BCT and ILP, 2023).
- Any excavations which will not be left in a tidy backfilled state overnight must be left trimmed, and with a rough-surfaced, 200mm wide board of untreated timber present, set at max. 45° angle from base to top to enable any animals falling-in to escape. In addition to this, any pipes over 120mm in diameter should be capped off at night to prevent animals entering.
- Where possible, trees should be retained and protected during works in accordance with BS5837: 2012 'Trees in relation to construction' for the purposes of ensuring that potential bird nesting habitat and sheltering habitat for other notable species, as well as potentially valuable connective corridors through the landscape, are maintained. The root protection zones of adjacent off-site trees should also be protected within the site during works.
- Grassland should ideally be habitually retained at the sward length at the time of survey. However, if this is not possible, any future vegetation clearance must apply precautionary measures to comprise a two-

phased strim approach of any long vegetation under ecological supervision. The first strim would reduce the vegetation to 20cm in height to encourage any species to move out of the area. A second pass should reduce the vegetation height to 5cm which would render the habitat unsuitable for these species. Strimming should take place when the air temperature is above 9°C, so that any reptiles are active and able to move away, and the vegetation should be hand searched prior to the second strim. This precautionary approach will also mitigate for any minor amphibian, reptile and hedgehog presence. Should protected species, such as great crested newts, be discovered during works, works should temporarily stop while Ecolocation or the local office of Natural England are contacted for advice on the best way to proceed.

- Where vegetation (or structures) suitable for breeding birds are to be removed, it will be essential to consider the nesting bird season and removal should be timed outside of the nesting bird season (typically 1st March to 31st August), unless features are first searched by a suitably qualified ecologist and no active nests are found. Breeding birds may also be present in adjacent off-site vegetation and as such, where works are to be undertaken in close proximity to retained suitable vegetation the potential for nesting birds to be present should also be mitigated for through nesting bird checks to avoid significant disturbance to any active nests until the young have fledged and permanently left the nest.

5.2 Recommendations

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) section 15 paragraph 192 states that "To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should: ...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". In order to ensure no net loss of biodiversity in accordance with NPPF & Circular 06/2005, and that precautionary measures are in place, recommendations are made below:

5.2.1 Opportunities

The National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 193 states that "...opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design...". Therefore, additional recommendations for biodiversity enhancements across the Site are provided below:

- New planting is required to compensate for the loss of the ornamental hedgerow and amenity grassland, as a minimum. Planting marginal plants around the ditch is also suggested. Any new landscaping proposed should make use of **native species**, preferably of local provenance, which are of higher value to local wildlife. The planting of native species which are appropriate to the landscape character may improve local species diversity as well as increase the potential for use of the Site by wildlife. In particular, new planting along the western boundary of the Site, such as low impact/water demand trees and/or a new species-rich hedgerow, would improve the habitats and potential for connectivity on this side of the Site, increasing the value to local wildlife.
- Any **waterbodies/SUDS** proposed on Site could provide some ecological gains if designed with biodiversity in mind. Areas which will hold water for longer lengths of time could be designed as wildlife ponds. New ponds could be planted with native aquatic and marginal plants and excavated in such a way as to allow ease of access by faunal species such as small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates.
- Consideration could be given to creating **log piles** within areas of open green space, SUDS features or along hedgerows to provide suitable habitat for invertebrates and shelter for amphibians, reptiles and small mammals. These should be sited in shady places and the lowest logs should be buried a few centimetres into the soil to keep them damp.
- **Hedgehogs** are a UKBAP Priority Species and have suffered a significant decline in numbers in recent years. With the loss of hedgerow habitat, hedgehogs increasingly rely on gardens and parks. Hedgehogs roam between 1-2km each night during their active season. It is therefore critical that they can access a

wide range of gardens. In order to preserve the opportunities for hedgehogs to move freely through any proposed development and take advantage of foraging, it is recommended that if any fences are used within the survey boundary, a hole around 15cm in diameter is left at any point. The access hole can be achieved by digging a hole underneath a fence, leaving a brick or two out of the base of a wall, or cutting a small hole in the base of the fence. Hedgehog fence plates could also be used to ensure these gaps are clearly visible and to prevent them from being blocked.



Eco Hedgehog Hole Fence Plate

- **Nest boxes** for swift or house sparrow (birds of conservation concern recorded nearby), such as those illustrated below, could be provided on Site to maintain, and enhance the existing breeding possibilities. Such nesting facilities should be sited away from roads, erected on any suitable proposed buildings and facing away from prevailing wind and rain.



RSPB house sparrow terrace



RSPB swift nest box

- A small number of **bat boxes**, such as the Schwegler 1FF, for species such as pipistrelle could be erected on retained or new trees or buildings, in order to provide additional opportunities for roosting bats. Boxes should be placed in a south-facing direction between 4 and 5m high. Ecolocation would be happy to offer further advice on this if necessary.



Schwegler 1FF bat box

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Appendix 1 - Proposed Plans



Appendix 2 - Species List 29/08/2025

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance
DAFOR: D – dominant; A – abundant; F – frequent; O – occasional; R – rare locally		
Trees/Shrubs		
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	A
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	F
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	A
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	R
Cherry	<i>Prunus sp.</i>	R
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	R
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	A
Magnolia	<i>Magnolia sp.</i>	R
Buddleia	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>	O
Heather sp.	<i>Calluna sp.</i>	R
Herbs		
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	O
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	O
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	R
Geranium	<i>Geranium sp.</i>	R
Valerian	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	R
Aaronsbeard St. John's Wort	<i>Hypericum calycinum</i>	R
Rose spirea	<i>Spiraea douglasii</i>	R
Grasses, Sedges and Rushes		
Perennial Rye Grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	A
Oat Grass	<i>Arrhenatherum</i>	A
Fescue Sp.	<i>Festuca sp.</i>	A
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	A
Fauna		
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	
Pigeon sp.	<i>Columbidae</i>	
Ladybird	<i>Coccinellidae</i>	