

The background of the page is a photograph of a field filled with numerous yellow wildflowers, possibly buttercups, growing in tall grass. In the distance, there is a line of trees under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of this image.

Lodge Farm School, Markfield

Ecological Appraisal

2024

Client Lodge Farm School

Project Title Lodge Farm School, Markfield

Project Reference RHE.4369

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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing educational development of land owned by Lodge Farm School, Markfield, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the ecological features of the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on the ecological interest. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

The site has a low level of ecological interest. Ecological features of interest include immature mixed woodland, modified grassland and a vegetated garden.

Outcomes

Further survey work is not required because the impacts can be fully determined from the field survey and desk study that have been carried out.

Establishing scrub habitat on modified grassland will provide a net gain for biodiversity to comply with legislation and policy.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2024 by Lodge Farm School to carry out an ecological appraisal of land in woodland to the south of the school campus. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SK 4779 0880 (see Figure 1).

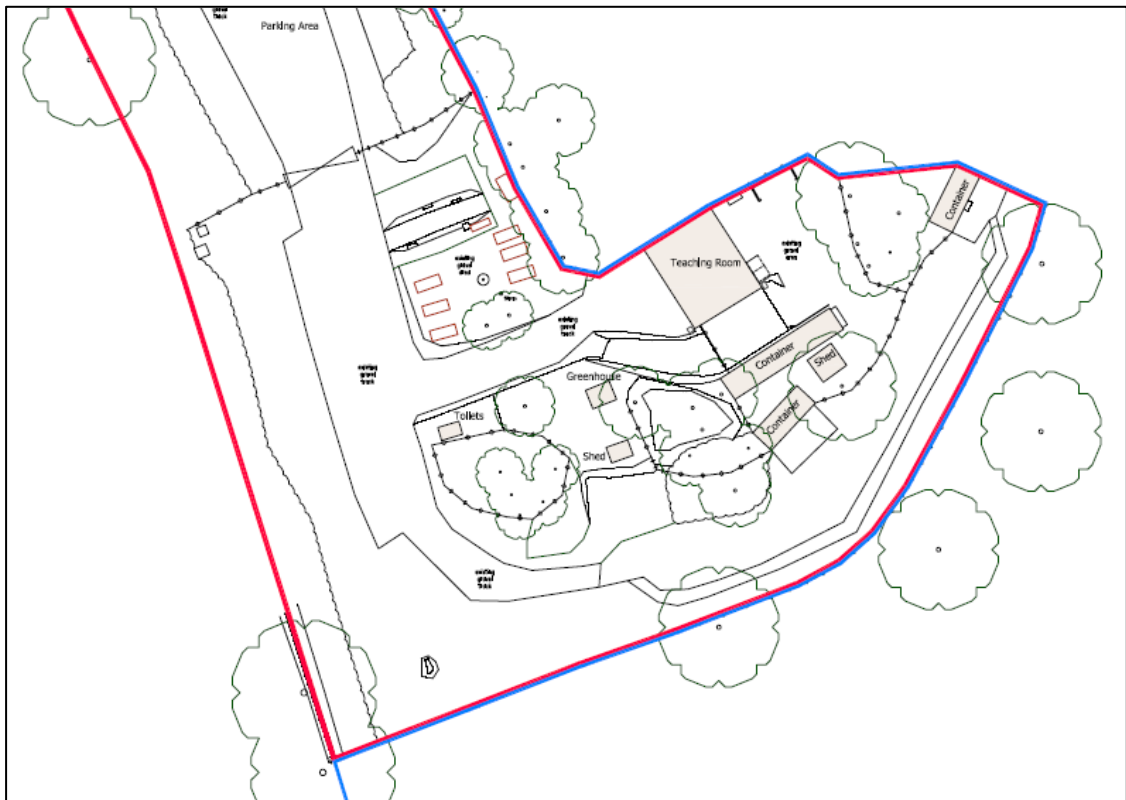


Figure 1. Location Map

- 1.1.2 The proposed development site is a woodland clearing with access tracks, islands of semi-mature mixed woodland, a modified grass strip, a vegetated garden, portacabins, portable toilets, wooden sheds, a generator and metal storage sheds. The site is enclosed with Heras panel fencing. The site is surrounded to the north and east by semi-mature mixed woodland, to the south by plantation broadleaved woodland and to the west by a hedgerow and farmland.

Description of Development

- 1.1.3 The site will be the subject of a retrospective planning application to regularise the use of the land for education. The land is part of the Lodge Farm School.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out the following works:
- Desk-based study to obtain details of designated sites, protected and notable species within a specified search area.
 - Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within and next to the site.
 - Calculate the baseline and post-development biodiversity units.
 - Search for signs of protected species and assessment of the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species.

1.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 1.3.1 Mark Woods *MCIEEM, CEcol* (Principal Ecologist) who has more than 35 years of professional experience, visited the site on 14 October 2024. Mark has carried out similar studies throughout England.

Weather

- 1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was overcast with a spell of light rain.



2. Methods

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 The Magic website (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) was interrogated for the presence of Statutory Designated Sites (and European Protected Species licences) within a 2km radius of the site.
- 2.1.2 The site was checked to determine if it is located within an Impact Risk Zones for any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and if so, whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult Natural England.
- 2.1.3 The Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre was contacted to provide details of non-statutory designated sites and records of protected and notable species within a 1km radius of the site.

2.2 Field Survey

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 In accordance with JNCC guidelines¹ the site was walked over and the habitats and features of ecological interest were mapped and described. Habitats and features of particular interest were target noted.
- 2.2.2 During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines². Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.3.1 During the site walkover the ecological condition of each habitat was assessed in accordance with the Defra (2024) guidelines³. Habitat types recorded and mapped during the field survey were converted

¹ JNCC (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

² CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

³ [The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_.pdf](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

from the JNCC system to the UK Habitat Classification system⁴.

- 2.3.2 Habitat data including type, area (or length), condition and strategic location were uploaded to the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculator spreadsheet to determine the baseline value of the site. The extent of any habitats to be retained or enhanced was also entered into baseline worksheets.
- 2.3.3 The post-development masterplan was interrogated to determine areas of hard standing, buildings, and associated infrastructure. New, retained and enhanced habitats were classified and allocated a target condition, based on habitat type, location and management input. This information was uploaded to the metric spreadsheet to obtain a post-development value.
- 2.3.4 The pre- and post-development values were compared to determine whether the yield of biodiversity units achieved a deficit or gain.

2.4 Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.4.1 Mitigation measures should be embedded within the masterplan design and planning application process. Measures during the construction phases should be included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan: Biodiversity (CEMP). This process from proposal to implementation needs to consider the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoid, reduce, compensate, and enhance:
 - Aim to avoid negative effects through the design process.
 - Mitigate if negative effects cannot be avoided.
 - Use compensation measures to offset residual impacts.
 - Identify and implement opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

⁴ Butcher, B., Carey, P., et al. (2020). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1. at <http://UKhab.org>

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

- 3.1.1 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are 3 years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old.
- 3.1.2 There were no constraints to the survey.

3.2 Designated Sites

- 3.2.1 The desk study provided information on the statutory and non-statutory designated sites and these are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Designated Sites			
Name	Status	Location/distance	Interest
Thornton Reservoir	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	0.365km, southwest	Reservoir with emergent & floating vegetation, significant bird & amphibian assemblages, mature trees, species-rich hedgerows, woodland, Red Data Book species. Community value.
Cliffe Hill Quarry	SSSI	1.5km, north	Geological

- 3.2.2 The desk study identified that the site was located within the Impact Risk Zone of Ulverscroft Valley SSSI. The proposed development will not require the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England regarding impacts on statutory designated sites.

3.3 Habitats

- 3.3.1 Target Notes and photographs are contained in Appendix 3 and the habitats survey plan is contained in Appendix 4. Condition Assessments are provided in Appendix 5.



Woodland and Scrub

- 3.3.2 The site is surrounded by two distinct stands of woodland. To the south there is a semi-mature Other Broadleaved Woodland, which is a Poplar *Populus* spp. plantation. To the north and east the woodland is a younger Other Mixed Woodland stand. The site has been created by clearance of part of the Other Mixed Woodland, which has left small stands of woodland at the centre of the site and larger stands to the northeast and east which merge into the surrounding woodland.
- 3.3.3 The patches of retained Other Mixed Woodland (TN3) have a fairly uniform height with even-aged Scots Pine *Pinus sylvestris* and regenerating Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa*. For the most part the stands of woodland support a field layer of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and Greater Willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, but there is a more open area of woodland that is dominated by a rough grassland field layer containing False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Soft Rush *Juncus effusus*, Compact Rush *Juncus conglomeratus*, Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus* and Broadleaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*. Collectively the stands are in poor ecological condition (score of 20 points) because of uniform age and structure, limited deadwood, abundance of Scots Pine and lack of woodland herbs.

Hedgerows

- 3.3.4 There is a boundary hedgerow (TN1) to the west, which is outside of the site boundary. It is unmanaged, species-rich and intact. It extends for the length of the woodland. Species include Pedunculate Oak, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Elm *Ulmus* agg., Hazel *Corylus avellana* and Butterfly Bush *Buddleja davidii*.

Grassland

- 3.3.5 A grass verge (TN2) located alongside the west boundary hedgerow also extends east to west along the south of the site boundary, separating the Poplar plantation from the site. The verge is short and of uniform structure. There is no scrub and the cover of weeds is very localised. Species include Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Broadleaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Dove's-foot Crane's-bill *Geranium molle* and Cock's-foot. The grassland is in 'poor' ecological condition because it has an average of less than six species per square metre.

Vegetated Garden

- 3.3.6 A small patch of vegetated garden (TN4) in the northwest corner of the site includes young Scots Pine and Pedunculate Oak trees, a semi-mature Goat Willow *Salix caprea*, raised flower and vegetable beds, bare ground, and a modified grassland lawn.

3.4 Biodiversity Net Gain

3.4.1 Table 3 provides a summary of the baseline value of area habitats within the site.

Table 3. Summary of Baseline Area Habitat Values			
Habitat (Reference No.)	Area (ha)	Condition	Value
Hard standing (metalled surface)	0.138	Not Applicable	0
Temporary Buildings	0.021	Not Applicable	0
Modified Grassland (TN2)	0.148	Poor	0.30
Other Mixed Woodland (TN3)	0.025	Poor	0.10
Vegetated Garden (TN4)	0.027	Not Applicable	0.05
Totals	0.359		0.45

3.5 Species

3.5.1 The desk study provided records of species associated with habitats such as open water that are irrelevant to this study and they have not been described or considered below.

Badger

3.5.2 The desk study returned four Badger *Meles meles* records within the search area, the nearest being 0.637km from the site.

3.5.3 No field signs were located but the site and surrounding habitat provides suitable habitat to establish a sett and to provide foraging opportunities.

Bats

3.5.4 The desk study returned 81 records of at least six species including Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared Bat *Plecotus auritus*, Daubenton's Bat *Myotis daubentonii*, Noctula *Nyctalus noctula* and Serotine *Eptesicus serotina*. The nearest record for any bat was 0.639m distance and the nearest roost was more than 0.7km distance.

3.5.5 None of the buildings or trees within the site contained any Potential Roosting Features (PRFs). The trees were all semi-mature without rot holes, flaking bark or cracks.

3.5.6 The buildings included a large portacabin, two steel containers, a wooden shed, a generator and four mobile toilets. None of these buildings contained any PRFs.

3.5.7 The open areas of the site and woodland edge provide suitable, sheltered foraging and commuting habitat.



Other Mammals

- 3.5.8 The desk study returned a single record of Western European Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* more than 0.8km from the site. There are disturbed areas, log piles and gaps below temporary buildings and structures where Hedgehog could be located.

Birds

- 3.5.9 The desk study returned 127 records of 23 species that could be found in or next to the woodland habitats.
- 3.5.10 During the field survey Great Tit *Parus major*, Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* and Robin *Erithacus rubecula* were observed foraging on the site.

Reptiles

- 3.5.11 The desk study did not return any records for the site. No signs of reptiles were encountered during the survey and the site in its present condition is sub-optimal because of the constant generator noise and vibration, and routine disturbance of the grounds surrounding the buildings. Reptiles are not, therefore, considered any further in this report.

Amphibians

- 3.5.12 The desk study returned four records of Common Frog *Rana temporaria* within the search area the nearest being more than 0.75km from the site.
- 3.5.13 The woodland and grassland habitats within the site provide cover and foraging habitat for Common Frog but there is no breeding habitat. Habitats most likely to support amphibians such as woodland and grassland are unlikely to be disturbed on a routine basis and such disturbance is unlikely to involve machinery so an adverse impact on amphibians is not anticipated and they are not considered any further in this report.

Invertebrates

- 3.5.14 The desk study returned three species of butterfly and three species of moth within the search area. suitable habitat is not present for any of the desk study species and given the high levels of disturbance it is considered that the site is unlikely to support notable or protected invertebrates. Invertebrates are not considered any further in this report.

Plants

- 3.5.15 The desk study returned 23 records of ten species, none of which are present on the site. The only relevant species is Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and that is unlikely to colonise if the site is disturbed. There is no further consideration of rare and notable plant species in this report.



3.6 Invasive Species

Plants

- 3.6.1 The desk study returned 29 records of seven species. Several of the species are potential colonists of woodland habitat but a search of the site confirmed that there are no invasive species within the site boundary.

Animals

- 3.6.2 The desk study returned eight records of Chinese Muntjac *Muntiacus reevesi* and three records of Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*. No signs of either species or any other invasive species were found during the site survey. The site has suitable habitat for both species, but the on-going activities will not cause the spread of either species so they are no longer considered in this report.



4. Assessment

4.1 Impacts on Designated Sites

- 4.1.1 Thornton Reservoir LWS and Cliffe Hill Quarry SSSI are geographically separated from the site so a direct impact is not anticipated. The school activity will not increase visitor numbers to Thornton Reservoir so increased recreational pressures will not occur.

4.2 Impacts on Habitats

- 4.2.1 There will be no change to the extent and condition of any of the extant habitats on the site apart from 0.01ha of modified grassland verge. The woodland areas (TN3) are, for the most part, separated by temporary fences from the operational areas and the grass track (TN2) appears to be used infrequently. The garden area (TN4) will continue to be disturbed by gardening activity, but this does not mean that it will be degraded.

4.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.3.1 Achieving 10% BNG is now a mandatory requirement for most developments in England under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. Given that there will be no change to the layout within the site boundary it is necessary to seek offsite opportunities to realise a net gain for biodiversity.
- 4.3.2 The baseline habitat value within the redline development is **0.45** area units. To achieve a net gain of 10% will require **0.495** units.
- 4.3.3 Conversion of 0.01ha of the modified grassland TN2 (the grass verge) to mixed scrub will increase the overall value of the site to **0.5 (11.16%)** units and achieve the net gain required to be compliant with legislation.

4.4 Impacts on Species

Badger

- 4.4.1 There will be no significant change to the layout of the site apart from some additional shrub planting so an adverse impact on Badger is not anticipated.

Bats

- 4.4.2 There will be no change to the layout of the site apart from some additional shrub planting so an adverse impact on bat activity is not anticipated. The proposed development provides an opportunity to enhance the site for bats by attaching bat roosting boxes to suitable trees.

Hedgehog

- 4.4.3 Given that there will be no disturbance of features that could provide cover and foraging for Hedgehog an adverse impact is not anticipated,

Birds

- 4.4.4 Assuming that features such as trees and shrubs are not disturbed during the nesting season an adverse impact on birds is not anticipated.
- 4.4.5 The proposed development provides an opportunity to enhance the site for nesting birds by attaching nesting boxes to suitable trees.



5. Recommendations

5.1 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

Habitats

- 5.1.1 Convert 0.01ha of the grass verge alongside hedgerow TN1 (within the site) to a strip of mixed scrub habitat. Plant native shrubs at 2m centres. Species will include Hazel (20%), Hawthorn (20%), Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* (10%), Holly (10%), Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris* (10%), Elder *Sambucus nigra* (20%) and Dog Rose *Rosa canina* (10%).
- 5.1.2 Implement a five-year aftercare period that includes replacement planting, weeding and mowing, repairs or replacement of individual shrub guards / supports. Removal of guards after five years. If the habitat is fully established after that time, further intervention will not be necessary to achieve moderate condition if the surrounding grassland is allowed to grow tall. Criteria A, C and D will be achieved.

Roosting Bats

- 5.1.3 Enhancement of the site for roosting bats can be achieved by making six wooden bat roosting boxes⁵ and attaching to the south facing trunk of trees at more than 4m height, in the vicinity of the site.

Nesting Birds

- 5.1.4 If there is a requirement to carry out works to the trees then impacts on nesting birds should be avoided by carrying out site clearance and similar operations outside of the bird breeding season (March-August). Construction activities that might directly impact upon breeding birds should hence be limited to the September-February period. If vegetation has to be cleared during the bird breeding season checks immediately before clearance by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required. If nesting activity is detected work in that area will need to stop until the ecologist considers that nesting activity is finished.
- 5.1.5 Enhancement of the site for nesting bats can be achieved by making six wooden nest boxes⁶ and attaching to the west or east facing trunk of trees at more than 4m height, in the vicinity of the site.

⁵ <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-bat-box> (or equivalent)

⁶ <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-bird-box> (or equivalent)

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 180 and 186, shown below:

- 180. 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;
 - 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.
- 186. 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.

Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000) includes the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs can be notified for their floral, faunal, geological, or physiographical features. Protection against damaging operations and management of SSSIs is also included within the Act. Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are zones around an SSSI account for the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and identify development proposal which could have adverse impacts.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000) protects native animals, plants and habitats. Under the Act it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5 and it is an offence to interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals occupying such places. The Act prohibits picking, uprooting or destroy any wild plant (or any attached seed or spore) listed in Schedule 8.

European Protected Species (EPS) such as bats, Hazel Dormouse, Otter, Natterjack Toad, Smooth Snake, Sand Lizard and Great Crested Newt are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Acts make it an offence to:

- a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill an EPS;
- b) Deliberately impair an EPS's ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture young; to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the EPS.
- c) Possess or control live or dead EPS or any part of, or anything derived from a EPS;
- d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an EPS;



- e) Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that is used for shelter or protection by an EPS;
- f) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection that is occupied by an EPS.

All common herptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000). Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Common Lizard, Adder are protected against intentional killing or injury. Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt is protected against sale. In addition, all British reptiles, Common toad and Great Crested Newt are listed as Species of Principal Importance.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage, or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully, or to attempt to kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Interference of a sett includes disturbing badgers during occupation of a sett, or damaging or destroying a sett, or obstructing access to the sett.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats. These are the species and habitats found in England which are regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'important' hedgerows from destruction or damage. A hedgerow is 'important' if it (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows unless permitted by the local planning authority.

The Environment Act 2023 makes it mandatory for housing and development, subject to some narrow exemptions, to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity – a requirement that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than before the development. Developers must submit a 'biodiversity gain plan' alongside usual planning application documents. The local authority must assess whether the 10% net gain requirement is met in order to approve the biodiversity gain plan.

The Environment Act 2023 strengthens the duty on public authorities (NERC Act, 2006) to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

The Environment Act 2023 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to introduce an additional purpose for granting a protected species licence in relation to development, 'for reasons of overriding public interest', and two additional tests for the granting of such licences: that there is 'no other satisfactory solution' and that granting the licence is 'not detrimental to the survival of any the population of the species concerned'. These changes will reduce the scope for unlicensed activities to provide clear safeguards before licences can be granted, providing legal certainty and clarity to developers about their environmental obligations.

Appendix 2: Desk Study

The report includes a summary of the species records that were made available. Should wish to see further details please submit a written request to Rachel Hacking Ecology. We will contact the client to ask permission to share the data.



Appendix 3: Target Notes

Reference No.	Habitat	Photograph
1	Species-rich Native Hedgerow with Trees	
2	Modified Grassland	
3	Other Mixed Woodland	

		
4	Vegetated Garden	

Appendix 4: Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 5: Condition Assessments

Condition Assessment Criteria: Woodland TN3					
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes ¹ present.	Two age-classes ¹ present.	One age-class ¹ present.	1
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in less than 40% of whole woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland ² .	3
C	Invasive plant species	No invasive species ³ present in woodland.	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, and other invasive species ³ <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ³ ≥10% cover.	3
D	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species ⁴ across woodland parcel.	1
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native ⁵ .	1
F	Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted ⁷ .	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ .	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category ⁷ .	2
G	Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland ⁸ ; trees 4 -	One or two classes only present in woodland ⁸ .	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland ⁸ .	2

Condition Assessment Criteria: Woodland TN3					
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator
		7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.			
H	Tree health	Tree mortality 10% or less, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback ⁹ .	11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present ⁹ .	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present ⁹ .	2
I	Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present.	1
J	Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland ¹¹ .	Two storeys across all survey plots ¹¹ .	One or less storey across all survey plots ¹¹ .	1
K	Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees ¹² per hectare.	One veteran tree ¹² per hectare.	No veteran trees ¹² present in woodland.	1
L	Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	1
M	Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment, and or	1

Condition Assessment Criteria: Woodland TN3					
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator
		damaged ground evident ¹⁴ .	enrichment across woodland area, and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	
Total Score (out of a possible 39)					20 (poor)

Condition Assessment Criteria: Modified Grassland (TN2)			Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1).		No
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.		No
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present).		Yes
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.		No
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .		Yes
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.		Yes
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).		Yes