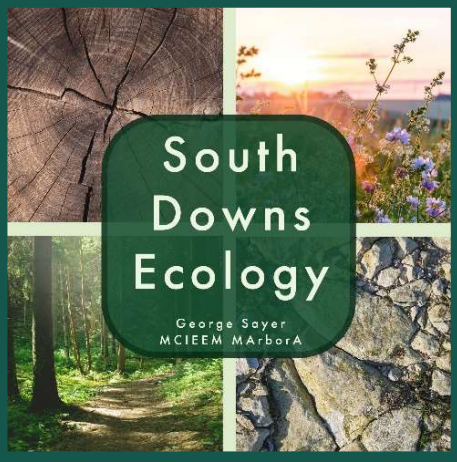
Ecological Impact Assessment

Scheme A, Linfield Care Home, Wykeham Road



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Version 1 – 27th October 2025

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Contents

Summary

The client, Guild Care have commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment of proposals for a three-storey extension and infill single-storey link extension at Linfield Care Home, 18-22 Wykeham Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 4JD (hereafter referred to as 'the site', centred at grid ref TQ 141 029). A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and UK Hab Survey of the site was carried out on 1st October 2025.

The proposal area consists of a large, linked building and developed land, of negligible ecological value, with surrounding garden habitats of low value.

The proposals are considered to represent a 'negligible' impact upon ecology, and no further surveys are recommended.

Overall, the buildings offer 'moderate' bat roost suitability; however the risk of disturbance to bats is 'negligible' at the locations proposed for extending due to lack of potential roosting features and lack of local records and suitable habitat, provided that basic avoidance measures are incorporated into construction.

No significant effects are anticipated upon any other notable species, designated sites or priority habitats.

The site is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, affecting less than 25.0m^2 of habitat.

When mitigation and enhancements have been taken into account, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact upon habitats or protected species in accordance with planning policy and once enhancements are considered, would result in a net gain.

The proposals include for new proportionate ecological enhancements. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant Local Plan Policies.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The owners have commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment of proposals for a three-storey extension and infill single-storey link extension at Linfield Care Home, 18-22 Wykeham Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 4JD (hereafter referred to as 'the site', centred at grid ref TQ 141 029). A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment and UK Hab Survey of the site was carried out on 1st October 2025.

1.2 The following Ecological Impact Assessment report has been completed by Lauren Miller *(BSc (Hons), MRes, ACIEEM, NE Licence Holder – Hazel Dormouse Level 1, Sand Lizards and Smooth Snakes – Freelance Ecologist)* and reviewed by George Sayer *(BSc (Hons) Environmental Sciences, PgDip Endangered Species Recovery, MArborA, MCIEEM, NE Licence Holder – Bats Level 2 and GCN - Ecologist).* This appraisal consisted of a site visit to identify existing habitats on site; the habitats have been categorised broadly following the UK Habitat Classification Guidance V2.01 (*UKHab Ltd 2023)*. In addition, an assessment of habitats and structures on the site was made to determine their potential for protected species. Following this an on-site and desktop assessment was undertaken, of the likelihood of National or European Protected Species being present on or near site, and the constraints these may pose on the development proposals.

1.3 Based on the results of the appraisal, recommendations for potential ecological enhancements have been provided.

Site Description and Surrounding Area

1.4 The site consists of a care facility which comprises a large, linked building and associated parking and gardens. The site is located on Wykeham Road in central Worthing and is bounded by residences to the west and south, a school to the east and a local green space, Victoria Park, to the north. The wider area consists of the town of Worthing with the coastline of the English Channel 750.0m south.

Proposals

1.5 The proposals are for a new three-storey extension on the southeast elevation of the building as well as an infill single-storey link extension to further connect the north and south wings. The proposed extensions total approximately 40.0m^2 but remove less than 25.0m^2 of vegetated habitat, with much of that removed being paving and gravel.

2.0 Scope of Appraisal

1. *Identify habitats or features which may have potential for protected species;*
2. *Identify whether any signs of protected species are present on-site;*
3. *Recommend whether further surveys are required, or whether there are any relevant constraints with regards to protected species;*
4. *Identify impacts of the proposed development and set out appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures;*
5. *Provide suggestions as to how the site and proposals could be enhanced with regards to protected species and habitats.*

2.1 This appraisal and assessment is deemed to be relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site. Should the site or proposals alter, the ecologist should be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

3.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. 'Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' states that development should be 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'

3.2 The Government Circular 06/2005, which is referred to by the NPPF, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

Local Planning Policy

3.3 The site is located within Worthing and must consider the following local environment policies detailed in the Worthing Borough Council Local Plan 2020-2036:

- Policy DM18 Biodiversity:
  a) Planning applications should be supported by up-to-date ecological surveys.
  b) All development should ensure the protection, conservation, and enhancement of biodiversity. If impacts are unavoidable, appropriate mitigation or compensation must be provided.
  c) Proposals that negatively affect designated sites, species and habitats will only be approved if it can be demonstrated that the benefits outweigh the impacts. In the case of approval, the mitigation hierarchy must be followed.
  d) Where applicable, new development next to the coast will have to demonstrate how it is reducing the impacts of coastal squeeze.
  e) All development must deliver at least 10% BNG, preferably on-site, unless exempt.
  f) Worthing Borough Council may invoke planning conditions to ensure development delivers appropriate enhancement and site mitigation measures.
- Policy DM19 Green Infrastructure
  a) All development should include on-site green features to achieve environmental net gain.
  b) Proposals should result in no net loss of trees. If trees are to be removed, they should be replaced at a ratio greater than 1:1. Additional tree planting is also encouraged.

c) Green infrastructure incorporated into new developments must be managed and maintained over the long-term, with arrangements and funding in place.

Legislation

3.4 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this EcIA includes:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
- The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

3.5 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat (live or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not.

3.6 All UK bird species are protected against disturbance whilst occupying a nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Developments that could predictably disturb, kill or injure nesting birds could result in an offence. Furthermore, a number of bird species are targets of UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans and listed as Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This obligates local authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity with particular emphasis on targeted species.

3.7 All other mammals receive general protection against cruelty, inhumane killing or injuring under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

4.0 Methods

Desktop Study

4.1 A desktop study was conducted using the government 'MAGIC' Map GIS tool; a search was carried out for all international statutory designated sites (Ramsar, SAC, SPA) and national statutory designated sites (SSSI, NNR, LNR) within 2.0 km of the site; and non-statutory designated sites (LWS) and priority habitats within 1.0 km of the site. These have been summarized below and their significance considered in the context of the development proposals. A search was also carried out to identify features of ecological interest in the area, such as water bodies and ancient woodland. Given the overall scale and nature of the site and the proposals, a full data search from SxBRC was not considered appropriate. This is in accordance with CIEEM current guidance for such projects.

Site Visit

4.2 A site visit was conducted on 1st October 2025, during suitable weather (16°C, wind force 1, 7/8 cloud cover, dry). Habitats were recorded according to the UKHab Classification System as described within the UK Habitats Manual, V2.01 (UKHab Ltd. 2023).

4.3 During the survey any constraints with regard to protected species were considered. The site was considered for its potential for protected species even when signs of these species were not noted at the time of survey.

4.4 The building was assessed internally (where possible) and externally by an experienced, licenced bat surveyor (George Sayer 2018-34434-CLS) for its potential to hold roosting bats; roof voids were assessed where relevant, and access points identified. Any evidence of bats such as grease marks, bat droppings, urine splashes were noted. The bat roost assessment was conducted following the Bat Conservation Trust – Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

4.5 Due to the site visit being carried out over one day, it is possible that some signs of protected species may not be apparent within this short timeframe. This is a constraint recognised within best practice guidelines and all reasonable effort has been made to identify evidence of protected species.

Ecological Impact Assessment

4.6 The methodology for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) follows best practice guidelines set by the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM): 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' (CIEEM, 2018). This includes identifying the baseline conditions on the site and subsequently rating the potential effects of the development based on the sensitivity and value of the resource affected, combined with the magnitude, duration and scale of the impact (or change). This is initially assessed without mitigation measures and then assessed again after allowing for the proposed mitigation measures; this provides the residual effects. The assessment is divided into construction effects and longer-term operational effects.

4.7 Each ecological feature within the site has been considered within a defined Geographic context such as:

- International and European;
- National;
- Regional;
- County;
- District;
- Local;
- Site Level;
- Negligible.

4.8 Based upon CIEEM guidance, value was determined with reference to the following factors:

- Its inclusion as a Designated Site or other protected area;
- The presence of habitat types of conservation significance, e.g. Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
- The presence (or potential presence) of species of conservation significance e.g. Species of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
- The presence of other protected species e.g. those protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- The site's social and economic value.

4.9 Specifically in the case of bats, the impact assessment has been conducted in accordance with the recently published Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray 2023).

5.0 Baseline Ecological Conditions and Protected Species Assessment

Desktop Study

Designated Sites and Habitats

5.1 The following is a summary of all protected and notable wildlife sites, with sites of local, national and international importance recorded within 2.0km of the site. These are divided into statutory and non-statutory; those with full legal protection and those without, but which the Local Planning Authority should still consider when deciding on planning policy and applications.

5.2 This information is included so that the site can be considered within the ecological context of the surrounding area, guiding decisions related to habitat change and protected species; these sites are not necessarily representative of the habitat on or surrounding the site and may not be influenced by the proposals.

5.3 The site is within the Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) of Cissbury Ring and Adur Estuary SSSIs. The proposed works are highly unlikely to have a negative impact on these SSSIs, and therefore Natural England does not need to be consulted in this case.

5.4 There are no statutory international, national and local designated sites within 2.0km of the site.

5.5 There is one non-statutory Local Wildlife Site (LWS) within 1.0km of the site: Heene Cemetery. It is Worthing's smallest LWS at 0.4 hectares in size and is designated for its neutral grassland and scrub habitat.

Habitats

Desk Study

5.6 The only UK Priority Habitat within 1.0km of the site is deciduous woodland. The closest parcel of deciduous woodland is 65.0m east of the site.

Site Assessment

5.7 The site is given over to the habitats discussed further below.

u1b5 815 – Commercial Building

5.8 The site contains a large, detached building operating as a care facility. The north wing is of newer construction than the south; both sections are in good condition and well-maintained. The building offers **negligible ecological value** in the broader sense. The potential for protected species to be present on site in discussed in Section 6.0.

u1b6 804 – Other Developed Land including Car Park

5.9 There is a tarmac and brick-paved parking area to the west of the building. There is also a paved area at the rear of the building that extends to the east side. This sealed surface is of **negligible ecological value.**

g4 108 200 846 847 – *Frequently Mown Modified Grassland with Trees, Flower Beds and Introduced Shrub*

5.10 The southwest corner of the site is given over to frequently mown lawn which includes the following common species: perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, common daisy *Bellis perennis*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. The remainder of the site includes flower beds with small trees, introduced shrubs and forbs including red robin *Photinia sp.*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus,* spotted laurel *Aucuba japonica,* palm *Cordyline sp. and* New Zealand flax *Phormium tenax*. The habitat is well maintained and of **negligible ecological value**.

5.11 There are three mature trees on the southwest boundary of the site belonging to the species sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* and horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, which offer **site ecological value.** They will be unaffected by the works.

6.0 Protected Species Assessment

Bats

Desk Study

6.1 No European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSMLs) for bats have been granted within 2.0km of the site.

6.2 All 18 UK bat species have been recorded within the county of West Sussex. 127 of 20426 bat records in West Sussex have been recorded in Worthing Borough as of 2021 (Worthing Borough 2021).

Site Assessment

6.3 The brick building is split into two wings (north and south) which are connected by an existing glass section. The building consists of three storeys with a clay-tiled roof. The roof structure is complex with a mixture of gable, hip, half-hip and flat roofs. There are dormers on all elevations and six chimneys. The north wing is clad with clay hanging tiles on the second storey whereas the south wing is styled with mock Tudor panels.

6.4 Overall, the building is relatively modern and in good condition. The hanging tiles and roof tiles do offer potential roosting features (PRFs) in places due to slips and natural cambering of the tiles. There are also occasional gaps where the dormer windows intersect the roof. Proposed works will be restricted to the southeast corner of the building and southwest of the glass link at the centre of the building. The southeast corner is Tudor-panelled and does not offer roosting features in the form of hanging tiles. The timber soffits and fasciae are tightly-sealed, and the roof tiles sit flat. There are also no intersecting dormer windows in this area. Meanwhile, the proposed extension adjacent to the glazed link will be single-storey and will not disturb the hanging tiles above. The brickwork and window frames in this area are in excellent condition with no crevices. This part of the site would be subject to very high lightspill due to the existing glass link, numerous surrounding windows and street lighting.

6.5 No loft voids could be located within the building, with much of the roof area visibly converted to allow for a third storey. A flat roof link section in the centre was inspected and allowed inspection of some tiles and dormers at height, finding no evidence of bats.

6.6 The bat roost potential of the building as a whole is **moderate;** however, considering that there are no visible crevices or ingress points in the areas proposed for extending, and the lack of local bat records and extensive urban surroundings, bats are highly unlikely to be impacted by the proposed works.

6.7 The mature trees on site were not assessed for roosting bats as they are outside of the proposed works area; however, none were of a notable age or size and given the location, are unlikely to support bat roosts. The trees and introduced shrubs are of limited **site value** for foraging and commuting bats as they are connected to wooded habitat in the adjacent Victoria and Amelia Parks. These parks are relatively isolated in the winder landscape and likely only used by low numbers of common bats.

Birds

Desk Study

6.8 Several bird species are present in the local area, including a number of woodland and wading species.

Site Assessment

6.9 The soffits, fasciae and roof tiles in the proposed three-storey extension area are well-sealed, preventing access for nesting birds. No bird nests were observed during the site assessment. The introduced shrubs in the proposed works footprint do offer breeding opportunities for birds. The trees also offer bird nesting opportunities but will be unaffected. Overall, the habitats are of **site value** to birds.

Other Species

6.10 The flowerbeds and introduced shrubs offer sub-optimal foraging, commuting and sheltering habitat for hedgehogs, especially given the secure fencing around the site. The site habitats are well-maintained and lacking water features and thus impacts upon other protected species are considered highly unlikely.

7.0 Evaluation of Impacts and Mitigation

Designated Sites

Potential Impacts

7.1 The proposals do not require consultation with Natural England and no impacts are envisaged.

Mitigation and Compensation

7.2 None required.

Residual Impacts

7.3 The impacts will be negligible and non-significant.

Habitats

Potential Impacts

7.4 The proposals would impact only developed land and small areas of the garden.

7.5 In the absence of mitigation, the proposals would include dust, noise and light pollution of adjacent garden habitats including trees. Given the proposals' nature and scale, impacts are of **very minor magnitude** at no more than **site level.**

7.6 The proposals are for extensions totalling approximately 40.0m^2. The proposed three storey extension appears to remove approximately 17.0m^2 of modified grassland garden,and the link extension several individual phormium and bamboo clumps, totalling perhaps 3.0m^2. As such the proposals fall under *de minimis* exemption under The Environment Act 2021 and are exempt from Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as they impact less than 25.0m^2 of vegetated habitats.

Mitigation and Compensation

7.7 All construction will be undertaken in accordance with best practice advice with regards to control of dust, noise and emissions. Any chemicals or fuel shall be stored appropriately and on existing surfaces. Any garden habitats lost or damaged will be replaced post-construction.

7.8 Trees to be retained will be protected in accordance with British Standard 5837:2012. A tree protection package accompanies the application

7.9 The proposals do not need to demonstrate BNG but need to provide a gain for biodiversity overall. This can be evidenced through planting of new native shrubs or plants from the RHS 'Plants for Pollinators' lists on the grounds.

Residual Impacts

7.10 Once mitigation is taken into account, the impacts will be negligible and non-significant.

Bats

Potential Impacts

7.11 The building overall offers 'moderate' bat roost suitability; however, given the location and scale of proposals, it is considered highly unlikely a bat or roost would be encountered or disturbed. In-line with the Bat Survey Guidelines, the likelihood of an impact is negligible and sufficiently low not to warrant further survey.

7.12 Construction noise, dust, lighting and vibration may temporarily make the site slightly less suitable for foraging bats. Give the surroundings and the existing lightspill at the site, the potential impacts on foraging bats is extremely low. Given the overall size and nature of the site, the potential impact to bats is low.

Mitigation and Compensation

7.13 Following the guidance within the recent Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray, 2023), given the overall potential of the buildings, further surveys for bats are not considered necessary.

7.14 Any works shall be undertaken with due consideration and measures to minimise dust and noise. No works shall take place externally between 30 minutes before sunset until 30 minutes after sunrise. No external works lighting shall be used. All new external lighting shall accord with the principles of the BCT/ILP Guidance Note 08/23. New external lighting shall be aimed downwards and be warm white in spectrum (below 3000K) and set with appropriate controls such that unnecessary lightspill is avoided.

7.15 Any tiles, flashings, soffits and fascias being removed should, as a matter of course, be removed by manually prying carefully away from the building. In the highly unlikely event that a bat or evidence thereof be discovered, works shall cease until an appropriate course of action is determined by the licenced ecologist.

Residual Impacts

7.16 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible. New roosting features would result in a gain for bats.

Nesting Birds

Potential Impacts

7.17 No evidence of nesting birds was noted within B1. Although there is a potential risk for nesting birds to be impacted, it is deemed to be very low.

Mitigation and Compensation

7.18 Any vegetation to be removed to facilitate the proposed development must either be removed outside of the nesting season (i.e. removed between September – February) or subject to final checks before removal to ensure no active bird nests are present.

7.19 Any active nests must be afforded a 5.0 m disturbance buffer and chicks must be allowed to fledge and leave the location before removal of the nest.

Residual Impacts

7.20 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Hedgehogs

Potential Impacts

7.21 Hedgehogs might become trapped in footings during construction. The potential risk is deemed to be very low.

Mitigation and Compensation

7.22 Materials and debris etc must be stored appropriately, with no materials left within areas where hedgehogs may shelter. All footings must be covered overnight or fitted with rough timber planks to allow mammals to escape, and pipework over 100mm in diameter should be capped overnight to prevent mammal ingress.

Residual Impacts

7.23 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

8.0 Ecological Enhancements

8.1 As the proposals only affect two sections of the building and their immediate surroundings, options for enhancements are limited. The following ecological enhancements have been recommended in line with local policies DM18 and 19 and National Planning Policy:

- Incorporation of integrated or wall-mounted bird box into the building at appropriate height and orientation;
- Incorporation of a bat box on the building, facing south or east; at least one small crevice-style box;
- Provision of new features in the care home garden for wildlife. This might include a new birdbath, flowering plants as detailed within the RHS 'Plants for Pollinators' lists, native trees and shrubs, a log pile, or a hedgehog box.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 Overall, the proposals are considered to represent a 'negligible' impact upon ecology and no further surveys are recommended. The proposal area consists of existing buildings and developed land, of negligible ecological value, with surrounding garden habitats of low value.

9.2 The proposals are not anticipated to have any significant impact upon ecology; the building affected offers 'moderate' bat roost suitability, but the proposals stand a 'negligible' chance of disturbing bats or their roosts provided basic avoidance measures are incorporated into construction. No further surveys are recommended at the site for these proposals.

9.3 No significant effects are anticipated upon any other species, designated sites or priority habitats. Basic protection measures are proposed to ensure no degradation of the surrounding garden habitats.

9.4 The site is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain as less than 25.0m^2 of vegetated habitat would be removed.

9.5 When mitigation and enhancements have been taken into account, the proposals are not considered to have a negative impact upon habitats or protected species in accordance with planning policy and once enhancements are considered, would result in a net gain.

9.6 The proposals include for new proportionate ecological enhancements. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant Local Plan Policies.

10.0 References

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Appendix 1 – Site Photos

Photo 1 – View of building frontage from southwest.

Photo 2 - Eastern elevation of south wing.

Photo 3 – South corner of north wing.

Photo 4 – Flat roof terrace between north and south wings.

Photo 5 – Rear paving and flower beds.

Photo 6 – Ornamental shrubs and flower beds along southeast edge of site.

Photo 7 – Mown lawn at southwest corner of site.

Photo 8 – View of parking area and sweet chestnut trees.

Photo 9 – Location of proposed single-storey extension.

Photo 10 – View of elevations either side of proposed single-storey extension.


Photo 11 – Location of proposed three-storey extension.

Photo 12 – View of sealed soffit and roof tiles at location of proposed three-storey extension.


11.0 Site Aerial

12.0 Site Proposals Plan