

AtkinsRéalis



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

West Sussex County Council

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HOMEFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Executive Summary

Report purpose	The aims of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are to: ▪ Identify key ecological constraints to the development; ▪ Identify if additional ecological surveys are required prior to construction to inform an ecological impact assessment; and, ▪ Identify recommended avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures.
Proposed Development	Provision of additional classroom and teaching space at Homefield Primary School, via an extension or new build. Proposed Development will include re-design of external areas around proposed extension/new build.
Desk studies and field surveys	A field survey was carried out in October 2025. Desk study was undertaken in December 2025, and updated in February 2026.
Ecological features	The Site is dominated by school buildings, hardstanding and a modified grassland playing field. Small, discrete areas of vegetated garden are present, including a 'wildlife' area in the north-west corner containing an ornamental pond and garden planting. Trees are present along the southern boundary and immediately adjacent to the northern boundary. Overall, opportunities for wildlife are limited, although there is some potential for protected species such as nesting birds, slow worm, foraging bats and great crested newt. Invasive non-native species recorded on Site include parrot's feather (in the pond) and Virginia creeper (on boundary fenceline).
Avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures	The report outlines a range of proportionate measures to avoid or minimise ecological impacts during construction, including pollution prevention, protection of retained habitats, safeguards for wildlife such as nesting birds, bats and reptiles, and procedures for responding to unexpected ecological finds or invasive species. These measures may need to be refined based on the outcome of recommended survey or any changes to the design proposals.
Recommendations for further survey	A presence/likely absence (environmental DNA (eDNA)) survey for great crested newts at one ornamental pond within the Site is recommended. This should be carried out prior to any planning application submission. Trees adjacent to the north boundary of the Site (on the railway side of boundary fence) are retained in the current proposals. However, if plans change and these require removal or significant works (e.g. pollarding) further assessment for roosting bats will be required in advance of any works.
Opportunities for biodiversity enhancements and biodiversity net gain	Opportunities include retaining existing habitats, incorporating additional tree planting, and enhancing the design with features such as a green or living roof to create new biodiversity value on site.

Report Validity

In the event of scope or programme changes or if works do not commence within 12 months of the date of this report then updates to the surveys may be required to ensure the validity of the data, as per Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance¹.

¹ CIEEM (2019) *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*.



1. Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

AtkinsRéalis UK Limited was commissioned by West Sussex County Council to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) in connection with the design and construction of new classroom facilities at Homefield Primary School (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development). Homefield Primary School is located in Worthing, West Sussex (hereafter referred to as the Site).

This report has been undertaken with reference to current good practice² and provides an initial appraisal of any likely ecological constraints upon designated site, protected species and other features of ecological interest.

Following the principles of the mitigation hierarchy and British Standard (BS) 42020:2013³, this report also identifies the need for measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate for damage and disturbance to habitats and species. Opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements in accordance with local, regional and national biodiversity planning strategies are also identified where relevant. Furthermore, it identifies recommendations for further ecological surveys that may be required to establish the presence or likely absence of ecological features within and adjoining the Proposed Development.

1.2 The Site

The Site is located at Ordnance Survey national grid reference TQ 15436 03549, off Chesswood Road, Worthing, West Sussex). The Site Location Plan is in **Appendix A**.

The Site is approximately 1.6 ha and is located in a predominantly residential, urban location immediately south of a railway line. The surrounding area includes residential gardens and houses. The Site is occupied by school buildings and hardstanding (car park, play areas) and grassland playing field. A small educational 'wildlife' area is present in the north-west corner of the Site which includes an ornamental pond and planted shrubs.

1.3 The Proposed Development

The Proposed Development includes the construction of a new classroom block, some internal refurbishment to discreet areas of the existing school building and external rearrangement of car parking areas and landscaping. The details of the Proposed Development as currently understood are shown on the Roof Plan and Landscape External Arrangement presented in **Appendix B**.

The Proposed Development will require planning permission, targeted for summer 2026. Construction commencement is targeted for summer 2027.

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

³ British Standards Institution (2013) *BSI Standards Publication BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - code of practice for planning and development*. BSI Standards Limited.



2. Scope of the Assessment

This report presents ecological information obtained during the following:

- A desk-study undertaken in December 2025 and February 2026; and
- A walkover survey of accessible land within and adjacent to the Site on 29/10/2025.

The walkover survey encompassed the entirety of the school grounds (the Site), and a proposed planning application boundary was unknown at the time of the survey. Proposed works are focussed on the west side of the Site, and recommendations set out in this report reflect currently understanding of the Proposed Development. The survey plan in Appendix E-1 shows the Site boundary (survey area) and the draft red line boundary provided following the survey.

The walkover survey and identification of potential ecological constraints was based on the condition of the Site and its immediate surrounds encountered at the time of the walkover survey, and information about the Proposed Development available at the time. If information on the Proposed Development should change, the Site may need to be re-visited to establish if there are any further ecological constraints arising from changes to the design.

Full details on survey methods are present in **Appendix C**, including details on the zone of influence applied during the data gathering and assessment of potential ecological constraints, and the methodology for assessing ecological constraints, alongside specific survey limitations.

This report provides an initial appraisal of any likely ecological constraints, such as the presence of protected species or other features of ecological interest, to the proposals. It identifies the need for any measures to avoid or mitigate damage and disturbance to habitats and species and provides recommendations for further ecological survey as required. This report is intended to inform design development, site layout and/or site investigations. Further survey is required prior to any planning application submission.

A summary of relevant ecological legislation is included in **Appendix D**.



3. Results

3.1 Site Description

A habitat plan of the Site is provided in **Appendix E.1**. Target Notes (TN) referred to below are indicated by points on the habitat plan. Target notes are described in **Appendix E.2** along with site photographs.

The Site (Homefield Primary School, Worthing) comprises an approximately 1.6 ha, broadly rectangular parcel of land situated between a railway line to the north and residential properties along Chesswood Road to the south. It lies within a predominantly residential, urban setting.

The majority of the Site consists of school buildings and associated hardstanding, including parking areas, play surfaces and pedestrian walkways. A large grassland playing field occupies the eastern part of the Site. In the north-western corner, adjacent to the railway, is an ornamental pond (TN1) with ornamental shrub planting (TN2) and a wooden outdoor classroom structure (Building B3) overlooking the ornamental pond.

Immediately beyond the northern boundary fence is a line of sycamore trees (TN3), located outside but directly abutting the Site. Further trees are present along the southern boundary with Chesswood Road, (TN8) some of which lie within the Site and others outside the boundary. An area containing greenhouses and planting beds is located to the north of building B1 (TN6).

The following UKHab categories are present within the Site:

- u1b (u1b5 and uab6) – Developed land; sealed surface (buildings and hardstanding)
- u1; secondary code 828 – Vegetated garden (discrete ornamental planted areas, planters, and small areas of grass around buildings)
- u1c – artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (bare ground - play area)
- rg1; secondary code 46 – Other standing water (ornamental pond)
- g4 – Modified grassland (playing field)
- h2a – Native hedgerow
- h2b – other hedgerow (beech hedgerow)
- Individual trees

3.2 Ecological Features

Table 3-1 provides a summary of ecological features identified during desk study and site walkover survey, along with recommendations for any further survey or mitigation requirements.

A summary of recommendations is then provided in **Section 4**.



Table 3-1 - Summary of ecological features, constraints and recommendations

Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey
Statutory Designated Sites⁴	There are no statutory designated sites within 1 km of the Site. The Site lies within the Impact Risk Zone of Cissbury Ring Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, the Proposed Development does not meet the criteria of developments which may pose a risk to this SSSI⁵. No statutory designated sites will be affected by the Proposed Development.	None	n/a	None
Non-statutory Designated Sites⁶	Site Ad07 Cokeham Brooks Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located approximately 680 m east of the Site. According to the site citation, the LWS comprises botanically rich wetland, grassland and lowland mixed deciduous woodland situated on the edge of an urban area, includes numerous springs and the Cokeham Brook watercourse, with the wetland habitats supporting notable invertebrate assemblages and breeding bird species. A review of Ordnance Survey mapping finds that no hydrological connectivity exists between the Site and the LWS. No other non-statutory sites are present within 1 km of the Site. Given the separation distance and the absence of any hydrological pathway, the construction and operation of	None	n/a	None

⁴ Where designated sites are situated outside of the Site boundary, the distance and direction are given to the closest point that the designated site is from the Site.

⁵ [https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0303000500000¬es=&location=514313,103699%20%20\(IRZ%20polygon%20centre\)](https://irz.geodata.org.uk/IRZ/step2.html?irzcode=0303000500000¬es=&location=514313,103699%20%20(IRZ%20polygon%20centre)) [Accessed 28/02/2026]

⁶ Where non-statutory designated sites are situated outside of the Site boundary, the distance and direction is given to the closest point that the designated site is from the Site.



Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey									
	the Proposed Development are considered to pose a negligible risk of direct or indirect adverse effects on Cokeham Brooks LWS.												
Irreplaceable habitats ⁷	Desk study found no irreplaceable habitats mapped within 1 km of the Site. No irreplaceable habitats were recorded on Site during the site survey.	None	n/a	None									
Priority habitats	Review of MAGIC identified the following priority habitats within 1 km of the Site: <table><thead><tr><th>Habitat</th><th>Parcels</th><th>Distance to nearest parcel</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Deciduous woodland</td><td>2</td><td>70 m south</td></tr><tr><td>Coastal vegetated shingle</td><td>1</td><td>950 m south</td></tr></tbody></table> Due to the distance between the site and nearby mapped priority habitats, impacts during construction and operation of the Proposed Development are unlikely, but precautionary measures can be implemented. Within the Site there are the following potential priority habitats: ▪ Native hedgerow – planted hedgerow with diverse species rich marking one boundary of the Site.	Habitat	Parcels	Distance to nearest parcel	Deciduous woodland	2	70 m south	Coastal vegetated shingle	1	950 m south	<u>Design</u> The following is recommended: ▪ The native hedgerow should be retained ▪ Opportunities to retain the pond should be explored. Where this is not possible, opportunities to replace the pond should be explored. <u>Construction</u> General pollution prevention measures should be implemented to reduce risk to nearby priority woodland habitat. See general measures in Section 4.	Design stage Construction stage	Survey to check for presence of great crested newts – see below
Habitat	Parcels	Distance to nearest parcel											
Deciduous woodland	2	70 m south											
Coastal vegetated shingle	1	950 m south											

⁷ As defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024): Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.



Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey
	Ornamental pond – this ornamental pond does not meet the description of priority habitat. However, in the unlikely event that great crested newts are confirmed as present (see below), it may be categorised as such may be considered priority habitat if protected species are present. The native hedgerow is unaffected by the proposed works. However the ornamental pond is expected to be removed to facilitate construction.			
Habitats	The Site includes the following habitats within and adjacent to the location of the Proposed Development: vegetated garden, other standing water (ornamental pond, TN1), native hedgerow and individual trees. The Proposed Development may involve the loss of, or damage to, these features.	<u>Design</u> The following is recommended: ▪ The hedgerow and trees should be retained where possible. ▪ Opportunities to retain the ornamental pond should be explored. Where this is not possible, opportunities to replace the pond should be explored. ▪ Building design and landscaping proposals should consider Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. See recommendations in Section 4. <u>Construction</u> <u>The following is recommended:</u> ▪ Retained trees should be protected in accordance with British Standards Institution (2012). <i>Guide for Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction: recommendations.</i> BS5837:2012.	Design stage Construction stage	None



Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey
		General pollution prevention measures should be implemented - see Section 44.3.		
Bats	SxBRC data included a summary of bats recorded within 2 km of the Site, with dates ranging from 1994 to 2023. Species records were split into the following species/species groups in order of abundance of records: common pipistrelle; unidentified bat; noctule, serotine, Nathusius's pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat and pipistrelle spp. Full results of the bat site assessment survey and preliminary roost assessment are provided in Appendix E.3. The Site is assessed as having low suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Building B1a, B1b, B2 and B3 were categorised as having negligible potential for roosting bats. Tree Group 1 (TN3), the row of trees immediately adjacent to the north boundary of the Site could only be viewed from the southern side. No potential roosting features were recorded. However, presence of features on north side of trees cannot be completely ruled out but is considered low risk based on observations during the survey. These trees are retained and unaffected in the current proposals (see Appendix B).	<u>Design</u> The following is recommended: - Retain trees within the design where possible - Incorporate bat roosting features into new building – features / boxes suitable for crevice roosting species (such as pipistrelle) should be selected. - Any proposed external lighting should take into account the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting professionals guidance note 08/23⁸. <u>Construction</u> The sycamore trees adjacent to the Site boundary (TN3) are retained and protected within the current design proposals. However, if the proposed development changes and removal of the sycamore trees outside the Site boundary (TN3) is required to facilitate construction, adopt a precautionary approach due to limited visibility during the initial survey. These trees are located on the railway corridor. If access can be obtained, a suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a further ground level assessment prior to any proposed works. If	Design stage Prior to and during construction stage	No further surveys are required prior to planning submission. Updated roost assessments should take place prior to works to structure or removal of any trees if this takes place 18 months after survey date to determine whether suitability remains the same. <u>If removal of the sycamore trees (TN3) on adjacent land is required</u> to facilitate construction (not currently required), a precautionary approach to removal is required due to limitations of the survey. As a precaution, further assessment by a suitability qualified ecologist should be undertaken prior to or at the time of works depending on access – see mitigation column. If no access for survey is possible prior to any planning application, limitation will need explaining to LPA, along with

⁸ Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Available at: 'Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' ILP Guidance Note update released - News - Bat Conservation Trust



Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey
		access to the track side of trees is not possible in advance, further inspection will be required at the time of works to mitigate the risk of damage to bat roosts. It will not be possible to undertake aerial inspection of trees by climbing due to location on railway corridor.		action plan / precautionary approach to be taken.
Birds	SxBRC provided records of 88 priority bird species. The vast majority of these are records are species associated with coastal, wetland or water habitats. From the list provided, the following species could make use of habitats within the Site for foraging or nesting: black redstart, dunnoek, great black-backed gull, green woodpecker, herring gull, house martin, house sparrow, kestrel, lesser black-backed gull, mistle thrush, redstart, starling, swallow, swift, tawny owl, whitethroat, willow warbler and wheatear. The trees and vegetated garden areas around the Site provide some suitable nesting opportunities for birds. No nesting potential was identified within any of the buildings affected by the Proposed Development. The flat roof of B1b is exposed to prevailing winds and is therefore unlikely to be used by roof-nesting species such as gulls, except in locations where adjoining roof sections offer shelter. There is a risk of damage or destruction of active bird nests if timing of site clearance activities is within the bird nesting season.	<u>Design</u> Planting scheme should consider provision of plants which provide a food source for birds, such as seed or fruit bearing plants.	Design stage	No further bird surveys are recommended prior to any planning application. The site is small and site clearance works (if required) are localised. Potential impacts to birds can be determined based on the results of this preliminary ecological appraisal.
		<u>Construction</u> Tree felling and vegetation clearance should be minimised as far as practicable and undertaken outside the core bird nesting season (01 March to 31 August) to avoid damage or destruction of occupied nests or harm to breeding birds. If works must occur during this period, a nesting bird check must be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist within 24 hours of clearance. If any active nests are found, they must be retained in situ until young have fledged; exclusion zones or alternative working methods may be required. Vegetation already cleared should be rendered unsuitable for nesting (e.g., removed, chipped or covered) to prevent re-nesting.	Construction	
Great crested newts	No records of great crested newt were returned by the desk study. An ornamental pond is present on Site (TN1). This ornamental pond is lined and contains some emergent and marginal vegetation, providing	<u>Design / construction</u> If great crested newts are confirmed to be present (see further survey recommendations)	TBC	A survey to determine the presence or likely absence of great crested newt should be undertaken prior to submission



Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey
	some potential habitat for breeding amphibians, including great crested newt. Terrestrial habitat within the Site is limited to a small area of overgrown garden vegetation immediately surrounding the pond; however, this connects to the railway corridor, where grassland and scrub offer additional terrestrial opportunities. The Habitat Suitability Index score category for the ornamental pond is 'poor'. A review of Ordnance Survey mapping identified no other waterbodies within 1 km of the pond. Great crested newts are typically associated with landscapes containing a network of ponds within dispersal distance (generally within 500 m), which increases metapopulation viability. Given the isolation of TN1, it is considered unlikely that great crested newts would have naturally colonised the pond. However, amphibians are sometimes introduced to ponds, and informal or unmapped ponds may be present within nearby residential gardens. Therefore, although the likelihood of great crested newt presence is low, their use of the pond for breeding cannot be completely ruled out. Any damage to, or removal of, the pond could result in impacts to great crested newt if the species is present.	and the pond (TN1) cannot be retained, a licence will be required to remove the pond or damage terrestrial habitat surrounding it. Two licensing routes are available: • West Sussex District Licence (administered by NatureSpace). This approach allows impacts to be covered through a financial contribution that funds strategic habitat creation and management off-site. Costs may be substantial where impacts include the loss of a breeding pond. • European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence. Under this route, the applicant must provide suitable compensation for any loss of aquatic (pond) or terrestrial habitat within the development design. Avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures are tailored to the specific Site. An appropriate licensing route can be determined in liaison with the client and design team should great crested newts be found to be present.		of the planning application. This survey involves collecting water samples from the pond during the great crested newt breeding season (mid-April to the end of June). The samples are then analysed by an accredited laboratory for environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm whether great crested newt DNA is present. If great crested newts are confirmed to be present, further surveys may be required to determine the population size to inform impact assessment. This will depend on the licensing route.
Reptiles	SxBRC returned records of common lizard, grass snake and slow worm within the study area. The Site offers very limited opportunities for reptiles. There is some potential for species such as slow worm (commonly associated with gardens) to be present within the overgrown planting surrounding the pond (TN1), particularly as this area connects to suitable	<u>Design</u> No specific design recommendations. Consideration should be given to re-provision of a wildlife area if this is lost to the proposals.	Design	None. The extent of habitat affected is small and the likely impacts can be reliably assessed at this preliminary stage.
		<u>Construction</u>	Construction	



Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey
	habitat along the railway corridor and lies adjacent to a neighbouring garden. However, due to the small size of this habitat parcel, it is unlikely to support anything more than a very small number of individuals, and a significant reptile population is not expected. Site clearance or redesign in this area has the potential to kill or injure individual reptiles if present. No further reptile survey is recommended, as the extent of habitat affected is small and the likely impacts can be reliably assessed at this preliminary stage.	To avoid harm to any slow worm or other common reptile species, vegetation clearance should be carried out sensitively. Brief site operatives on the potential presence of reptiles, safe handling procedures and relocation protocols. Clearance should ideally occur March to October, when reptiles are active. Any reptiles encountered should be moved to suitable habitat outside the works area, ideally within undisturbed habitat within the Site, directly adjacent to the adjacent railway corridor. It is recommended this approach is captured in a written method statement / precautionary method of working.		
Hazel dormouse	The desk study returned no records of hazel dormouse. Although hazel dormouse are widespread in Sussex and can occur in urban-fringe locations where suitable habitat is present (such as the adjacent railway corridor), the habitats within the Site itself offer negligible potential for this species. Hazel dormouse are therefore considered absent from the Site.	None	n/a	None
Badger	No evidence of badger was recorded during the site survey. SxBRC do not provided records of badger as part of their data search. The area of the Site affected by the Proposed Development is largely hardstanding with a small area of vegetation garden. It offers limited opportunities for badger. Badger are considered absent from the Site.	None	n/a	None



Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey
Protected/priority⁹ Invertebrates	A large number of priority invertebrate records were returned by SxBRC, largely associated with survey work undertaken on semi-natural habitats on the outskirts of Worthing. In contrast, the Site is dominated by hardstanding, buildings, modified grassland and small areas of ornamental vegetation. These habitats offer very limited structural or botanical diversity and do not provide the conditions required to support an invertebrate assemblage of any special interest.	None	n/a	None
Protected/priority¹⁰ plants	No protected or priority plant species were recorded during the Site survey. Although the survey was undertaken in October, outside the core growing season for botanical identification, the Site is dominated by hardstanding, buildings, modified grassland and small areas of ornamental planting. These habitats have very limited potential to support rare or legally protected plant species. As such, the likelihood of encountering protected plants is considered negligible.	None	n/a	None
Invasive Non– Native Plant Species (INNPS)	The following invasive non-native species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were recorded during the Site survey: ▪ Parrot’s feather within the ornamental pond (TN1)	<u>Construction</u> If works are likely to affect these plants, a careful plan must be implemented to prevent their spread beyond the Site, in accordance with legal responsibilities under Schedule 9.	Prior to and during construction	Survey by specialist invasive species contractor.

⁹ Taken as principal species for the conservation of biodiversity listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; any invertebrate listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); any invertebrate listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); any invertebrate listed in the IUCN Invertebrate Red Data Book (1991); and any invertebrate listed under the local biodiversity action plan.

¹⁰ Taken as principal species for the conservation of biodiversity listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*; any species listed under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended); any species listed under Schedule 5 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended); any species listed in an IUCN Red Data Book; and any other species listed under the local biodiversity action plan.



Ecological feature	Description and potential ecological constraints	Mitigation recommendations	Timing	Further survey
	Virginia creeper along the western and southern boundary fences, and over the shed (TN4, Building B2) There is potential for site clearance and construction activities to cause the spread of these species.	It is recommended that a specialist invasive-species contractor is appointed to provide advice on appropriate management, control or eradication measures.		

3.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

Under the Environment Act 2021, all major development projects in England are required to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This requires development proposals to demonstrate, through an approved biodiversity metric, that habitats retained, enhanced and/or created as part of the project result in an overall measurable increase in biodiversity value compared to the pre-development baseline.

A BNG assessment will therefore be required to support the planning application. The design should prioritise on-site habitat retention and enhancement, with the aim of achieving the 10% BNG requirement within the Site boundary. If this is not achievable, it will be necessary to purchase off-site biodiversity units from an accredited provider.

To assist in achieving the BNG target, the following additional measures should be incorporated into the design where feasible:

- Retain the existing hedgerow and trees where possible.
- Explore opportunities to retain the ornamental pond (TN1). If retention is not achievable, opportunities to create a replacement pond should be considered in the design.
- Provide new tree planting and additional native shrub and hedgerow planting where possible or flower abundant grassland. Any space created specifically for wildlife should consider its location, focusing on areas of the Site connected to the railway corridor.
- Incorporate a green / living roof on new buildings to provide additional foraging and nesting opportunities for invertebrates and birds, and contribute directly to habitat creation under BNG.
- Red line boundary to be adjusted to exclude the retained hedgerow, so that this does not appear in the pre-development baseline calculations.



4. Summary of recommendations

4.1 Design stage

A summary of design stage recommendations is provided below:

- **Retention of exiting habitats:**
 - Retain the existing hedgerow and trees where possible.
 - Explore opportunities to retain the pond (TN1). If retention is not achievable, opportunities to create a replacement pond should be considered in the design.
- **Landscaping:**
 - Incorporate landscaping that contributes to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
 - Planting schemes should favour species that provide nectar, seeds or fruit, supporting birds, bats and invertebrates.
 - Consider the re-provision of a wildlife area if any existing informal wildlife space is lost to the proposals – ideally located adjacent to the boundary shared with the railway corridor to maximise opportunities for wildlife utilising this space and providing an educational resource.
 - Provide new trees where space allows to increase structural and habitat diversity. Urban trees provide a resource for wildlife and other environmental benefits.
- **Space for wildlife:**
 - Incorporate a green / living roof on new buildings to provide additional foraging and nesting opportunities for invertebrates and birds, and contribute directly to habitat creation under BNG.
 - Integrate bird boxes and bat roosting features (e.g., integrated bat bricks or external bat boxes) suitable for crevice-roosting species such as common pipistrelle.
 - Ensure any proposed external lighting follows the Bat Conservation Trust & Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note 08/23, avoiding unnecessary illumination of boundary features, tree lines or potential bat habitat.
- **Red line boundary:** adjusted to exclude the retained hedgerow, so that this does not appear in the pre-development baseline calculations.

4.2 Further survey

The following surveys are recommended to inform design development and any planning application:

- **Great crested newt presence/ likely absence environmental DNA (eDNA) survey at the on-site pond (TN1):**

A survey to determine the presence or likely absence of great crested newt should be undertaken prior to submission of the planning application. This survey involves collecting water samples from the pond during the great crested newt breeding season (mid-April to the end of June). The samples are then analysed by an accredited laboratory for environmental DNA (eDNA) to confirm whether great crested newt DNA is present.
- Trees adjacent to the north boundary of the Site (TN3) are retained in the current proposals. If this should change, further bat roost assessment of these trees is required.

4.3 Construction

A summary of construction stage recommendations is provided below:



- **General measures:**
 - Implement pollution prevention measures to protect retained habitats and nearby sensitive areas from contamination (e.g., fuels, concrete washout, surface runoff).
 - Apply general good practice to avoid harm to wildlife, including keeping storage areas tidy, managing waste appropriately, and covering excavations or providing escape ramps to prevent animals becoming trapped.
 - If any protected species, evidence of protected species, or invasive non-native species are encountered unexpectedly, all works should stop and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted for advice.
- **Protection of trees:** Protect retained trees in accordance with BS 5837:2012 – *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction* or any project specific tree protection plans.
- **Protection of roosting bats:** Sycamore trees adjacent to the north boundary of the Site (TN3) are retained and unaffected in current proposals. If removal of the sycamore trees outside the Site boundary is required to facilitate construction, adopt a precautionary approach due to limited visibility during the initial survey. A suitably qualified ecologist should undertake a further assessment at the time of works if earlier access is not possible.
- **Protection of nesting birds:** Carry out vegetation clearance outside the core nesting season (1 March – 31 August). If works must occur during this period, a nesting bird check must be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist within 24 hours of clearance. If any active nests are found, they must be retained in situ until young have fledged; exclusion zones or alternative working methods may be required. Vegetation already cleared should be rendered unsuitable for nesting (e.g., removed, chipped or covered) to prevent re-nesting.
- **Protection of reptiles:** Conduct vegetation clearance sensitively to avoid harm to slow worms or other common reptiles. Brief site operatives on the potential presence of reptiles, safe handling procedures and relocation protocols. Clearance should ideally occur March to October, when reptiles are active. Any reptiles encountered should be moved to suitable habitat outside the works area, ideally within undisturbed habitat within the Site, directly adjacent to the adjacent railway corridor. It is recommended this approach is captured in a written method statement / precautionary method of working.
- **Management of invasive non-native species:** If works may affect parrot's feather (present in pond, TN1) or Virginia creeper (present on boundary fence and over shed, TN4), implement measures to prevent spread in accordance with legal obligations under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A specialist invasive species contractor should be appointed to provide advice on containment, management or eradication.
- **Protection of great crested newts (if present):** Further survey work is recommended to check for the presence of great crested newts in the pond. Mitigation or licensing requirements will depend on survey results. If great crested newts are confirmed and the pond cannot be retained, a licence will be required to remove or disturb aquatic or terrestrial habitat. Two options may apply:
 - West Sussex District Licence (NatureSpace) – impacts are covered through a financial contribution funding strategic habitat creation off-site.
 - European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence – site-specific compensation for loss of terrestrial or aquatic habitat. Obtained via Natural England.

The appropriate licensing route will be confirmed in liaison with the client and design team if great crested newts are found to be present.



APPENDICES