



Essential Ecology

Courtlands

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

(Ref: ESEC/26006/01/v1.0)

Prepared by Essential Ecology
on behalf of Courtlands Independent Special School

April 2026

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Contact Us

a: 25 Katmandu Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 2SP

t: 07841 042796 | **e:** info@essentialecology.co.uk | **w:** www.essentialecology.co.uk

Contents

1. Executive Summary	1
2. Introduction	2
3. Methodology	4
4. Ecological Designations and Notable Habitats.....	9
5. Habitats & Flora	10
6. Protected Fauna	15
7. Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement Recommendations	22
8. Conclusions	27
9. References.....	28

Drawings

ESEC/26006/01-01 Habitats and Ecological Features

Appendices

Appendix 1	Proposed Location & Site Plan (Arch Evolve, drawing ref: ARC/ 012/ 26/ 63)
Appendix 2	Summary of Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy
Appendix 3	Building Descriptions and Assessment of Bat Roosting Suitability

1. Executive Summary

Table 1.1. Executive Summary	
Section	Summary
Introduction and Methodology	A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed development for the provision of additional facilities, including classrooms and MUGA at Courtlands, has been undertaken by Essential Ecology (ESEC) on behalf of Courtlands Independent Special School. The assessment was undertaken between February and April 2026 and is based on a desktop study, extended UK Habitat survey and protected species habitat suitability assessments, particularly in respect of Badger, bats, nesting birds and Great Crested Newts. An assessment of impacts has been provided based on the proposals for the site.
Ecological Designations and Notable Habitats	Given the location of the site and the nature and scale of the proposals, no significant adverse impacts on any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations, ancient woodlands, ancient/veteran trees or offsite Priority Habitats are anticipated.
Habitats and Flora	Native hedgerows and woodland W2 within the site have been assessed as being Important Ecological Features (IEFs). It is understood that these habitats will be fully retained under the proposals. No other habitats within the site are considered to form IEFs. Semi-mature to mature trees, and other woodland and non-priority ponds are considered to be of inherent ecological value. The vast majority of these habitats are also retained.
Protected Fauna	A number of Badger setts have been recorded within the site. The site also provides opportunities for roosting bats, foraging and commuting bats, common mammals/amphibians (including Priority Species) and nesting birds.
Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement	A number of mitigation measures (EM1-EM8) are recommended in respect of woodland, hedgerows and trees, Badger, bats, small mammals/herpetofauna and nesting birds. A number of enhancement measures (EE1-EE5) are also recommended, including provision of new native planting, bat and bird boxes, brash piles and a stumpery.
Conclusions	The proposed development, subject to the implementation of recommendations set out, is not considered likely to result in significant adverse impacts to other biodiversity at the site or in the local vicinity. Indeed, the opportunity exists to bring forward significant ecological enhancements at the site.

2. Introduction

2.1 Terms of Reference

- 2.1.1 Essential Ecology (ESEC) has been commissioned by Courtlands Independent Special School to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to inform a planning application for the site for additional facilities including classrooms and MUGA, located at Courtlands in Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex (central ordnance survey (OS) grid reference TQ 11916 02440).

2.2 Site Location and Overview

- 2.2.1 The site is located west of Parklands Avenue and north of Alinora Crescent in Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex. Within a wider context, the site is surrounded primarily by residential development.
- 2.2.2 The site itself, as shown by the red line boundary, comprises an area of c. 1.8ha. The site comprises buildings, hardstanding, modified grassland, introduced shrub, ruderal/ephemeral, woodland, pond, trees and hedgerows.
- 2.2.3 The Developable Area is smaller in size measuring c. 1.2ha and excludes the pond and an area of woodland W3.

2.3 Description of Proposals

- 2.3.1 Change of use of the site from a care/school facility with overnight accommodation (Class C2) (approved under reference AWDM/2234/21 and AWDM/2235/21) to a Special Educational Needs (SEN) School (Class F1) for up to 80 pupils, including the removal of previously approved overnight accommodation, retention of two replacement outbuildings (retrospective sheds), erection of lodge-style classroom buildings, installation of a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), and associated internal and external works (see Appendix 1).

2.4 Purpose of Report

- 2.4.1 The purpose of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is to inform the planning application for the site. Specifically, the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal provides an assessment of the ecological value of the site and the anticipated impacts of the proposals, in the context of the relevant legislation and planning policy (a summary of relevant legislation and planning policy is provided at Appendix 2). The assessment is based primarily on the desktop study and site survey work undertaken and will include recommendations for appropriate mitigation where significant adverse impacts on Important Ecological Features (IEFs) are identified and/or proposals have the potential to result in the contravention of relevant legislation.

2.5 Quality Assurance and Management

- 2.5.1 The site survey work and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal have been undertaken by Tom Staton. Tom has over 15 years' experience in professional ecological consultancy and holds a Master's degree in Biological Recording and Ecological Monitoring and a PhD in Ecology and Agri-environmental Research. Tom has experience in undertaking numerous habitat/botanical surveys, including extended Phase 1, UK Hab, NVC and ancient woodland indicator surveys across a range of sites and development projects in the UK. Tom holds a Natural England Class 2 bat licence, Natural England Class 1 Great Crested Newt licence and a Natural England Class 1 Dormouse licence.
- 2.5.2 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been reviewed by Megan Jewson (Director). Megan has over 13 years' experience in professional ecological consultancy, is a full member of CIEEM and holds a Master degree in Biodiversity and Conservation. Megan has experience in undertaking numerous ecological surveys and assessments and devising appropriate ecological mitigation and enhancements strategies for habitats and species across a range of sites and development projects in the UK. Megan also holds protected species licences in respect of bats (Class 2) and Great Crested Newt (Class 1) and is an accredited agent on a Dormouse (Class 1) licence.
- 2.5.3 This report has been produced with reference to current best practice guidance produced by CIEEM, including '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*', version 1.2 (dated April 2022) and '*Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*', second edition (dated December 2017), as well as British Standard (BS) 42020:2013 which involves the evaluation of potential ecological constraints based on UK Habitat Classification survey data and background desk study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Desktop Study

3.1.1 The desktop study was undertaken in February 2026. Background information for the site was obtained from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, Defra's Multi-agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) map tool (DEFRA 2026) and the Woodland Trust's Ancient Tree Hunt map tool (Woodland Trust 2026). Information was specifically sought for the following:

- Statutory Conservation Designations – 5km, extended to 15km for European-level Designations
- Non-statutory Conservation Designations -1km
- Protected Species -1km
- Priority Habitats, Ancient Woodlands and Veteran/Ancient Trees – 1km
- Offsite Ponds – 250m

3.2 Habitat Survey

3.2.1 The site was surveyed on 6th February 2026 based on UK Habitat Classification Survey (v2) (UKHab Ltd 2023) methodology. This involves identifying and mapping habitat types and establishing the species composition of each habitat type. The nomenclature used for plant species is based on the Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) Checklist (BSBI 2026).

3.2.2 The survey was extended in line with CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM 2018), to record details on suitability and/or presence of any notable or protected habitats or species. This survey is used to identify where further, more detailed surveys are likely to be required to inform the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

3.3 Faunal Surveys

3.3.1 General faunal activity (observed visually or by call) during the course of the survey work was recorded. Specific attention was also paid to the potential presence of protected, rare or notable species, as set out below.

Badger

3.3.2 The site was surveyed on 6th February 2026. The site was searched for any evidence of Badger (e.g., setts, paths, push-throughs, hair, latrines, dung, footprints etc.) in order to establish use (if any) of the site. Methodology broadly followed recommendations set out within The Mammal Society Publication '*Surveying Badgers*' (Harris, Cresswell and Jefferies 1989).

Roosting Bats

Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of Buildings/Structures

- 3.3.3 The buildings/built features were surveyed on 6th February 2026 by a Natural England licensed surveyor (Class 2 Licence: WML-CL18). The buildings at the site were subject to a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) to externally and internally assess suitability to support roosting bats, where accessible.
- 3.3.4 The PRA comprised an external and internal survey to identify potential/actual bat access points, potential roosting places and to identify any evidence of bats themselves.
- 3.3.5 Any potential roosting features (PRFs), access points and the overall condition of the buildings were noted. Particular attention was paid to loft voids, window sills/panes, door frames and surrounds, exposed open piping, hanging tiles, weather boarding, eaves, soffit boxes, fascia's, vents, lead flashing, loose roof tiles and gaps within brick/stonework, where present. Where identified, field signs such as droppings, feeding remains and dead or living bats were also recorded.
- 3.3.6 The potential roost suitability of the building was assessed using the criteria detailed in Table 3.1 below, in accordance with the current bat survey guidelines (Collins 2023).

Table 3.1: Potential Bat Roost Suitability of Buildings	
Suitability	Criteria
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions 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 and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by large numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g., maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

Ground-level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

- 3.3.7 The onsite/adjacent trees were surveyed on 6th February 2026 by a Natural England licensed surveyor (Class 2 Licence: WML-CL18). The trees were subject to a Ground-level Tree Assessment (GLTA) to provide a preliminary assessment of suitability of trees to support roosting bats.
- 3.3.8 The GLTA comprised a detailed inspection of the exterior of the trees from the ground level to identify features which could be used by roosting bats (i.e., Potential Roosting Features or PRFs). Particular attention was paid to features such as woodpecker holes, rot holes, pruning cuts, tear out wounds, cankers, butt rot, cracks, snaps, lifted bark, fissures and ivy, where present. Where identified, field signs such as droppings, feeding remains and dead or living bats were also recorded.
- 3.3.9 The potential roost suitability of the trees was assessed using the criteria detailed in Table 3.2 below, in accordance with the current bat survey guidelines (Collins 2023).

Table 3.2: Potential Bat Roost Suitability of Trees

Suitability	Criteria
None	No PRFs identified in the tree and/or tree PRFs highly unlikely to be present.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF identified. Where PRF's are identified these are categorised as: - PRF-I: PRF identified is only suitable for individual or very small number of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitat; or - PRF-M: PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Nesting Birds

- 3.3.10 An assessment was made as to the suitability of the site to support nesting birds on the 6th February 2026. Survey methodology was broadly in line with standard techniques set out within 'Bird Monitoring Methods: A Manual of Techniques for Key UK Species' (Gilbert, Gibbons and Evans 1998). During the survey, particular attention was paid to the following:

- presence of habitats suitable to support nesting birds.
- site context.
- evidence of current or previous nesting activity (e.g., nests and concentrations of droppings, feathers, down and chick remains etc.).
- general bird activity (observed visually or by call) both within the site and the immediate surrounds.

Great Crested Newt

- 3.3.11 Great Crested Newts utilise ponds for breeding and will typically commute up to 250m from breeding ponds (English Nature 2004). Consideration should therefore be given to presence of

GCN within onsite ponds and any connected offsite ponds within 250m (up to 500m in some instances¹).

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)

3.3.1 An assessment, in the form of a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment (Oldham R.S. 2000), was therefore undertaken as to the suitability of offsite ponds identified using OS/aerial imagery. A study area of up to 250m was considered appropriate.

3.3.2 The HSI study was undertaken on the 6th February 2026 by a licensed ecologist. The survey involved recording information in relation to ten factors, specifically including location, pond area, pond permanence, water quality, level of shading, presence of fowl and fish, pond count within 1km, suitability of surrounding terrestrial habitat and cover of macrophytes. Each factor is assigned a numerical score between 0 (unsuitable) and 1 (optimal). The score for each factor is then combined to determine the overall suitability of the waterbody as one of five categories: 'poor', 'below average', 'average', 'good' or 'excellent'.

3.4 Survey Limitations

3.4.1 The UK Habitat Classification Survey was undertaken in February, outside the optimum survey season. Nevertheless, given the nature of the site actively used and managed as a school, it is considered that the data collected represents a valid sample of ecological evidence present for that date/season and provides a robust assessment of the habitats.

3.4.2 The absence of desk study records is not relied upon to determine absence of a particular species. Absence of records is often a result of under-recording within the given search area and as such the professional judgement of the surveyor is used to assess likely presence of absence, and inform the need for more detailed survey work.

3.4.3 Attention was paid to the presence of any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The detectability of such species varies due to a number of factors, e.g., time of year, site management, etc., and hence the absence of any given invasive species should not be assumed even where not recorded during the habitat survey.

3.5 Ecological Assessment Methodology

3.5.1 The assessment of ecological features and their relative importance is based on industry guidance and professional judgement. Where an Important Ecological Feature (IEF) is identified, importance will be defined at an appropriate geographic scale. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal follows the methodologies within the Chartered Institute of Ecology and

¹ Natural England's Development Licence Method Statement template states that surveys are only required of ponds within 500m of the site boundary where data indicates that the pond(s) has potential to support a large Great Crested Newt population, the footprint contains particularly favourable habitat, the development would have a substantial negative effect on the favourable habitat and there is an absence of dispersal barriers.

Environmental Management (CIEEM) '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*' (CIEEM 2018).

4. Ecological Designations and Notable Habitats

4.1 Statutory Ecological Designations

4.1.1 No statutory ecological designations have been identified within 5km of the site. The nearest identified statutory European-level ecological designations are:

- Arun Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar – c. 13.5km north west
- Pagham Harbour Ramsar – c. 13.5km west

4.1.2 At these distances, no significant adverse impacts on any statutory ecological designations are anticipated as a result of the proposals. This is supported by a review of the Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) which indicates that, at this location, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial SSSIs and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

4.2 Non-statutory Ecological Designations

4.2.1 No non-statutory ecological designations have been identified within 1km of the site.

4.2.2 Given the scale and nature of the proposals, no significant adverse impacts on any non-statutory ecological designations are anticipated.

4.3 Ancient Woodland and Ancient/Veteran Trees

4.3.1 No ancient/veteran trees or areas of ancient woodland have been identified within 1km of the site.

4.3.2 Given the scale and nature of the proposals, no significant adverse impacts on any ancient/veteran trees or areas of ancient woodland are anticipated.

4.4 Priority Habitats

4.4.1 A number of areas of Priority Habitat have been identified within 1km of the site, including areas of Deciduous Woodland and Coastal Vegetated Shingle. At this distance, given the scale and nature of the proposals, no significant adverse impacts on these or any other more distant areas of Priority Habitat are anticipated.

4.4.2 Consideration of onsite Priority Habitat is provided at Section 5 below.

5. Habitats & Flora

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A description and evaluation of the habitats and ecological features present within/adjacent to the site is set out below, together with an assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals. An assessment of the habitat in terms of value for protected/notable species is set out separately within Section 6 below.

5.2 Modified grassland (g4)

- 5.2.1 The site supports large areas of modified grassland, for the most part comprising regularly mown lawns (see drawing ESEC/26006/01-01).
- 5.2.2 Grasslands G1 and G2 appear to be regularly mown to a short sward height (< c. 10cm). Frequent patches of bare ground were recorded throughout G2, attributable to school recreation activities and likely worsened by the very wet weather preceding the survey. The sward was recorded to be dominated by grass species, particularly Perennial Rye-grass and Fescue, with a variable herb content and locally abundant Springy Turf-moss. The most frequent forb species included Ribwort Plantain, Creeping Buttercup, White Clover, Daisy and Common Cat's-ear. Species richness was very poor (typically 3-4 species/m²).
- 5.2.3 Grassland G3 comprises a small area which appears to be less frequently managed, and supported a moderate sward height at the time of survey (c. 20cm). Species composition reflected the less frequent management, with dominant Cock's-foot in addition to frequent tall ruderal species such as Cleavers, Cow Parsley, Red Dead-nettle and White Dead-nettle. Species richness was poor (typically 3-5 species/m²).
- 5.2.4 The species recorded within the areas of modified grassland are common and widespread. No indicator species of Priority Habitats were recorded during the survey, whilst the grassland was not assessed to be sufficiently species-rich or herb-rich to qualify as Priority Habitat. Although the survey work was undertaken outside of the optimal season for botanical survey, on the basis of the species and community present it is unlikely that an in-season survey would materially change this conclusion. On this basis, the modified grassland is not considered to form an important ecological feature and not considered to form a constraint to the proposals. In any event, relatively small areas of the modified grassland will be impacted by the proposals.

5.3 Other broadleaved woodland (w1g)

- 5.3.1 Two areas of non-native woodland, dominated by Sycamore, were recorded within the site (W1 and W3).

- 5.3.2 Woodland W1 comprises a wooded band along the northern margin of the site. The canopy layer is dense and dominated by semi-mature to mature Sycamore with occasional Common Lime, Holly, and Yew. The understorey layer is dominated by non-native ornamental species including Evergreen Spindle and Cherry Laurel, while the ground flora is dominated by Ivy with frequent Bramble and Winter Heliotrope.
- 5.3.3 Woodland W3 comprises a more extensive area in the south of the site, which is fenced off from the main site. The majority of woodland W3 is located outside of the developable area. The woodland lies on uneven ground including small banks and evidence of historic development such as rubble. The canopy layer is dense and dominated by Sycamore and Hybrid Black Poplar, with occasional Common Lime, Sweet Chestnut, Horse Chestnut, Yew, Beech, Leyland Cypress and Holm Oak. Most tree species were assessed as semi-mature, with some mature specimens present. The understorey layer is very sparse, including Holly, Elder and Yew, while the ground flora is generally dense and dominated by Ivy and Winter Heliotrope, with occasional Common Nettle, Cow Parsley, Snowdrop, Early Dog-violet, Herb-Robert and invasive species Three-cornered Garlic.
- 5.3.4 Woodlands W1 and W3 are both dominated by non-native species in the canopy, and as such fall under the UKHab definition of w1g which includes “*stands of non-native tree species*”. As such, the habitat is not considered to represent Priority Habitat, although the woodlands are of some ecological interest in the context of the site.
- 5.3.5 It is understood that a new shed is proposed within Woodland W3. The proposed footprint lies within an area of disturbed ground, with a sparse ground flora. As such, impacts on the woodland are considered to be limited, although recommendations are set out in Section 7 to minimise impacts.

5.4 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (w1f)

- 5.4.1 A small area of other mixed woodland was recorded in the east of the site (W2). The woodland supports a dense canopy of semi-mature to mature species, including Holm Oak, Pedunculate Oak, Beech, Common Lime, Sycamore and Wild Cherry. The understorey layer was generally sparse, including occasional Evergreen Spindle, Holly, Cherry Laurel and Yew. The ground flora was dominated by Bramble and Ivy, with occasional Cow Parsley and Stinking Iris.
- 5.4.2 The woodland supports a mix of native and non-native species with a poorly developed woodland structure. As such, the woodland is classified as a Priority Habitat, albeit is considered to form a poor example. Nevertheless, woodland W2 is considered to represent an important ecological feature. It is understood that the woodland will not be impacted under the proposals.

5.5 Introduced shrub (u1-847)

- 5.5.1 Small areas of introduced shrubs were recorded, mainly in proximity to the main school building (B1). These are well maintained for amenity purposes, and dominated by non-native species including Evergreen Spindle, Spotted Laurel, Cherry Laurel and Bay.
- 5.5.2 The habitat, being dominated by introduced non-native species, is not considered to represent an important ecological feature. It is therefore not considered to represent a constraint to the proposals.

5.6 Buildings (u1b5)

- 5.6.1 Four buildings were recorded within the site, comprising the main school building (B1) in addition to three small sheds/outbuildings (B2-B4). The buildings were recorded to be well maintained and in good condition with negligible vegetation cover. This habitat type is therefore considered to be of negligible botanical and ecological value, does not form an important ecological feature and is not considered to pose a constraint to the proposals in terms of its habitat value.

5.7 Other developed land (u1b6)

- 5.7.1 Areas of other developed land comprise asphalt car parking and access surfaces, in addition to small areas of paving around the main building (B1) and pebble-surfaced paths to the east of the main building (see drawing ESEC/26006/01-01). These areas appear to be well maintained and supported negligible vegetation at the time of survey.
- 5.7.2 Areas of other developed land are considered to be of negligible ecological value, do not form important ecological features and are not considered to pose a constraint to the proposals.

5.8 Ruderal or ephemeral (u1-81)

- 5.8.1 A small area of ruderal vegetation was recorded to the south-west of the main building (B1). This area appears to be infrequently managed by cutting, and supported coarse grasses and ruderal species including Cock's-foot, Cleavers, Common Nettle, Red Dead-nettle and Pendulous Sedge, with notable patches of bare ground.
- 5.8.2 This is a common habitat type which supported a limited species diversity within a small area, such that it is not considered to represent an important ecological feature or represent a constraint to the proposals.

5.9 Pond (r1g-41)

- 5.9.1 A pond is located within a fenced area in the south of the site, set within woodland W3. The pond is located outside of the developable area.

5.9.2 The pond is linear in shape, with a long narrow wooded island situated centrally. The pond is, for the most part, heavily shaded by the surrounding woodland, although the northern end is more open. Few aquatic or marginal species were recorded, with Pendulous Sedge and an Iris species restricted to the north. The pond has a narrow drawdown zone with artificial vertical banks in places.

5.9.3 The pond is not currently known to qualify as a Priority Habitat, as it is not known to meet Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive, support species of high conservation importance (such as Priority Species and legally protected species), or support exceptional assemblages of key biotic groups. In any event, the pond will not be directly impacted by the proposals. It is recommended that safeguards are put in place to minimise indirect impacts such as water quality effects.

5.10 Individual trees (200)

5.10.1A number of individual trees were recorded within the grounds of the site, many of which comprise mature specimens. Species include a mix of native and introduced species, including Holly, Magnolia, Holm Oak, Cypress, Dawn Redwood, Common Lime and Yew.

5.10.2The trees within the site are of some inherent ecological value in their own right, albeit unlikely to form important ecological features at this time. It is anticipated that the trees will be retained under the proposals. Recommendations are set out at Section 7 below regarding protection of retained trees.

5.11 Other native hedgerows (h2a6)

5.11.1Three native hedgerows were recorded around the site boundaries (see drawing ESEC/26006/01-01). Descriptions of the hedgerows are set out at Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Hedgerow Descriptions							
No.	Height	Width	Woody species	Avg. per 30m* ¹	Ground flora & climbers	Associated features	Likely to Qualify* ²
H1	>3m	5m	<u>Yew</u>	1	Mostly bare ground, some Stinking Iris	<10% gaps	N
	Comments: Line of trees but with canopy base <2m high, hence classified as a hedgerow. Does not appear to be subject to regular management. No bank or ditch.						
H3	1.5m	1.5m	<u>Yew</u> , Ivy, Bramble	1	Ivy, Common Nettle	<10% gaps	N
	Comments: Subject to regular management. No trees, bank or ditch.						
H5	1.8m	1.5m	<u>Yew</u> , Ivy, Bramble	1	Ivy, Daffodil.	<10% gaps	N
	Comments: Subject to regular management. No trees, bank or ditch.						
* ¹ estimated average number of woody species per 30m (as listed under Schedule 3 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997). Qualifying species underlined.							
* ² likely to qualify – as ‘important’ under the wildlife and landscape criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997							

5.11.2 All of the hedgerows within the site are species poor and heavily dominated by a single native species. Nevertheless, the dominance of native species qualifies the hedgerows as Priority Habitat. On this basis, the hedgerows are considered to form important ecological features. It is understood that the hedgerows will be retained under the proposals. It is recommended that retained hedgerows are fully safeguarded throughout construction in line with recommendations set out at Section 7 below.

5.12 Non-native and ornamental hedgerows (h2b)

5.12.1 Four non-native hedgerows were recorded within the site or along its boundaries (H2, H4, H6 and H7).

5.12.2 Hedgerow H2 forms a regularly managed feature with dimensions of 3m height by 1.5m width. The hedgerow is dominated by Beech, with Honeysuckle and Ivy.

5.12.3 Hedgerow H4 forms a heavily managed feature on the frontage of the main school building (B1), with dimensions of 1.5m height by 1m width. The hedgerow is dominated by a deciduous non-native species, over bare ground.

5.12.4 Hedgerow H6 lies along the site boundary, managed to a height of 2m and width of 2m. The hedgerow is dominated by Cherry Laurel, with Yew and Ivy.

5.12.5 Hedgerow H7 also lies along the site boundary, with no recent management, supporting a height of 2-3m and width of 2-3m. Species include Evergreen Spindle, Variegated Holly, and Bramble.

5.12.6 These hedgerows support insufficient native species to qualify as Priority Habitat, and are not considered to form important ecological features. The hedgerows are therefore not considered to represent a constraint to the proposals.

5.13 Invasive non-native species (524)

5.13.1 Three-cornered Garlic was recorded within woodland W3, on the eastern side of the pond. Three-cornered Garlic is a highly invasive species which is detrimental to the ecological value of the site. Allowing or causing the spread of this species into the wild would be in contravention of wildlife legislation (see Appendix 2) and recommendations for the eradication of this species from the site are set out at Section 7 below.

6. Protected Fauna

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 A description and evaluation of the site's suitability for protected species and presence/likely absence of protected species is set out below, together with an assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals. The legislative protection afforded to each species/species group is provided below, with a summary of the legislation included at Appendix 2.

6.2 Badger

6.2.1 **Legislative Protection.** Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

6.2.2 **Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation.** Evidence of Badgers was recorded in the form of four setts in the south of the site.

6.2.3 Sett S1 comprises four entrances within all within 5m of each other. The entrances are associated with large spoil heaps and well-worn pathways, with Badger footprints visible at the time of survey. All of the entrances appear to be in active use, although no bedding or latrines were recorded in association with the sett. On the basis of the evidence, sett S1 is considered likely to be a small active main sett.

6.2.4 Sett S2 comprises a single entrance within a compost pile, located c. 20m from sett S1. The sett entrance was of a size and shape consistent with Badger and was associated with a spoil heap which appeared to be fresh, although there were no signs of active use. The sett could not be conclusively identified as Badger, albeit given the confirmed presence of Badger, the presence of a spoil heap and the proximity to sett S1 it is considered likely. On the basis of the evidence, sett S2 is considered likely to be a small active annex sett.

6.2.5 Sett S3 comprises a single entrance located c. 10m from sett S1 and S2. However, this sett is no longer active, was blocked and appears to have been disused for an extended period of time. On the basis of the evidence sett S3 is considered likely to be a small disused annex sett.

6.2.6 Sett S4 comprises a single entrance beneath tree roots, located c. 35m from sett S1. The sett entrance was associated with a large spoil mound and well-worn pathway. The sett could not be conclusively identified as Badger, albeit given the confirmed presence of Badger, the presence of a large spoil heap and the proximity to sett S1 it is considered likely. On the basis of the evidence sett S4 is considered likely to be a small active annex sett.

6.2.7 Evidence of foraging/commuting Badger was restricted to woodland W3, with evidence that Badgers are also utilising surrounding offsite gardens.

6.2.8 The planning application includes provision of two sheds in the south of the site, however one of which (Shed 2) is in situ and planning is being applied for retrospectively. As such, future

works in the vicinity of the Badger setts will be limited to the provision of Shed 1. Shed 1 is located c. 15m from Badger sett S2 and further than 30m from Setts S1, S3 and S4. As such, it is considered that the provision of Shed 1 has the potential to impact on Badger sett S2 should the sett continues to be actively used.

6.2.9 Sett S2 is located within a compost pile which is unlikely to be structurally sound and therefore prone to tunnel collapse. As such, update survey work will be required within 3 months prior to provision of shed 1 to establish whether the sett is still present and active or if any other sett entrances have been created within 30m of shed 1.

6.2.10 Overall, the proposals have the potential to result in impacts to Badger at the local level. As such, recommendations are set out at Section 7 below to ensure Badgers are fully safeguarded throughout construction. It should be noted that Badger is a dynamic species which regularly creates/abandons setts. As such, the proposed mitigation strategy and licensing requirements will need to be informed by results of the updated survey work.

6.3 Bats

6.3.1 **Legislative Protection.** Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (various species).

6.3.2 **Desktop Study Review.** A small number of records of bats were returned from within the search area, including Common Pipistrelle, Noctule Bat and unspecified Chiroptera bats. Of these, one record relates to the site and is for an injured bat in 1986. The next nearest record is for a bat roost, located c. 0.1km north west of the site in 1983.

6.3.3 **Roosting Bats - Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation.** None of the trees within/adjacent to the site be removed/impacted under the proposals have been identified as affording opportunities for roosting bats and therefore no impacts on roosting bats in trees are anticipated.

6.3.4 Four buildings were recorded within the site, comprising the main school building (B1) in addition to three small sheds/outbuildings (B2-B4). These were inspected for evidence of roosting bats and potential roosting features (see Appendix 3). No evidence of roosting bats was recorded in the buildings. Building B1 comprises the main school building and buildings B2-B4 comprise small outbuildings/sheds. Buildings B1 and B2 were assessed as being of moderate suitability for roosting bats, whilst buildings B3 and B4 were assessed as being of negligible suitability for roosting bats.

6.3.5 None of the buildings are proposed for removal and/or to be subject to works as part of the proposals.

6.3.6 On this basis, no significant impacts on the local population of roosting bats are anticipated as a result of the proposals.

6.3.7 **Foraging and Commuting Bats - Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation.** The majority of the site offers limited opportunities for foraging and commuting bats, comprising buildings, other developed land, introduced shrub and short-sward modified grassland. Nevertheless, habitats of elevated value, in the form of woodland, hedgerows, trees and pond, are present predominantly in association with the site boundaries. Nevertheless, the site is surrounded by residential development and therefore the overall value of these suitable habitats is likely to be limited by lack of connected suitable habitats in the local area.

6.3.8 It is understood that the vast majority of suitable habitats will be retained under the proposals. Where any additional lighting is proposed as part of the proposals, efforts should be made to minimise light spill on retained woodland, trees and hedgerows through the design of a sensitive lighting scheme.

6.3.9 On this basis, subject to the implementation of a sensitive lighting scheme, no significant adverse impacts on the local population of foraging and commuting bats are anticipated as a result of the proposals. Recommendations in respect of external lighting are outlined at Section 7 below.

6.4 Other Mammals

6.4.1 **Legislative Protection.** Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Dormouse), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Dormouse, Otter and Water Vole), Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (all wild mammals as defined by the act) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (various species, including Hedgehog, Brown Hare, Harvest Mouse and Polecat).

6.4.2 **Desktop Study Review.** A number of records of Hedgehog were returned from within the wider search area. The majority of records are for 1km x 1km grid squares. The more specific records returned are located c. 0.6-0.7km from the site between 2010 and 2016. A small number of marine species were also returned albeit this is not considered relevant to the site.

6.4.3 **Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation.** No evidence of any protected, rare or notable mammal species was recorded within the site.

6.4.4 The site does not support and is not linked to suitable habitats for Otter or Water Vole.

6.4.5 The habitats within the site, particularly areas of woodland, hedgerow and introduced shrub, provide opportunities for the Priority Species Hedgehog. The majority of habitats of value to hedgehog will be retained under the proposals.

6.4.6 Other common species which likely make use of the site, e.g., Fox, Mice, Deer and Rabbit, do not receive specific legislative protection in a development context and are therefore not a material planning consideration.

6.4.7 On this basis, no significant impacts on the local mammal populations are anticipated as a result of the proposals. A number of recommendations are set out at Section 7 below to ensure Hedgehog and other small mammals are fully safeguarded throughout construction.

6.5 Birds

6.5.1 **Legislative Protection.** Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (note additional protection afforded to Schedule 1 birds as listed within the act) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (various species).

6.5.2 **Desktop Study Review.** A high number of bird records were returned from within the search area, including numerous Schedule 1 and Priority Species. The majority of species returned are wetland birds associated with coastal habitats to the south.

6.5.3 **Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation.** No Schedule 1, Priority or notable bird species were recorded within the site during the survey work undertaken. The site provides nesting and foraging opportunities for a range of species, particularly in the form of buildings, trees, woodland, introduced shrub and hedgerows.

6.5.4 Under the proposals, the majority of habitats of elevated value to bird species is to be retained with only minor losses required to accommodate the proposed buildings. As such, continued similar opportunities will be available at the site under the proposals and the site will continue to support a similar bird assemblage.

6.5.5 Overall, no significant impacts on the conservation status of the local bird population are anticipated as a result of the proposals. Nevertheless, the proposals could result in the disturbance of nesting habitat, which could potentially affect any nesting birds that may be present at the time of works. Accordingly, a number of measures are set out at Section 7 below to ensure nesting birds are fully safeguarded throughout construction.

6.6 Great Crested Newts

6.6.1 **Legislative Protection.** Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

6.6.2 **Desktop Study Review.** A single record of Great Crested Newt has been returned from within the survey area, located c. 0.35km east of the site in 2020. The record relates to a garden pond and states that seven individuals were observed.

6.6.3 **Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation.** A single pond (P1) is present in the south of the site. No other ponds have been identified within 250m of the site.

6.6.4 An HSI assessment was undertaken of pond P1. This assessment is based on a visual inspection from the site boundary and supported by aerial imagery. The results of the HSI assessment are summarised at Table 6.1, below.

Table 6.1. Habitat Index Suitability (HSI) Assessment		
S.I. No.	SI Description	P1
1	Geographic location	1
2	Pond area	0.85
3	Pond permanence	0.9
4	Water quality	0.67
5	Shade	0.4
6	Water fowl effect	1
7	Fish presence	1
8	Pond Density	0.1
9	Terrestrial habitat	0.33
10	Macrophyte cover	0.35
HSI Score		0.55
Pond suitability		Poor

6.6.5 Ponds P1 was assessed to be of 'poor' suitability. Given the location of the site surrounded by residential development and the lack of other identified ponds on OS mapping within 1km of the site, Great Crested Newts are considered highly unlikely to be present.

6.6.6 Terrestrial habitats within the site which are of value to Great Crested Newts are limited to woodland, introduced shrub and hedgerows. Other vegetated habitats within the site, such as ruderal/ephemeral and modified grassland are not considered to provide sufficient cover for Great Crested Newts.

6.6.7 The majority of habitats of value to Great Crested Newts are retained under the proposals. Losses are largely limited to areas of grassland. Areas of habitat suitable for newts proposed for removal are restricted to trimming of hedgerow H7 to accommodate classroom 2 and creation of shed 1 and a footpath within woodland W3.

6.6.8 On this basis, given the isolation of the onsite pond and the limited impacts to onsite, suitable terrestrial habitat, no impacts on the local conservation status of Great Crested Newts are anticipated as a result of the proposals. Nevertheless, a number of recommendations are set out at Section 7 below to ensure Great Crested Newts are fully safeguarded throughout construction.

6.7 Other Amphibians

- 6.7.1 **Legislative Protection.** Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Natterjack Toad), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Natterjack Toad) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Natterjack Toad, Common Toad and Pool Frog).
- 6.7.2 **Desktop Study Review.** Three other amphibian species have been returned from within the search area, including Common Frog, Smooth Newt and the Priority Species Common Toad. The majority of records are for 1km x 1km grid squares. Of the specific records returned, the nearest record returned is for Smooth Newt, located c. 0.3km south of the site in 2020.
- 6.7.3 **Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation.** The site provides opportunities for amphibian species, in the form of woodland, hedgerows, introduced shrub, modified grassland and ruderal/ephemeral, as well as the pond in the south of the site.
- 6.7.4 The majority of suitable habitat will be retained under the proposals such that continued opportunities for amphibians will be available under the proposals in the long-term.
- 6.7.5 On this basis, no significant negative impacts on the local amphibian population are anticipated as a result of the proposals. Nevertheless, a number of recommendations are set out at Section 7 below to ensure amphibians are fully safeguarded throughout construction.

6.8 Reptiles

- 6.8.1 **Legislative Protection.** Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard; and partial protection: Adder, Common Lizard, Grass Snake and Slow-worm) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- 6.8.2 **Desktop Study Review. Records** of three species of reptile have been recorded from within the search area, including Slow-worm, Common Lizard and Grass Snake. The majority of records are for 1km x 1km grid squares. Of the specific records returned, the nearest records returned are for Common Lizard, located c. 0.5km north west of the site in 2018 and 2021.
- 6.8.3 **Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation.** The majority of the site, including areas of modified grassland and ruderal/ephemeral, are not considered to provide suitable opportunities for reptiles, comprising only a short sward with insufficient vegetation cover. Habitats within the site in the form of woodland, hedgerow bases and introduced shrub could provide opportunities for reptiles. However, the site is surrounded by residential development and therefore isolated from other areas of suitable habitat. Reptiles are therefore not considered likely to be present.
- 6.8.4 On this basis, no significant impacts on the local reptile population are anticipated as a result of the proposals. In any event, recommendations set out at Section 7 below in respect of small

mammals/common amphibians will also safeguard reptiles in the unlikely event individuals are present within the site during construction works.

6.9 Invertebrates

6.9.1 Legislative Protection. Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Large Blue, Fisher's Estuarine Moth and Lesser Whirlpool Ram's-horn Snail), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (White-clawed Crayfish) and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (various).

6.9.2 Desktop Study Review. A number of protected (Schedule 5) invertebrate species have been recorded in the local area, including Stag Beetle and Brown Hairstreak. The nearest identified record of Stag Beetle is located c. 0.06km east of the site in 2002. The nearest identified record of Brown Hairstreak is located c. 0.25km south east of the site in 2023.

6.9.3 Records of a number of Priority Species of butterfly and moth were also returned from the search area.

6.9.4 Survey Results, Assessment & Evaluation. The majority of the site, comprising buildings, other developed land, modified grassland, ruderal/ephemeral habitat provides limited opportunities for invertebrates, supporting limited floristic and structural diversity.

6.9.5 The site affords opportunities for saproxylic invertebrates, including Schedule 5 species Stag Beetle, in the form of woodland, mature trees and hedgerow. The majority of these habitats are to be retained under the proposals such that continued opportunities for these invertebrates will be available under the proposals in the long-term. Schedule 5 Brown Hairstreak is typically associated with woodlands, hedgerows and scrub which is dominated by Blackthorn. A number of Priority Species could also make use of the site.

6.9.6 The majority of habitats likely to be of elevated value to invertebrate species, including Schedule 5 and Priority Species, are to be retained under the proposals, such that continued opportunities will be available at the site in the long-term.

6.9.7 On this basis, no significant adverse impacts on invertebrates are anticipated as a result of the proposals.

7. Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement Recommendations

7.1 Mitigation

7.1.1 In accordance with the information set out above, an overview of required mitigation measures is provided in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Ecological mitigation measures		
Ref	Receptor	Recommendations
Pre-commencement		
EM1	Three-cornered Garlic	- Initial advice will be sought from a specialist contractor with regards to the appropriate method of eradication from the site. This is likely to involve either herbicide application or mechanical removal. - Eradication of Three-cornered Garlic will then be undertaken in accordance with a method statement produced by the specialist contractor. - Soils containing Three-cornered Garlic are classified as controlled waste and will therefore be disposed of at licensed landfill.
Pre-commencement/Construction Phase		
EM2	Woodland, Hedgerows and Trees	- Dust sources will be dampened down loose materials will be covered to reduce dust deposition. - Chemicals and hazardous materials will be stored in line with best practice guidelines. - Fires will only be lit in secure compounds and not allowed to remain during the night. - Unsecured food and litter will not be left within the working area overnight. - Fires will only be lit in secure compounds and not allowed to remain during the night. - Any lighting required will be turned off when not in use/outside of working hours. - Measures set out under EM2 below will also safeguard the onsite woodland. - Retained trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected during construction according to arboricultural best practice (BS5837:2012) or as otherwise directed by a suitably competent arboriculturalist. This may require protective fencing or other methods to safeguard root protection areas.
EM3	Pond P1	- Measures set out at EM2 will also safeguard the pond. - Storage areas for any chemicals, fuels, etc. will be sited well away from the pond (minimum 10m), and stored on an impervious base within an oil-tight bund with no drainage outlet. Spill kits with sand, earth or

Table 7.1: Ecological mitigation measures

Ref	Receptor	Recommendations
		commercial products approved for the stored materials will be kept close to storage areas for use in case of spillages. - Where possible, and with prior agreement of the sewage undertaker, silty water will be disposed of to the foul sewer or via another suitable form of disposal, e.g., tanker offsite. - Water washing of vehicles, particularly those carrying fresh concrete and cement, mixing plant, etc. will be carried out in a contained area as far from the river as practicable (minimum 10m), to avoid contamination. - Refuelling of plant will take place in a designated area, on an impermeable surface, away from the pond (minimum 10m). - Protective fencing will be provided and maintained at a 10m buffer from the pond and maintained throughout the course of works, where appropriate.
EM4	Badger – General	- Roughened planks of wood (or similar) will be placed in any trench/excavations which are left overnight in order to ensure Badgers (and any other animals) do not become trapped. This is particularly pertinent during winter/periods of wet weather which could cause trenches/excavations to fill with water. - Storage of topsoil or similar materials will be given careful consideration and minimised wherever possible. - Trenches/excavations and mounds will be inspected every morning to ensure Badgers (or other animals) have not become trapped or taken the opportunity to build a new sett. - Any temporarily exposed open pipes with a diameter of >150mm will be securely blocked outside of working areas to prevent access by Badgers or other animals. - Installation of heras fencing at 30m from all active setts present onsite to prevent use/access to this area by construction staff. - Consideration could also be given to preventing access by Badger to any trenches/excavations and mounds through the use of heras fencing. - Should a trapped Badger or suspected new setts be encountered during the construction period, works will cease and a suitably qualified ecologist (e.g., Essential Ecology) will be contacted immediately for further advice.
EM5	Badger – Sett S2	- An update survey will be undertaken within 3 months prior to commencement of works at the site. The aim of the survey will be to establish whether sett S2 remains active and whether any new sett entrances have been created at the site which have the potential to be impacted by the proposals. - Where it is not feasible to confirm the status of the sett, a 21-day monitoring exercise will be undertaken. This involves installation of camera traps at the site which are checked every 3 days. - Where active setts are no longer present within 30m of proposed works, works can proceed in accordance with measure EM4.

Table 7.1: Ecological mitigation measures

Ref	Receptor	Recommendations
		- Where sett S2 is confirmed as active, given the proposals include provision of a shed (which will require minimal if any footings), located c. 15m from the sett, it is proposed that shed construction/installation is undertaken in accordance with a non-licensed method statement under supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. This will include measures such as: - Works will be preceded by a toolbox talk detailing the legal protection of Badgers, the proposed working measures and the implications of coming across a Badger tunnel during works. - The Badger zone will only be accessed by site staff when a suitably qualified ecologist is onsite and supervising works. Works in this area will be restricted to construction/installation of the shed. Where feasible, construction/assembly works will be undertaken outside of the Badger zone and carried to the appropriate location. - Any vegetation removal required will be undertaken using hand tools only. - Any digging required will be kept to a minimum and will be undertaken using hand tools only. - Should it become apparent at any stage of works that a Badger tunnel/sett will be impacted, works will cease immediately and a licence will need to be obtained from Natural England in order to allow works to proceed lawfully. - Should any other active setts be identified within 30m of proposed works at the time of survey, the non-licensed method statement will need to be updated accordingly and/or consideration given to licensing. However, provided any new setts are located at c. 15m or more from the proposed shed, measures set out above in relation sett S2 are considered likely to be appropriate.
EM6	Great Crested Newts, Small Mammals and Herpetofauna	- Ground works/habitat clearance works will be undertaken between March/April and September/October (outside of the hibernation period) where temperatures have reached a minimum of 9°C. - Any potential refuge features, e.g., log piles, which will be impacted by the proposed works will be carefully disassembled by hand. - Areas of outgrown grassland/vegetation (over 15cm) present which need to be removed at the time of habitat clearance works will initially be strimmed to a short height of no less than 15cm). Strimming will be undertaken using hand-held tools under a watching brief maintained by site contractors. - The grassland will then be left for a minimum period of 24hrs so as to encourage and allow time for animals to disperse to nearby habitat. - Grassland will be maintained at a short sward height for the duration of construction works. - In the unlikely event protected species (e.g., Great Crested Newts, etc.) are encountered, works will cease immediately and a suitably qualified

Table 7.1: Ecological mitigation measures

Ref	Receptor	Recommendations
		ecologist (e.g., Essential Ecology) urgently contacted for advice (unless present on survey area). - In the event other animals are encountered (e.g., Hedgehog, reptiles, common amphibians etc.), these will be carefully moved to an area of retained suitable habitat to the south of the site. - In the event that an injured animal is encountered, it will be taken to a vet or animal hospital for treatment.
EM7	Nesting Birds	- Any works impacting woodland, hedgerows, trees or shrubs will ideally be avoided between the 1st March to 31st August in order to avoid the nesting period. - If the above is not practicable, habitats to be impacted or within proximity of proposed works will be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist (SQE) no more than 24hrs prior to commencement of works to identify the presence of any nests/nesting activity. - Any active nests identified will be cordoned off within an appropriate buffer (minimum 5m – species dependant) and protected until the end of the nesting season or until the nesting attempt is complete. - A watching brief for nesting birds will be maintained by contractors throughout construction. Should any new nests be encountered during the construction period, works will cease and a suitably qualified ecologist will be contacted immediately for further advice.
Completed Development		
EM8	Foraging/ Commuting Bats	- External lighting should be so far as possible minimised, particularly around areas of retained woodland, trees and hedgerows. - Should any external lighting be proposed, consideration should be given to nocturnal fauna. Recommendations for appropriate lighting are set out within the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note GN08/23 '<i>Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night</i>' (ILP 2023).

7.2 Compensation and Enhancements

7.2.1 In accordance with the information set out above, an overview of recommended compensation and enhancement measures is provided in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2 Ecological enhancement measures

Ref	Enhancement Measure	Recommendations
EE1	Trees/Shrub/Woodland Hedgerow Planting	- It is recommended that new planting within the site comprises native species of local provenance. - Tree planting could include native species such as Oak, Ash, Beech, Wild Cherry, Lime and Field Maple.

Table 7.2 Ecological enhancement measures

Ref	Enhancement Measure	Recommendations
		Any new shrub/hedgerow planting could include native species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Field Maple, Dogwood, Hazel, Cherry, Spindle, Holly or Wild Privet.
EE2	Bat Boxes	- It is recommended that a minimum of four woodcrete/woodstone bat boxes (e.g., 2x Vivara Pro Large Multi Chamber Woodstone Bat Box and 2x 2FN Schwegler Bat Box) be provided on retained trees in or at the edge of retained woodland. - Boxes should be positioned on the southern, eastern or western tree face at a minimum height of 4-5m. - Boxes should not be directly lit.
EE3	Bird Boxes	- It is recommended that a minimum of four woodcrete/woodstone bird boxes (e.g., 2x Vivara Pro Seville 28mm WoodStone Nest Box, 2x Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone® Open Nest Box) are provided on retained trees. - Bird boxes should be provided at a minimum height of 4-5m on the northern or eastern tree face.
EE4	Brash Piles	- It is recommended that a minimum of two brash piles are created within the site to benefit a range of small mammals, amphibians and invertebrates. - Where feasible, brash piles will be created using arisings from habitat clearance works. - Brash piles should ideally be located at the woodland edge and/or in the vicinity of the pond. - Brash piles should measure a minimum of 1m x 1m x 1m.
EE5	Buried Log Piles	- It is recommended that a stumpery is created at the woodland edge under the tree canopy for the benefit of invertebrates, including Stag Beetle. - The stumpery should be created using broad-leaved logs. Logs with a variety of diameters and heights should be selected, with a minimum diameter of 15cm and a minimum height of 70cm. - Logs should be buried to a depth of c. 50cm. - Gaps between logs should be filled with soil.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1.1 Essential Ecology has undertaken a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site based on the results of a desktop study, extended UK Habitat Survey and habitat suitability assessments for protected species, particularly including Badger, bats, Great Crested Newts and nesting birds.
- 8.1.2 The implementation of recommended mitigation measures (and where appropriate licensing) will ensure the ecological value of the site and protected species are safeguarded. A number of enhancement measures could also be implemented to provide an ecological betterment over the existing situation in line with local and national planning policy.
- 8.1.3 On this basis, the proposed development is not considered likely to result in significant adverse impacts to biodiversity at the site or in the local vicinity either alone or in combination with other projects. Indeed, the opportunity exists to provide an ecological betterment under the proposals.

9. References

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Drawings



- Key:**
- Developable Area
 - Site boundary
 - Buildings (u1b5)
 - Other developed land (u1b6)
 - Modified grassland (g4)
 - Introduced shrub (u1-847)
 - Ruderal/ephemeral (u1-81)
 - Other broad-leaved woodland (w1g)
 - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (w1f)
 - Pond (non-priority) (r1g-41)
 - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (h2b)
 - Other native hedgerow (h2a6)
 - Individual tree (200)

Project:
Courtlands

Drawing Title:
Habitats & Ecological Features

Drawing No:
ESEC/26006/01-01
Date:
May 2026

Rev:
A



a: 25 Katmandu Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 2SP
t: 07841 042796 | e: info@essentialecology.co.uk
w: www.essentialecology.co.uk

Appendices

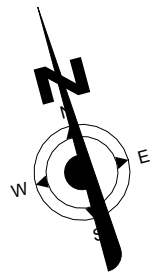
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- Developable Area
- Site Boundary
- Location of Existing Sheds
- Tree Locations
- Hedge Locations



Revision Number	Revision Description	Issued by	Revision Date
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DATE: 06/10/25 STATUS: PLANNING ISSUE SHEET SIZE: A1

SCALE: As indicated DRAWN: AP CHECKED:

CLIENT: Courtlands SITE ADDRESS:

DRAWING: Change of Use

TITLE: Proposed Location & Site Plan

PROJECT NO: Courtlands DRAWING NO: APC/012/26/63 REVISION:



ARCHEVOLVE

// design @archevolve.co.uk

// www. archevolve.co.uk

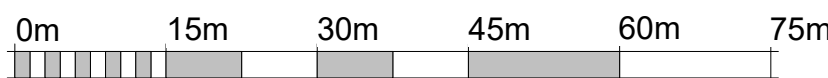
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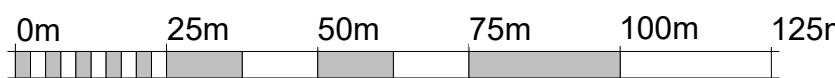
Site Plan
1 : 750



Location Plan
1 : 1250



VISUAL SCALE 1:750 @ A1



VISUAL SCALE 1:1250 @ A1

Legislation – Statutory Designations
Ramsar Sites: Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands for containing representative, rare or unique wetland types or for their importance in conserving biological diversity. Ramsar sites receive statutory protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Policy statements relating to Ramsar Sites have been issued which extend to same level of protection at policy level as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).
Special Protection Areas (SPAs): Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected areas for birds in the UK and in England are classified under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Regulations require the provision of a register of SPAs (along with other European sites) under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC).
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs): Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are protected areas in the UK and in England are designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Regulations require the provision of a register of SACs (along with other European sites). Under these Regulations, the UK Government and devolved administrations are required to establish a network of important conservation sites which will contribute to conserving the habitats and species identified in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive (European Council Directive 92/43/EEC).
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs): Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended. Modified provisions for the protection and management of SSSIs were introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. SSSIs comprise the UKs finest sites and are typically designated on the basis of wildlife or geological interest.
National Nature Reserves (NNRs): National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are declared under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). NNRs comprise important habitats, species and geology in the UK and are open to the public.
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs): Local Nature Reserves are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, LNRs and are declared for nature conservation by principal local authorities following consultation with Natural England. LNRs comprise features of local wildlife or geological interest.
Hedgerows: Hedgerows defined as 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulation 1997 are protected from removal (up-rooting or otherwise destroying). The definition of importance is based on a number of criteria in relation to wildlife, landscape or historical value, with hedgerows within or forming the curtilage of residential dwellings exempt.
Various Habitats: Including Grassland, Arable Field Margins, Woodland, Rivers, Ponds, Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land¹. Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats of principal importance (often referred to as Priority Habitats) for the conservation of biodiversity in England. Under Section 40 of the Act, the list should be used by local planning authorities, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England. A total of 56 habitats, all identified on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), are included on the S41 list.

Legislation – Species
European Protected Faunal Species: Including, Creeping Marshwort, Early Gentian, Fen Orchid, Floating-leaved Water Plantain, Killarney Fern, Lady's Slipper, Shore Dock, Slender Naiad, Yellow Marsh Saxifrage¹. Regulation 47 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provide protection to European Protected Species of plant. Under the regulations, it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy any listed plant at any stage of the plant's biological cycle.
European Protected Faunal Species: Including, bats, Dormouse, Otter, Great Crested Newt, Natterjack Toad, Pool Frog, Sand Lizard, Smooth Snake, Large Blue Butterfly, Fisher's Estuarine Moth, Lesser Whirlpool Ram's-horn¹. Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) provide protection to European Protected Species of animals. Under the regulations, it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species. • Deliberately disturb any wild animals of any such species, including in particular any disturbance likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or which is likely to affect significantly their local distribution or abundance. • Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal. • Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal. In accordance with these regulations, European Protected Species (EPS) licences can be granted by Natural England to permit activities that would otherwise be unlawful provided the development is for reasons of overruling public interest, there is no satisfactory alternative and the favourable conservation status of the species will be maintained or enhanced.
Protected Faunal Species: Including, bats, Dormouse, Otter, Water Vole, Pine Marten, Great Crested Newt, Natterjack Toad, Pool Frog, Sand Lizard, Smooth Snake, White-clawed Crayfish, Roman Snail and a number of other invertebrate species¹. These animals receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it illegal (subject to certain exceptions) to: • Intentionally kill, injure or take any such animal. • Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection. • Intentionally or recklessly disturb such animals while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection.
Protected Faunal Species (partial protection only): Including, Adder, Common Lizard, Grass Snake, Slow Worm¹. These animals receive partial protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it illegal (subject to certain exceptions) to intentionally kill or injure these animals
Schedule 1 Birds Protection is provided to birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bird listed on Schedule 1, or their dependent young while nesting. Protection with respect to nesting birds (set out below) also applies to Schedule 1 birds.
Nesting Birds All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it illegal to:

Legislation – Species

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

Badgers

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under the Act it is an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat* a Badger, or attempt to do so.
- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with an active sett, including damaging or destroying a sett, obstructing access to a sett or disturbing Badgers using a sett.

In England, licences can be obtained from Natural England to permit development activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the legislation.

Wild Mammals

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 provides legal protection to all wild mammals against intentional harm or suffering.

Various Species:

Including, Hedgehog, Brown Hare, Polecat, Common Toad, all species of UK reptiles and a wide variety of plants, birds and invertebrates¹.

Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species of principal importance (often referred to as Priority Species) for the conservation of biodiversity in England. Under Section 40 of the Act, the list should be used by local planning authorities, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England. A total of 943 species, all identified on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), are included on the S41 list.

Schedule 9 Invasive Species:

Including, Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, Giant Hogweed, Various Cotoneasters, Rhododendron, American Mink, Muntjac Deer, Grey Squirrel, Italian Crested Newt, Alpine Newt, Signal Crayfish¹.

Certain non-native species of plants and animals have been identified as representing a threat to native species. Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) prohibits the release or allowed spread of any such species listed on Schedule 9 into the wild.

¹ Where species/habitat lists are set out these are provided to give an indication of species included. These do not, and are not intended, to provide complete species/habitat lists.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out policies to conserve and enhance the natural environment at Chapter 15 with the overarching aim of halting biodiversity loss (set out at paragraph 174). The NPPF is accompanied by Planning Practice Guidance on 'Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure' and ODPM Circular 06/200512.

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states:

- a) *When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*
- b) *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;*
- c) *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*
- d) *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*
- e) *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*
- f) *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.'*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) accompanies the NPPF, providing guidance on its interpretation. The NPPG includes guidance on how biodiversity should be taken into account when preparing a planning application, provides clarification on the interpretation of the mitigation hierarchy and sets out appropriate enhancement recommendations.

Government Circular 06/05:

Government Circular 06/05 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system' provides guidance on the application of legislation relating to planning and nature conservation in England and details on the implications of designations and protected habitats and species.

Worthing Borough Council Local Plan 2020 - 2036 (Adopted 28th March 2023)

The Local Plan includes a number of policies of relevance to ecology and biodiversity. The following policies have been reviewed as part of the Ecological Appraisal:

- Policy EN7: Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
- Policy DM18: Biodiversity
- Policy DM19: Green Infrastructure

Building B1**Building Description:**

Building B1 comprises the main school building which is in active use. The building is three storeys and is of solid brick and block construction, with a pitched roof supporting slate tiles and slate ridge tiles, with some flat sections. The building also supports soffit boxes and several chimney stacks.

Assessment of Bat Suitability:

Opportunities: The building is generally well maintained. Given the age of the building, it is likely that access points are present on and around the roof, although this could not be confirmed from the ground due to the height of the building. The building is also likely to support loft voids.

Evidence: No evidence recorded, albeit no internal surveys were undertaken.

Level of Suitability: **Moderate** (in the absence of internal inspection surveys)

Photographs:

Building B2**Building Description:**

Building B2 is a small outbuilding of block and concrete render construction with a pavilion roof supporting slate tiles. The building supports circular windows with timber frames.

Assessment of Bat Suitability:

Opportunities: A number of gaps were noted under slates which could provide opportunities for bat roosting and/or access internally.

Evidence: No evidence recorded, albeit no internal surveys were undertaken.

Level of Suitability: **Moderate** (in the absence of internal inspection surveys)

Photographs:

Building B3**Building Description:**

Building B3 is a small garden shed, of wooden tongue and groove boarding with a pitched roof supporting bitumen felt.

Assessment of Bat Suitability:

Opportunities: The shed is in reasonably good condition, well-sealed and of a construction type not typically favoured by bats. No suitable roosting opportunities for bats were identified.

Evidence: No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the inspection survey work.

Level of Suitability: **Negligible**

Photographs:

Building B4**Building Description:**

Building B4 is newly constructed large shed of wooden tongue and groove construction, with a pitched roof supporting corrugated sheeting. The roof and walls are internally lined with timber boarding. The internal space is naturally light due to presence of a number of windows and doors.

Assessment of Bat Suitability:

Opportunities: The building is new, well-sealed, naturally light internally and is of a construction type not typically favoured by roosting bats. No suitable roosting opportunities for bats were identified.

Evidence: No evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the inspection survey work.

Level of Suitability: **Negligible**

Photographs:



Essential Ecology

Essential Ecology Ltd
25 Katmandu Road
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 2SP

t: 07841 042796

e: info@essentialecology.co.uk

w: www.essentialecology.co.uk