THREE SHIRES LTD
ECOLOGY, FENCING, ARBORICULTURE, INVASIVE WEEDS

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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

July 2025

Sapcote Road, Burbage

HSSP Architects

Report for:

HSSP Architects

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Document Revisions

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1	First Issue of Report	21/03/2025
1.1	Updates following LPA comments	29/07/2025

Management Systems

This document has been produced by Three Shires Ltd in full compliance with our management systems, which have been certified to ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 and ISO 45001:2018.

Contents

Non-Technical Summary

Three Shires Ltd was commissioned by HSSP Architects, on behalf of the Site owner, to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a proposed residential development on an area of land at 11 Sapcote Road, Burbage, Leicestershire.

The survey included a baseline habitat assessment, and a Preliminary Roost Assessment of buildings and trees, with an assessment of the habitat suitability for protected and notable species.

Development of the Site will include the removal of existing vegetation and buildings and replaced with three residential properties, associated gardens, access and parking.

There are two statutory designated sites within 2km of the Site, Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI and Burbage Common & Woods LNR. Neither are considered likely to be impacted by the proposed development.

The habitats present on Site were:

1. Dense Bramble Scrub;
2. Vegetated Garden and Sparsely vegetated Urban Land;
3. Existing buildings and Other Developed Land

One building on Site was noted with several potential roosting features and was assessed as having moderate potential for roosting bats, and the Site has limited potential to to support foraging and commuting bats.

The habitats on Site provide suitable nesting and foraging habitat for birds.

The Site provides hibernation and foraging habitat for hedgehog, and offers connectivity to other suitable habitat.

Although there are areas of the Site with suitable habitat to support several protected species, no evidence was recorded on Site and there is a lack of connectivity to commuting and foraging habitats within the wider landscape. It is therefore considered unlikely that further protected species are present on Site.

No further records or signs of protected species were noted on-site and therefore are unlikely to be impacted by the development.

Overall, the Site has both low ecological value habitats and is expected to have a minimal effect on protected habitats and species in the surrounding area.

It is recommended that at least two presence-absence surveys are carried out to determine if bats are roosting in the building identified as having roosting potential. These surveys should be conducted between May and September, with at least one survey between May and August.

Removal of scrub or trees should be conducted outside the active nesting bird season, or, if not possible, with supervision from a suitably qualified ecologist.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

In support of a planning application for a re-development of the Site into housing units, Three Shires Limited was commissioned in January 2025 by HSSP to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of an area of land at 11 Sapcote Road, Burbage, LE10 2AS, hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

The Site has been vacant and unmanaged for five years.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

The aim of this report is to provide an assessment of the current biodiversity value of the Site, highlight any other ecological features that have the potential to be impacted by any proposed development, and inform the design of the proposed development. The report follows best practice guidance[1] and follows the principles of the mitigation hierarchy and British Standard (BS) 42020 2013[2]

The objectives are to:

- Identify any designated sites for nature conservation and priority habitats that are on, near or adjacent to the Site;
- Identify any notable and/or protected plant or animal species of conservation value, which may occur on or near the Site;
- Identify the presence of any invasive plant species on or adjacent to the Site;
- Provide a map with habitats recorded using the UKHAB convention with target notes of ecological features as identified above;
- Undertake a preliminary assessment of the potential impacts on any ecological receptors of conservation value identified on, near or adjacent to the Site; and
- Recommend further surveys, mitigation, offsetting opportunities and enhancement measures as appropriate.

1.3 Site Location and Context

The Site is approximately 0.18ha and situated approximately 1km north of the village of Burbage and approximately 1.5km southeast of the town of Hinckley, Leicestershire. The approximate centre of the Site lies at British National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 44172 93466 (**Figure 1**).

The Site consists of an uninhabited residential bungalow, overgrown vegetated garden and scrub bordered by residential housing to the northern, eastern and western boundaries. Sapcote Road is adjacent to the southern boundary.

The wider landscape to the north and northeast of the Site consists of arable farmland and deciduous woodland forming Burbage Common and Woods Country Park, separated by a railway line. To the west and

[1] Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition, CIEEM December 201
[2] Biodiversity — Code of practice for planning and development, British Standards Institute 2013

south is the village of Burbage with a mosaic of housing, gardens and public greenspace. The northwest extends further into the residential and urban areas of the town of Hinckley (**Figure 2**).

Figure 1: Site Location

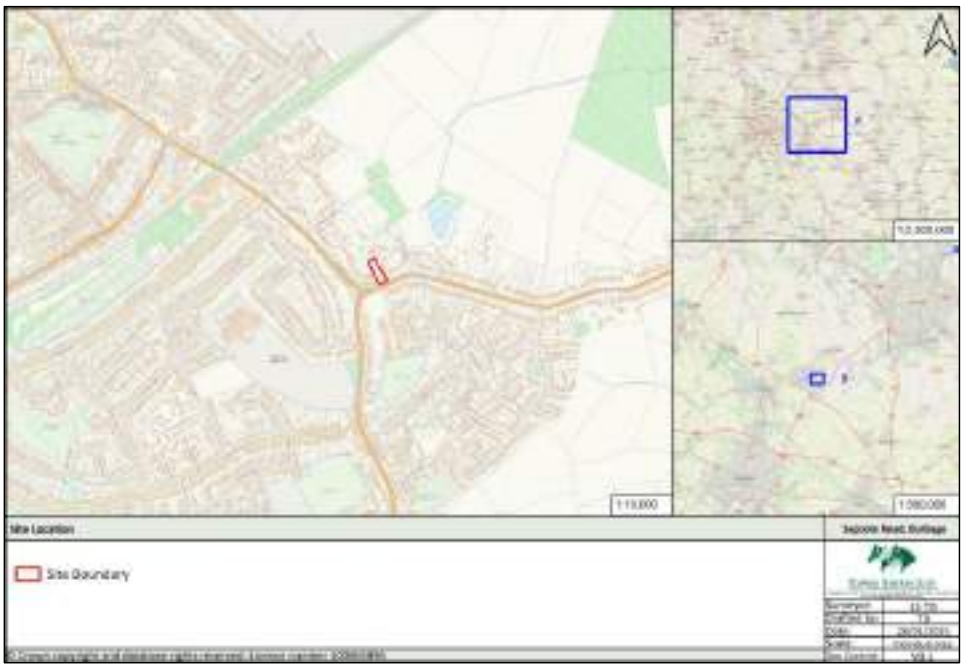


Figure 2: Site Landscape Context

1.4 Project Overview

The proposals include the construction of three residential properties with associated gardens, access and parking **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Proposed Development Plan

2.0 Relevant Legislation and Local Policy

Relevant legislation and National Planning Policies applicable to the Site can be found in **Appendix A**.

2.1 Local Planning Policies

Local planning policy is set out within the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Plan 2006 – 2026 ("Core Strategy DPD", adopted December 2009 and "Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD" adopted July 2016)[3]. The relevant policies for this assessment are outlined below.

Policy 4: Development in Burbage

To ensure development contributes to Burbage's character and sense of place and that the village's infrastructure can accommodate the new development, the council will:

- *Protect and preserve the open landscape to the east which provides an important setting for the village and seek to enhance the landscape structure which separates the village from the M69 corridor as supported by the Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment*
- *Require development to be of the highest environmental standards in line with Policy 24*

Policy 20: Green Infrastructure

The implementation of the Green Infrastructure Network as outlined on the Key Diagram is a key priority of the council.

To assist delivery of this plan, the following strategic interventions will be supported:

Southern Zone

- *Burbage Common and Woods - Increase the size of the site to increase both the community value and biodiversity holding capacity and improve access to the site, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists*
- *Burbage Allotments - Enhance the semi abandoned allotment site that separates Burbage and Hinckley as part of the east-west recreational corridor linking the Ashby Canal, Sketchley Brook, Burbage Allotments and Burbage Common*

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

[3] https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/localplandocs

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 proposed is 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 the development management process; and

c) All appropriate mitigation measures have been addressed through 168 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD DM6 (Continued) Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest

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."

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (ZoI) was defined considering the likely effects arising from the proposals, both during construction and in operation.

It is considered that the following impacts may result from the construction of low numbers of housing units:

- Temporary and permanent habitat loss;
- Injury or mortality of protected and notable species;
- Habitat degradation (e.g. dust pollution);
- Disturbance to protected and notable species resulting from works – machinery noise, vibration, light, increased human activity.

The distances from the site for these potential impacts are shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Zone of Influence used for this Assessment

Ecological Receptors	Zone of Influence
Special Areas of Conservation with bat species as features of interest	Within 10km of the Site boundary
Statutory protected sites	Within 2km of the Site boundary or where any site Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) covers the development site
Non-statutory protected sites	Within 1km of the Site boundary
Habitats of Principal Importance and Ancient Woodland boundaries	Within 50m of the Site boundary
Waterbodies	Within 500m of the site boundary
Protected species evidence • Badger • Bat • GCN • Otter • Water vole	 Within the Site boundary plus 30m 30m from the location of the source of disturbance 500m from the Site boundary 200m from the Site boundary along watercourses 200m from the Site boundary along watercourses
Habitats	Within the Site boundary plus 50m, where visible

3.2 Desk Study

The following sources were used to provide data for the desk study:

- Aerial photography – in order to aid preliminary ecological and overall assessment of the site;

- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)[4] – for statutory sites designated for nature conservation and recently granted (since 2009) European Protected Species (EPS) licences within 2km of the Site; and
- Environment Agency Main River Watercourse database[5] - to determine whether any waterbodies identified on Site are designated as Statutory Main River.
- GCN Risk Zone (Leicestershire, Rutland, Rushcliffe and South Kesteven)[6] – to determine if the area is important for GCN populations.
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted December 2009 & 2016.

A local record search was not undertaken at this stage, given the scale of the proposals, habitats present and local knowledge and experience enabling a reasonable assessment of likely species presence (e.g. more common/widespread light tolerant bat species, badger etc) to be undertaken. The need for a full records search will be considered during the evaluation and conclusions and recommended if considered necessary.

3.3 Field Survey

A field survey was undertaken on 24 January 2025 by suitably qualified ecologists.

A detailed description of the methodologies for habitats and protected species can be found in **Appendix B**.

3.4 Survey Constraints / Limitations

The field survey was undertaken in January, outside of the optimum plant survey period (April to September). Some plant species will not be visible at this time of year and others will be harder to identify due to reduced overwintering growth and lack of diagnostic features such as flowers. Although the broad habitat types were mapped confidently, it was possible that some plant species were missed.

Many invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians as well as some birds and mammals are not active or present on site in January. In that case, the habitats on Site were assessed for suitability for these species, such as the presence of ponds for amphibians and habitat mosaics for reptiles.

During the PRA, the loft was not accessible due to no safe access point as a result of the unstable nature of the building being uninhabited and in disrepair. However, due to the large holes within the ceiling, an assessment of the space was possible and did not hinder the overall roost assessment of the building.

[4] magic.defra.gov.uk
[5] environment.maps.arcgis.com
[6] naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com

4.0 Results and Evaluation

4.1 Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

There were no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) with bats listed as a feature of interest within 10km of the Site.

A search of MAGIC identified two Statutory sites that are within 2km of the Site boundary. Burbage Wood & Aston Firs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Burbage Common and Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (**Figure 4**). Further details on their designation are given in **Table 2.**

The Site lies within the 3rd Impact Risk Zone of the SSSI, however, due to the nature and scale of the proposals, it is considered unlikely that they will result in any effects (Operations Requiring Natural England's Consent (ORNECs) that would likely impact the Sites) due to the lack of terrestrial and hydrological connectivity. Therefore, they will not be considered further within this report.

Figure 4: Statutory Protected Nature Conservation Sites within 2km

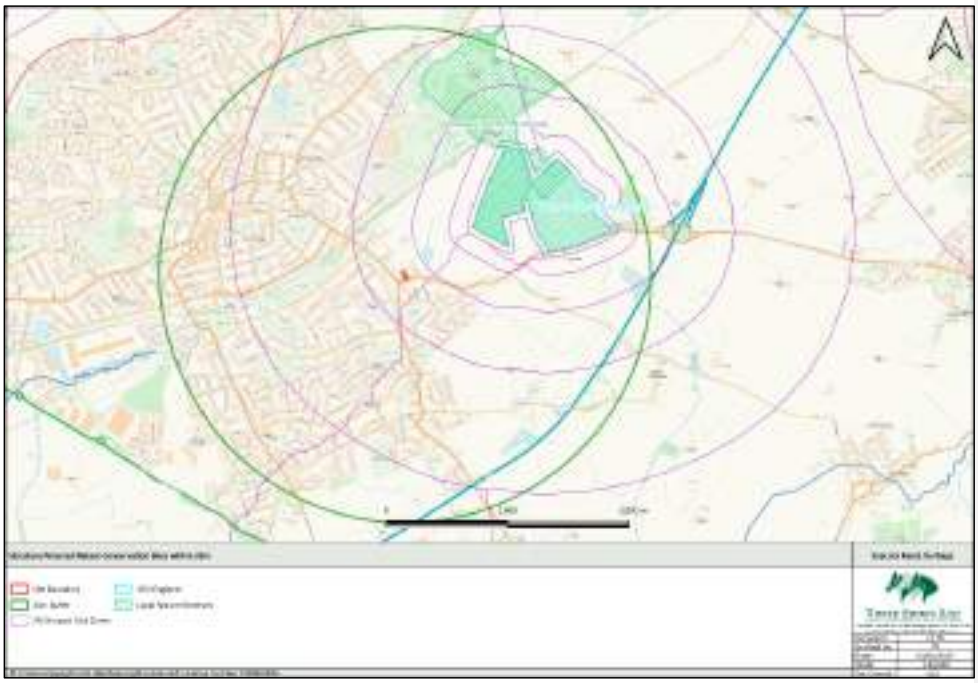


Table 2: Statutory Sites Within 2km of the Site

Statutory Site	Distance from Site	Reason for Designation
Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI	0.69km NE	The site comprises one of the best remaining examples of ash-oak-maple woodland in Leicestershire and is representative of semi-natural woodland developed on the clays of eastern England.
Burbage Common & Woods LNR (Overlaps with Burbage wood SSSI)	0.69km NE	The site consists of semi-natural woodland and unspoilt grassland

4.2 Non-Statutory Sites

A background search for non-statutory sites was not conducted at this stage, as it was not considered appropriate for the Site due to the scale of the development, and therefore they will not be considered further within this report.

4.3 Priority Habitats

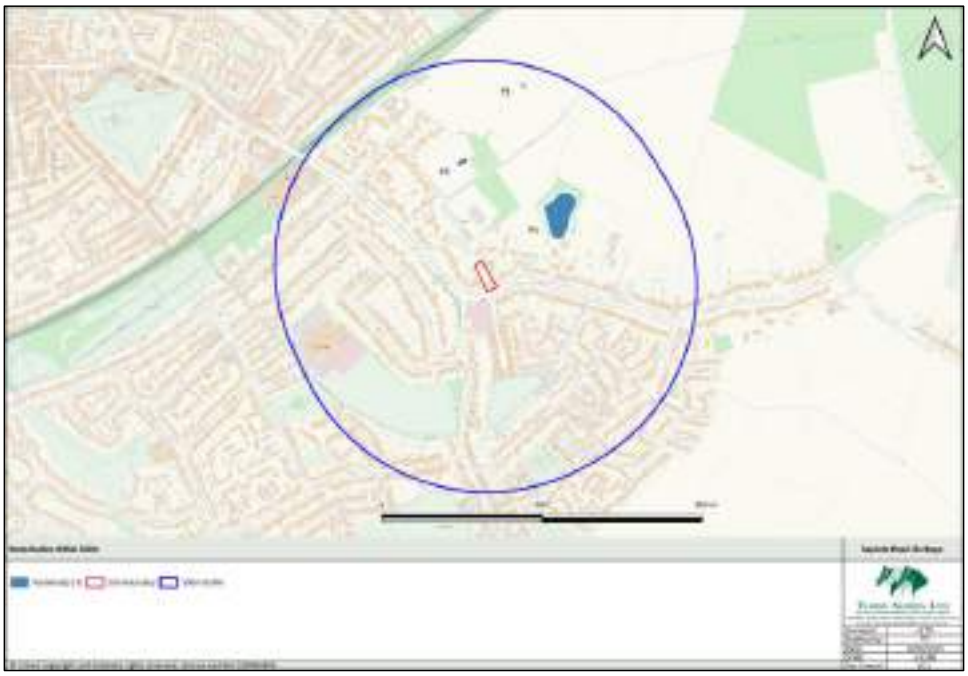
There are no priority habitats on Site or within 50m of the Site boundary.

4.4 Non-Priority Habitats - Waterbodies

Three waterbodies (P1-P3) are present within 500m of the Site boundary. The closest is P1 (**Figure 5**), situated approximately 192m northeast of the Site, with P2 approximately 245m and P3 440m north of the Site.

Due to the lack of terrestrial and hydrological connectivity to these receptors, it is unlikely that any proposed development will impact any waterbodies directly and/or indirectly. Therefore, they will not be considered further within this report.

Figure 5: Waterbodies within 500m



4.5 Habitat Overview

The habitats identified on Site consist of developed land in the form of a building with sparsely vegetated urban land, dense overgrown bramble scrub, and other neutral grassland. The western and eastern boundaries are bordered by non-native ornamental hedgerows with a total of ten individual trees situated throughout the Site. A section of vegetated garden remains adjacent the bungalow on the western side.

A habitat map can be seen below along with a detailed description of each habitat (**Figure 6**) and an A3 map in **Appendix C**.

Figure 6: Site Baseline Habitat Map

Commented [LS1]: Update with new

4.5.1 Grassland

Other Neutral Grassland (g3c)

Separating the bungalow from the road, is a former lawn, which due a lack of recent management has matured into other neutral grassland. The sward height was varied and a section of the lawn was covered with bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) scrub (**Photographs 1 & 2**).

The grassland was dominated by cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), with ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) abundant. Ragwort (*Senecio sp.*) and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) were frequent throughout the lawn, and snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*), bramble, common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), and cleavers (*Galium aparine*) were occasional.

Photograph 1. Other neutral grassland front lawn

Photograph 2. Other neutral grassland front lawn

4.5.2 Bramble Scrub (h3d)

Bramble scrub covered the area north of the bungalow. Despite consisting of three patches of clearing, the area has been left unmanaged for some time (**Photograph 3**). Bramble is dominant, with abundant common nettle, common ivy (*Hedera helix*), frequent dog rose (*Rosa canina*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and occasional holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*).

Photograph 3. Bramble scrub, situated north of the bungalow.

4.5.3 Introduced Shrub (u1 – 847)

An area of planted shrubs within a garden, dominated by ornamental species, including Choisya sp., spans from the southwestern corner of the Site to the bungalow (**Photograph 4**).

Photograph 4. Introduced shrub situated west of the bungalow.

4.5.4 Sparsely Vegetated Urban Land (u1f)

Two sparsely vegetated areas are present on Site. A driveway entrance to the Site with wood panels and Heras fencing present in a pile is adjacent to the east of the bungalow (**Photograph 5**). A second area is located to the north of the Site between the laurel hedges and has some tall ruderal vegetation present.

Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*), common ivy and common nettle are abundant. Bramble, ragwort, and common mallow (*Malva neglecta*) are frequent, cinquefoils (*Potentilla sp.*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) are occasional.

Photograph 5. Driveway entrance to the Site.

4.5.5 Buildings (u1b5)

A building consisting of an unoccupied single-storey bungalow is located towards the south of the Site. The building is neglected and in a state of disrepair (**Photograph 6 & 7**). The external structure consists of rendered brick-and-mortar walls with a tiled roof. The building has been vacant for five years and has evidently not been managed recently. The internal structure is an open-plan space.

Two wooden sheds are present on the Site. The first is situated approximately 10m north of the bungalow and the second is located south of the laurel hedge on the western border (**Figure 6**).

Photograph 6: Northern elevation of bungalow

Photograph 7: Southern elevation of bungalow

4.5.6 Individual Trees and Shrubs

There are ten individual trees that are present on-Site, nine of which are situated on the western boundary. Two of these trees are mature, four are semi-mature and four are young. Multiple trees are ivy clad and surrounded by dense scrub. Two semi-mature poplar (*Populus sp.*) trees have been pollarded (**T3 & T8**).

Tree species on-Site include silver birch (*Betula pendula*), willow (*Salix sp.*), poplar and common hazel (*Corylus avellana*).

The Site also consisted of hazel, wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*) shrubs adjacent to the bungalow and north of the vegetated garden, with apple (*Malus sylvestris*) present towards the centre of the Site.

Table 3 provides a detailed description of each tree.

Table 3: Tree Descriptions

Tree No.	Tree Description	Photograph
T1	Semi-mature silver birch, with an approximate height of 10m and an approximate diameter at breast height (DBH) of 40cm.	

Tree No.	Tree Description	Photograph
T2	Semi-mature willow, with an approximate height of 6m, and an approximate DBH of 20cm.	
T3	Semi-mature and pollarded poplar, with an approximate height of 4m, and an approximate DBH of 35cm.	
T4	Semi-mature, heavy ivy clad poplar, with an approximate height of 8m and an approximate DBH of 20cm.	

Tree No.	Tree Description	Photograph
T5	Semi-mature, ivy clad poplar, with an approximate height of 8m, and an approximate DBH of 25cm.	
T6	Young hazel, with an approximate height of 4m, and an approximate DBH of 10cm.	
T7	Young hazel, with an approximate height of 4m, and an approximate DBH of 10cm.	

Tree No.	Tree Description	Photograph
T8	Semi-mature, heavy ivy clad and pollarded poplar, with an approximate height of 8m, and an approximate DBH of 20cm.	
T9	Mature, ivy clad willow, with an approximate height of 11m and an approximate DBH of 55cm.	
T10	Mature willow, with an approximate height of 8m and an approximate DBH of 60cm.	

4.5.7 Hedgerows

Non-Native and Ornamental Hedgerow (h2b)

Two cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) hedges are situated along the eastern and western boundaries of the Site. The hedges are approximately 5m wide and 7m tall. There was no ground vegetation beneath the hedgerow (**Photograph 8 & 9**).

Photograph 8: Cherry laurel hedge on the northwestern boundary of the Site

Photograph 9: Cherry laurel hedge on the northeastern boundary of the Site

4.6 Protected and Notable Species

4.6.1 Bats

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) with bat species listed as features of interest within 10km of the Site.

MAGIC returned no records of granted European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSML) applications for bats within 2km of the Site.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The bungalow underwent a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) where multiple Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) were identified. These consisted of gaps present in broken and lifted tiles, missing mortar, and large open holes providing access into the roof void through the ceiling. As a result, the bungalow has been classified as having **moderate** potential to support roosting bats.

Further details on the PRA have been detailed in **Table 4** below.

No bats or evidence of bat presence were recorded during the survey.

Table 4: Preliminary Roost Assessment

Building Description	Building Photograph(s)
Single-storey bungalow uninhabited for five years. The external structure is brick-and-mortar walls with a tiled pyramid-hipped roof. The building has not been maintained since, with this evident with some broken and lifted roof tiles. The internal structure consists of large, open spaces.	  

Building Description	Building Photograph(s)
Suitable access/egress points are present along the four hip starter tiles, where mortar is missing.	  

Building Description	Building Photograph(s)
	
Gap present between fascia and roof tiles, offering a suitable entrance hole. Situated on the eastern side of the bungalow	
Open room in the southeast corner of the bungalow, with two gaps present in the ceiling. The internals of the roof consist of wooden beams in good condition, with no signs of rot. No cracks, crevices or missing tiles were found following a ground inspection using a torch.	

Building Description	Building Photograph(s)
	

Ground Level Tree Assessment

A ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was conducted on two trees (**T1 and T9**) that were identified as having PRFs at a PRF-I level, defined as suitable to support an individual or opportunistic bat. **T1** is a semi-mature silver birch to the south of the Site. **T9** is a willow near the centre of the Site. Details of the features are presented in **Table 5.**

Table 5: Bat PRF Survey

Tree No.	Tree Description	PRF(s)	Photograph	Potential
T1	Semi-mature silver birch, with an approximate height of 10m and DBH of 25cm.	Wound off the base of the tree, approximately 5m in length and west-facing. Unlikely to be suitable for a large number of bats or maternity roost based on the lack of cavity space and exposure to unstable temperatures.		**PRF-I** Suitable for an individual or opportunistic bat

Tree No.	Tree Description	PRF(s)	Photograph	Potential
		Branch tear-out approximately 2m off the base of the tree, north-facing.		**PRF-I** Suitable for an individual or opportunistic bat
T9	Mature willow, with an approximate height of 11m and a DBH of 55cm	Loose bark on a mature weeping willow, approximately 1.5m off the base, west-facing		**PRF-I** Suitable for an individual or opportunistic bat

Wider Landscape

The habitat situated on Site was generally of lower suitability for foraging and commuting bats, with individual trees and bramble scrub providing some foraging opportunities.

The two sheds on Site offer no suitability to support bats.

Despite the Site being uninhabited and therefore anticipated to have low noise and low artificial light levels, connectivity to the surrounding habitat is poor with the Site situated in an urban environment, surrounded by gardens and buildings. The Site has potential to support foraging and commuting bats, although it is anticipated that this would be common and widespread species in low numbers due to the limited connectivity to the wider landscape.

4.6.2 Badgers

No setts, or evidence of badger utilising the Site was recorded during the survey. Although the Site offers suitable habitat for badger (*Meles meles*), with vegetated habitats providing cover and a suitable environment for setts, however connectivity to the surrounding habitat is poor with the Site situated in an urban environment, surrounded by gardens and buildings.

Due to the proximity (~130m) to larger areas of suitable habitat with greater connectivity to arable fields and woodland (**Figure 2**), it is considered unlikely that badger will be using the site.

4.6.3 Birds

The Site offers suitable habitat for birds, with the trees and bramble scrub providing potential nesting and foraging habitat. Species observed on Site were common and widespread, and included:

Long-tailed tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*), great tit (*Parus major*), and magpie (*Pica pica*).

Any development on the Site will result in the loss of a small area of habitat for nesting and foraging garden birds.

4.6.4 Great Crested Newt and Widespread Amphibians

MAGIC returned no records of granted GCN licence applications or Class survey returns within 500m of the Site. The Site lies within the amber GCN risk zone of the District Level Licensing scheme for Leicestershire, Rutland, Rushcliffe and South Kesteven.

There are no ponds or waterbodies on Site and connectivity to the three ponds within 500m (identified in **section 4.4**), is limited by significant barriers such as roads or residential areas. The bramble scrub, leaf litter to the north of the bungalow and debris on the driveway to east, provide habitat suitable to be utilised by GCN and widespread amphibians as refugia and foraging habitat

Therefore, GCN and widespread amphibians are considered unlikely to be present on Site.

4.6.5 Reptiles

The Site offered areas of isolated habitat suitable for slow worm and common lizard, with bramble scrub and potential refugia in the fence and wood panels pile. However, connectivity, both to waterbodies and suitable foraging habitat in the wider landscape, is limited by roads and residential areas. Due to the absence of waterbodies, it is considered the Site lacks suitability for grass snake.

Therefore, although the Site provides isolated areas of habitat suitable for slow worm and common lizard, it is considered unlikely that they are present on Site.

4.6.6 Hedgehog

No evidence of European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus)* was recorded on the day of the survey.

However, the site provides suitable foraging and nesting habitats for the species such as grass of varied sward height, scrub, leaf litter and debris piles. As the Site has been vacant for five years, it has provided a quiet and undisturbed habitat which increases its favourability for hedgehogs to utilise the Site for primarily foraging and commuting.

The wider landscape to the north presents further favourable habitats such as wide open grassland with dense woodland and hedgerows of which is partially connected through gaps present in the fence in the adjacent gardens providing terrestrial connectivity to the Site.

4.6.7 Other Protected or Notable Species

The species below have been excluded from further evaluation for the reasons below (**Table 6**).

Table 6: Ecological Receptors Excluded from Further Evaluation

Ecological Receptor	Basis for Exclusion
Hazel Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*	Hazel dormice are considered absent from Leicestershire[7]. It is considered highly unlikely that hazel dormouse will be present on this Site.
Otter *Lutra lutra*	There are no watercourses on-Site. The habitat on-Site is not mature enough to provide suitable natal holts.
Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius*	There are no watercourses on-site
White Clawed-Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*	There are no watercourses on-site
Freshwater and Migratory Fish	There are no watercourses on-site
Invasive Non-Native Species	No invasive non-native species were identified during the survey.
Notable Invertebrates	No notable invertebrates were identified on-site.

[7] ptes.org

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Site Habitats

Overall the Site habitats have low ecological value and whilst these do provide habitat for some species, this is limited by the nature of the site, being an urban garden.

5.2 Protected and Notable Species

5.2.1 Bats

The bungalow has moderate potential to support roosting bats. Multiple potential access points were found, and the internal roof structure was in a stable and suitable condition to support a roost. The Site has connectivity to the highly suitable woodland habitat to the northeast, and therefore has potential to be an important connecting feature for bats.

No evidence of bat roosting (droppings, insect remains, staining) was found during the survey. However, the building has potential to support a roost, and therefore, two emergence surveys should be conducted between May and September, with at least one survey to take place between May and August to assess bat presence and account for variability in activity.

5.2.2 Birds

Removal of scrub, shrubs and trees will result in a loss of nesting and foraging habitat for birds. Where possible, clearance of these habitats should be conducted outside of the active nesting season. If the works are to be carried out during the bird breeding season, they should be done so with supervision from a suitably experienced ecologist checking for active nests. If active nests are found, they should be left with a suitable buffer until all young have fledged and the nest is no longer occupied.

5.2.3 Hedgehog

The Site offers suitable foraging and nesting habitat for hedgehog, in addition to terrestrial connectivity to the surrounding wider landscape habitat. However, it does not present enough suitable hibernation potential for the species to be impacted by the proposed development.

Therefore, it is recommended that dense vegetation and debris piles are removed slowly to check for any existing nests.

5.2.4 Badgers

No impacts are anticipated and therefore no further recommendations are required.

5.2.5 GCN and Widespread Amphibians

No impacts are anticipated and therefore no further recommendations are required.

5.2.6 Reptiles

No impacts are anticipated and therefore no further recommendations are required.

Appendix A Relevant Legislation and Policies

Legislation

The main pieces of legislation regarding the protection of species and habitats in the UK are the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Other legislation is in force which gives protection to certain species, such as the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, specific activities, such as the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 and specific habitats, such as the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (as amended).

Invasive non-native species are regulated via a combination of the Invasive Alien Species (Permitting and Enforcement) Order 2019 and Section 14/Schedule 9 of the 1981 Act.

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, all public bodies are required to have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their function. Under this Act, habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England are identified and published under the provisions of Section 41 (S41).

Planning Policies

The biodiversity policies which are most relevant on a national level are the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[8].

National Planning Policies

In terms of planning policy, at a national level, Chapter 15 of the NPPF (which relates to conserving and enhancement the nature environmental) requires Local Authorities to take measures to:

- Refuse planning permission if significant harm to biodiversity results from a development that cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for;
- Develop planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
- Not usually permit development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments). 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 SSSI;
- Refuse planning permission for development that results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees), unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- Support development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

[8] National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Appendix B Methodology

Habitat Survey

This was conducted by undertaking a systematic walkover over of the Site habitats, using a route which allowed all habitats to be viewed and flora species identified where possible. Habitats were defined and mapped using the 'UKHab V2.01' classification system.

Dominant plant species were noted, as were any protected, uncommon, invasive species or species indicative of a particular habitat type, but there was no attempt to compile exhaustive species lists for this element of the Site assessment. Botanical nomenclature in this report follows Stace (2019)[9] for both scientific and common names.

The survey also included:

- A preliminary search for evidence of protected or important species and species groups, and for habitats and features likely to host them if direct evidence is absent;
- The identification of other constraints (e.g., invasive non-native plant species) and any further opportunities for ecological enhancement; and
- An assessment to identify any potential roosting features (PRF) of significant buildings and trees providing bat roost potential.

Protected and Notable Species

Badger

Field signs for badger (Meles meles) within or adjacent to the Site (within 30m of the boundary, access permitted) were recorded in accordance with the standard methodology outline (Harris et al 1989) which includes surveying for active sett entrances, as well as spoil, bedding, latrines, hairs, prints, foraging signs and pathways.

A walkover of the whole site (including land, where accessible, within approximately 30m of the Site boundary) was undertaken and signs of badger activity were recorded in accordance with the standard methodology outline[10]. Signs of activity include:

- Sett entrances (entrances that are greater than 25cm in diameter with a flattened oval appearance);
- Presence of and size of any spoil heaps outside tunnel entrances;
- Presence of bedding material within or outside tunnel entrances;
- The degree of smoothness, or wear of the tunnel sides;
- The degree of any vegetation covering tunnel entrances, the presence of any debris within the tunnel;
- Faeces;

[9] Stace, C (2019) *New Flora of the British Isles.* 4th edn. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
[10] Surveying Badgers, Harris S. et. al, *1989*

- Paths between setts or leading to feeding habitats;
- Areas of scratching at the base of tree trunks or branches;
- Scrapes into the ground (snuffle holes) where badgers have searched for food;
- Bundles of vegetation where badgers may sleep above ground (day nests);
- Hair traces;
- Tracks.

When found, the activity level and status of the sett was based on the number of used, partially used and disused entrances. The definition of a badger setts "current use" is outlined in the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended) and further in a guidance by Natural England[11;] mainly smooth-sided entrances, clear of debris and vegetation, with spoil heaps and sometimes bedding material and footprints outside.

If setts were located, then they were categorised according to **Table 8,** with the activity status categorised according to **Table 9.**

Table 8: Sett Categories

Sett Type	Definition
Main	Typically, several active entrances with large spoil heaps and obvious paths leading from and between sett entrances. Signs of frequent and constant high levels of activity. May contain inactive entrances.
Annexe	Normally close to a main sett (<50m), comprising several entrances with well-worn paths between the main and annex sett. May not be in use all the time, even if main sett is very active.
Subsidiary	Usually some distance from main sett (>150m) with several entrances, but no obvious paths connecting to other setts. May only be used intermittently.
Outlier	Often comprise one or two entrances with little spoil outside. No obvious paths connecting to other setts and only used sporadically. May also be used by foxes and rabbits.

Table 9: Entrance and Overall Sett Activity Status Criteria

Sett status	Definition	Field signs
Active	Where field signs indicate that the sett or entrance is currently being occupied by badgers.	Field signs include recently excavated spoil, bedding material, footprints, hairs, fresh latrines and with well-worn paths present between entrances and leading into surroundings, entrances generally clear of vegetation and look well used.
Inactive	Where field signs indicate a strong likelihood of no or limited badger activity within the previous three months.	Absence of fresh spoil, bedding or footprints, leaf build up in tunnel entrances, extensive cobwebs in tunnels, seedlings growing in tunnel entrances etc. Paths may be present but less well defined.
Disused	Where field signs indicate that the sett has not been used for some	Large amount of leaf litter / debris collected at tunnel entrances and vegetation grown up around or inside entrances. No obvious paths visible leading to

[11] Guidance on 'Current Use' in the definition of a Badger Sett, *Natural England 2009*, https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20140523111208/http:/www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/WMLG17_tcm6-11815.pdf

Sett status	Definition	Field signs
	considerable time, typically more than 3 months minimum.	and from entrance and spoil heap has dispersed / weathered and become re-vegetated. May be partially collapsed or blocked.

Bats

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was undertaken to determine the Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) which could support roosting bats. This was undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced Three Shires Ltd ecologists, and the assessment of the buildings and trees and their suitability for roosting bats were carried out from the ground using binoculars and torches (where necessary).

The external surfaces of any buildings were inspected using binoculars to check for loose or lifted roof tiles, soffit boards, facias, guttering or cracked brickwork. Internal inspections were also undertaken, where access was permitted, to give a broader understanding of the suitability of the building and to identify any potential features that may provide roosting opportunities.

An assessment of the trees and their suitability for roosting bats was also carried out from the ground using binoculars and torches (where necessary). These were assessed for features such as woodpecker holes, fissures, cracks, cavities, and loose bark that could be suitable for use by roosting bats.

Where features were identified, observations of evidence of bat use or activity, such as droppings, urine stains, odour, feeding remains, scratch marks, grease stains, wear marks were recorded.

Table 10 below details the level of suitability for roosts and the features that classify each suitability level.

Table 10: Bat Roost Suitability Levels

Suitability Level	Typical Features / Evidence
Confirmed	Evidence or presence of bats within feature or on/within building/structure
High	A building/structure with one or more potential roost Sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat.
Moderate	A building/structure with one or more potential roost Sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
Low	A building/structure with one or more potential roost Sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost Sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Negligible	Negligible features present that are unlikely to support roosting bat species

Birds

The species of birds encountered during the survey were recorded and details of suitable habitats for nesting birds during the breeding bird season (March – August inclusive) were noted, with habitat suitability for notable species or important assemblages being considered, including barn owl. Binoculars were used to aid vision and the presence of nests, where observed, was also recorded.

Great Crested Newt (GCN)

An assessment of all on-site waterbodies and those within the immediate vicinity of the Site boundary were surveyed for their potential to provide suitable habitat for GCN. If available to be surveyed, each pond was also given Habitat Suitability Index[12] (HSI) score. This allowed a numerical value to be given to each pond based on its suitability based on variety of factors. These scores range from < 0.5 being poor to > 0.8 being excellent (**Table 11**).

Figure 7: Table 11: HSI Scores

HSI score	Pond Suitability
< 0.50	Poor
0.50 - 0.59	Below average
0.60 - 0.69	Average
0.70 - 0.79	Good
> 0.80	Excellent

Reptiles

Suitable habitat for grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and adder (*Vipera berus*) was identified and recorded. Evidence for field signs for reptile (e.g. sloughs, burrows, eggs) and an assessment of habitat potential for reptiles (e.g. edges/ecotones, ridges, hummocks, sunny slopes, brash heaps) were recorded.

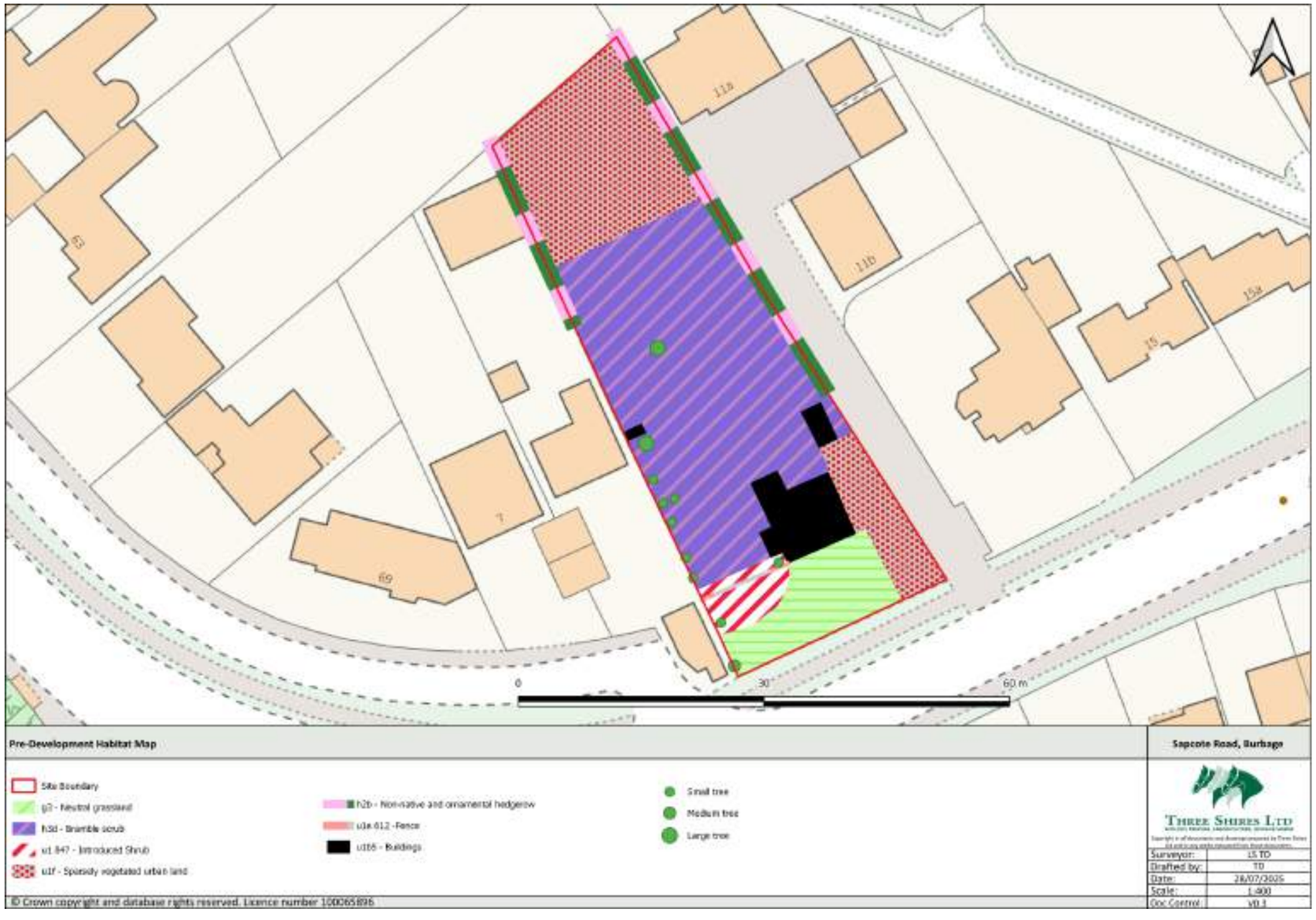
Other Notable Species

The Site was also assessed for suitability for other protected species such as barn owl (*Tyto alba*) and hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*).

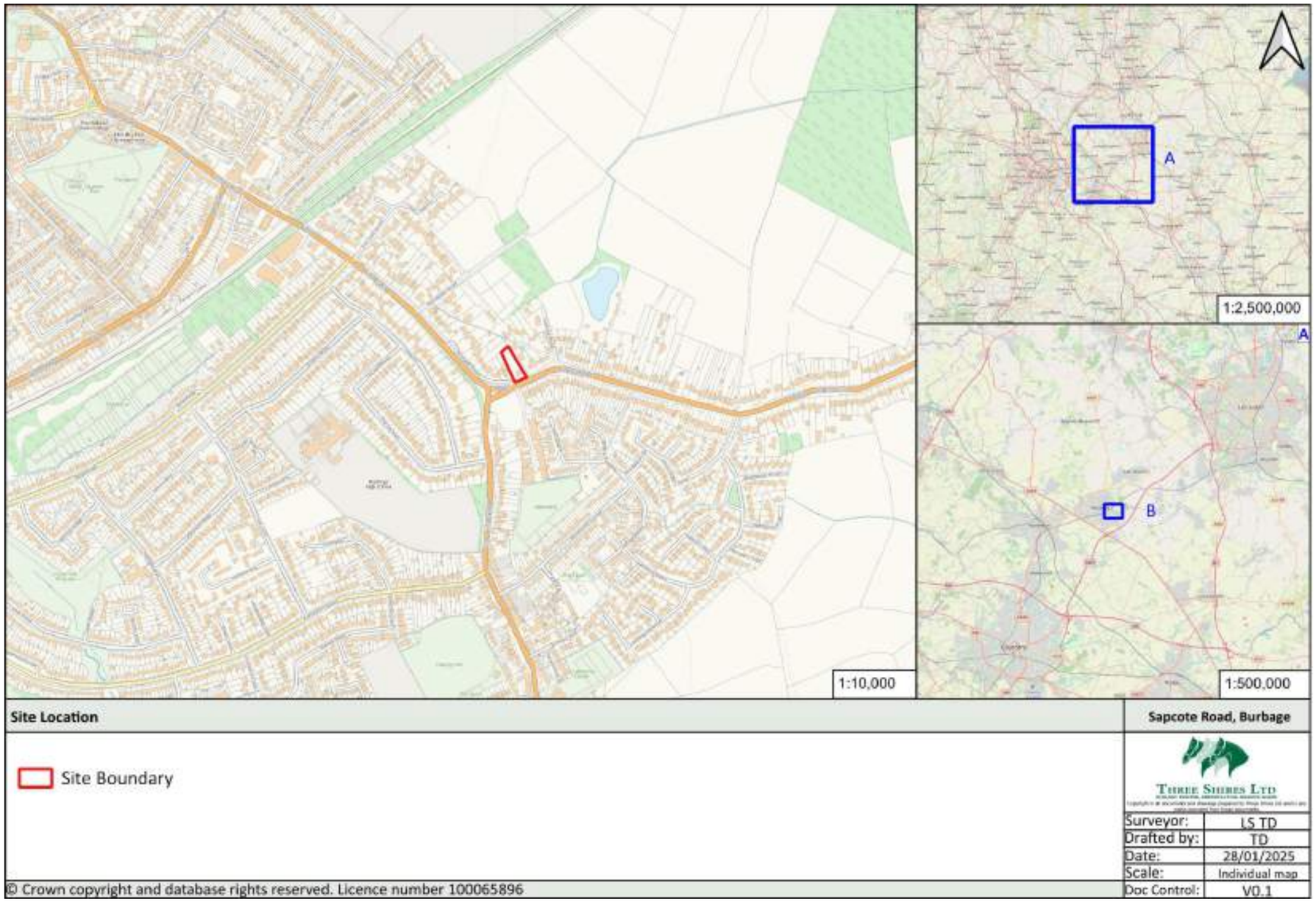
[12] https://www.arguk.org/info-advice/advice-notes/9-great-crested-newt-habitat-suitability-index-arg-advice-note-5/file

Appendix C A3 Maps

a Pre-Development Habitat Map



b Site Location



Site Location	Sapcote Road, Burbage
Site Boundary	Three Shires Ltd
	Surveyor: LS TD
	Drafted by: TD
	Date: 28/01/2025
	Scale: Individual map
	Doc Control: V0.1

c Site Landscape Context

Site Landscape Context	Sapcote Road, Burbage
Site Boundary	Three Shires Ltd
	Surveyor: LS TD
	Drafted by: TD
	Date: 28/01/2025
	Scale: 1:5,000
	Doc Control: V0.1