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ALDER ECOLOGY UK LTD

Working for the Client - Working with Wildlife

Waterbury House, Ford Road, Ford, Arundel, Arun, West Sussex BN18 0BH

AEUK 1548

Preliminary Ecological Assessment

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Project: Waterbury House, Ford, West Sussex

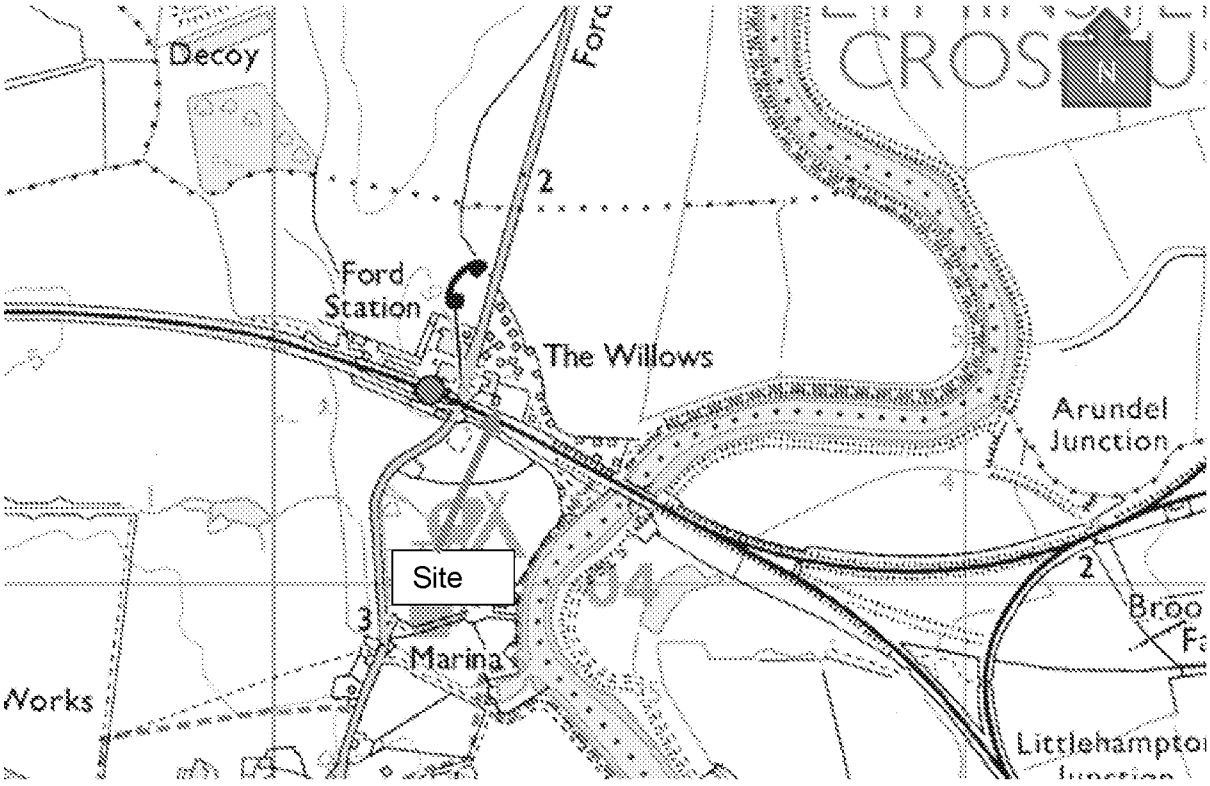
Contents

1. BACKGROUND

Commission

This report presents the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) on the proposed development of the site Waterbury House, Ford Road, Ford, Arundel, Arun, West Sussex BN18 0BH National grid reference TQ003042 what3words locator (phones.assets.allow) hereafter referred to as the "site". The survey was commissioned by Consensus Support Services Ltd and undertaken by Alder Ecology UK Ltd. The survey comprised an inspection of the land on site a former residential garden attached to the main house.

The site is a medium sized plot approximately 0.431 hectares (1.065 acres) which is situated within a rural fringe location. This application relates to the proposed provision of residential care accommodation. The site contains amenity grassland, hard standing, buildings, immature and maturing trees, none native species poor hedgerow and scrub.



Map 1 showing site location

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Map 2 showing the approximate site boundary and surrounding habitat

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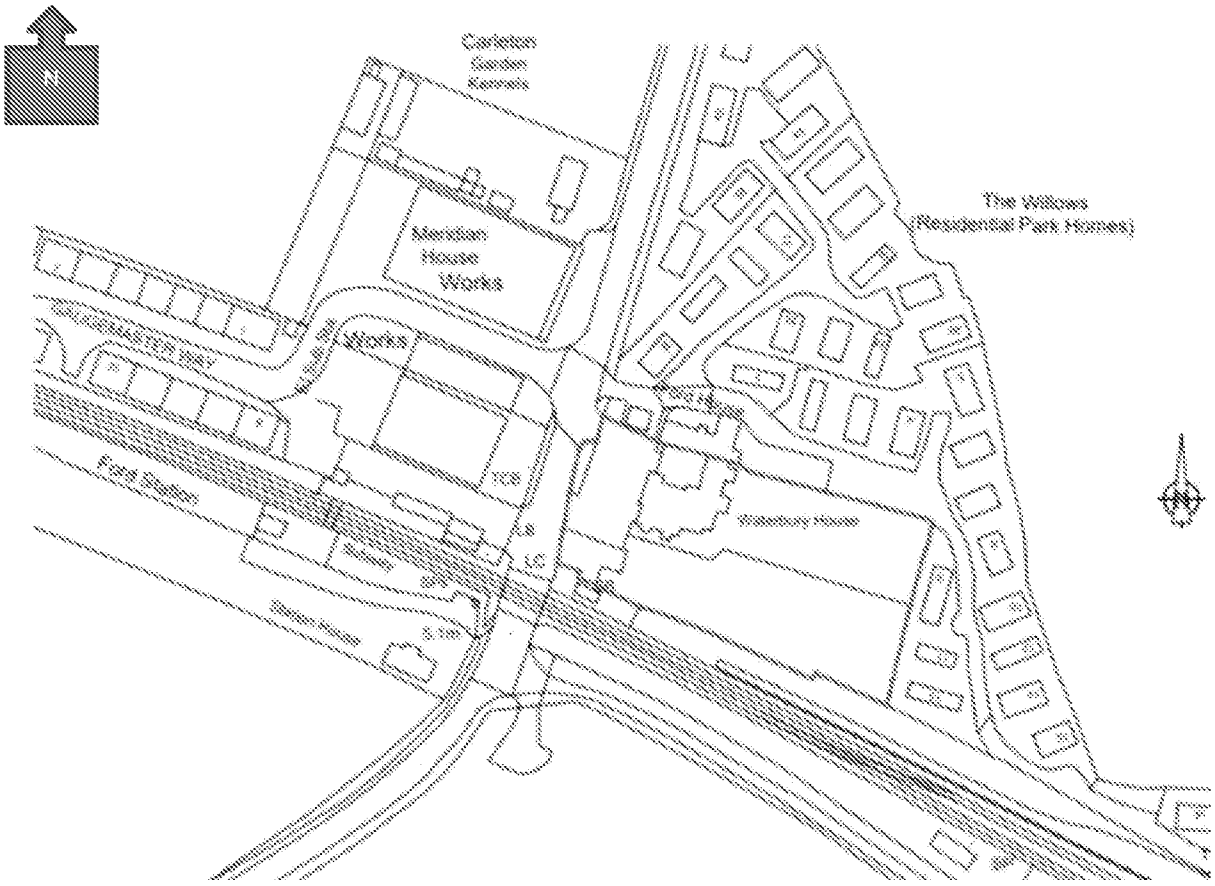

Plan 1 Showing proposed red line boundary for the site and proposed unit location

2. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) undertaken on 25th April 2024. An assessment has been provided on the potential value of the site for wildlife based on the PEA results obtained. Conclusions have been drawn about the site and an approach has been proposed to the way any development may proceed with enhancements for the site.

Mr Roger Martindale BA (Hons), MSc CEnv, MCIEEM, Ecologist at Alder Ecology UK Ltd who is a full member of The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv), undertook the PEA assessment during April 2024. The surveyor has over 25 years' experience of this type of work.

The aim of the PEA is to identify existing habitat types, to determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas and to identify the presence of any protected species or habitats suitable for supporting such species that may be impacted by the scheme.

The objectives of the PEA were to:

- Identify habitat types on site;
- Assess the importance of habitat types;
- Identify the potential presence of any protected species and recommend further survey
- Assess the likely impact areas within any potential development

3. FIELD STUDY

Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)

This survey consists of a walkover survey of the site observing habitats and if they are considered important or have potential to hold protected species. This is not a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and therefore does not detail species compositions within identified habitat areas or assign them an alpha numeric code. The survey included a search for the presence or evidence of UK protected species and UK priority habitats and species.

4. LEGISLATIVE AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) affords protection to species of fauna and flora included in schedules 5 and 8 of the act. Additionally section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists species and habitats that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales. Those pieces of legislation together with national, regional and local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) seek to safeguard areas containing protected species and habitats.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Section 41 list and the BAPs are used to guide decision-makers such as landowners in implementing their duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions. This legislation is further strengthened by the European Habitats directive 1992 which affords special protection to species and habitats of European importance. Protected species and habitats are a material consideration in the planning process and an assessment of their presence/absence from a site and the likely impact of a development on such species or habitats must be undertaken prior to any planning submission.

5. LIMITATIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT

The PEA habitat survey was carried out at a sub optimal time of year for summer floristic species compositions but given the limited range of habitats on site is thought to be accurate. The timing of the survey may limit the ability of the assessment to recognise seasonal changes on site. Although given the baseline conditions and habitats present it is considered to be accurate. Full access was available for the site survey although some areas were difficult to access and survey due to the dense scrub habitat and a drone was used to aid survey techniques.

6. DATA REVIEW

Table 1 Protected habitats 5km search

Site Name	Protected status	Distance from site to closest record	Comment
West Beach	LNR	3.8km S	Marine
Climping beach	SSSI	3.9km S	Marine
Arundel Park	SSSI	3.8km N	Chalk grassland and woodland
Fairmile bottom	SSSI & LNR	4.9km NW	Chalk grassland and woodland

Table 2 Protected and Notable Species Historic Records 2km search

Name	Records	Distance from site to closest record	Date of most recent record	Comment
Adder	2	2km	2017	
Badger	14	2km	2018	
Bird assemblage	148	2km	2023	
Brown hare	1	2km	2019	
Brown long eared bat	1	2km	2021	
Common lizard	8	2km	2018	
Common pipistrelle bat	5	2km	2021	

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Common toad	14	2km	2023	
Daubentons bat	2	2km	2020	
Dormouse	40	2km	2022	
Grass snake	5	2km	2019	
Hedgehog	38	2km	2023	
Noctule bat	2	2km	2020	
Serotine bat	1	2km	2014	
Slow worn	5	2km	2023	
Soprano pipistrelle	2	2km	2023	
Water vole	18	2km	2021	

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Bird assemblage

Of the 148 species of bird historically recorded within 2km of the site a total of 23 species are listed on section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as Species of Principle Importance for Nature Conservation and 10 species listed as schedule 1 species so the area has value in that respect.

Table 3 Priority bird species or schedule 1 bird species are listed below.

Species	Number of records	Priority species	Schedule 1 species
Avocet	1		Yes
Barn owl	10		Yes
Bewick swan	2	Yes	Yes
Bullfinch	46	Yes	
Cetti's warbler	279		Yes
Common Cuckoo	45	Yes	
Corn bunting	10	Yes	
Fieldfare	73		Yes
Firecrest	7		Yes
Grey Partridge	51	Yes	
Herring gull	620	Yes	
House sparrow	572	Yes	
Kingfisher	176		Yes
Lapwing	416	Yes	

Lesser redpoll	5	Yes	
Lesser spotted woodpecker	1	Yes	
Linnet	333	Yes	
Marsh tit	5	Yes	
Redwing	59		Yes
Reed bunting	504	Yes	
Ring ouzel	16	Yes	
Scaup	3		Yes
Skylark	440	Yes	
Song thrush	296	Yes	
Spotted flycatcher	4	Yes	
Starling	766	Yes	
Tree sparrow	6	Yes	
Turtle dove	3	Yes	
Whimbrel	31		Yes
Wood warbler	3	Yes	
Yellow wagtail	32	Yes	
Yellowhammer	228	Yes	

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7. PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES

Plate 1 showing the site looking south

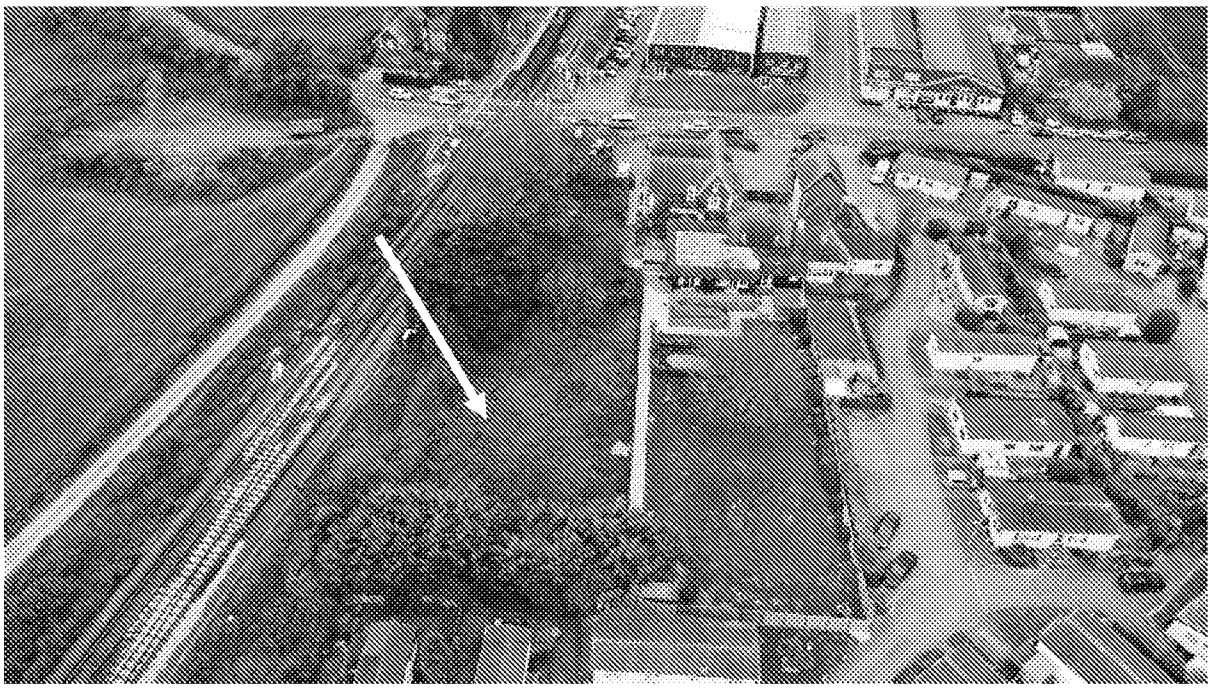

Plate 2 showing dense scrub habitat

Plate 3 Showing site looking north

Plate 4 showing the buildings and residential garden with scrub habitat and trees adjacent to the railway

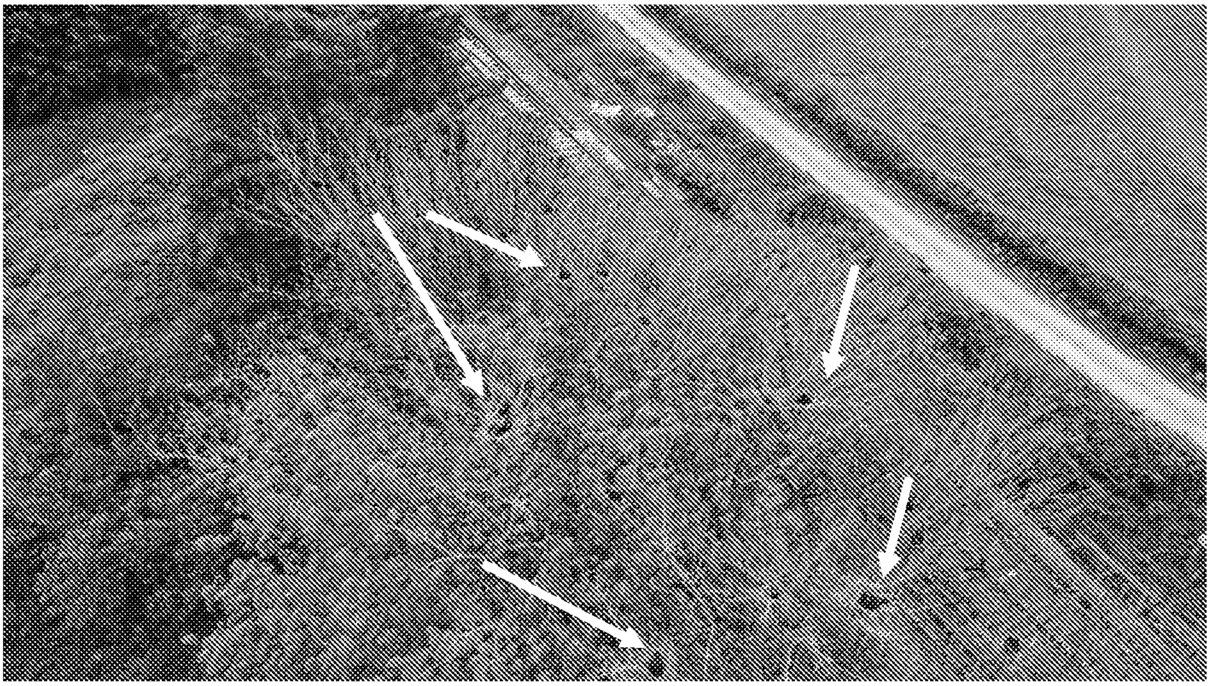

Plate 5 showing the Rookery on the south boundary with examples of nest shown a total of 33 nests were recorded

Plate 6 Complex roof structure of the Waterbury house good habitat for bats and birds

Plate 7 rubble pile on the south boundary good for reptiles

Plate 8 showing overgrown scrub habitat

Plate 9 showing small area of grassland within the scrub habitat

Plate 10 amenity grassland of the rear garden of Waterbury house

8. RESULTS

Habitats

Habitat Description

The site supports a limited range of generally low quality natural habitats and is a current and former residential garden with amenity grassland, scattered trees, non-native hedgerow, scrub hard standing and buildings.

Table 4 Habitats on site

Habitat	***National importance***	***Regional importance***	***Local importance***	***Site importance***
Non-native hedgerows				*Yes*
Amenity grassland				*Yes*
Scattered trees			*Yes*	
Scrub				*Yes*
Hard standing				*Negligible*
Buildings			*Yes*	

None native Hedgerows

There are non-native species hedgerows forming a boundary on the east which is overgrown Leyland cypress and the south boundary which is a mix of Leyland cypress and laurel. They offer limited value for foraging wildlife but can be used by roosting and nesting birds. The non-native hedgerows are assessed to be of site value.

Amenity grassland

The site contains a small area of amenity grassland typical of residential gardens in the area and has been mown. This type of grassland is common within residential settings such as this but does have some limited value for foraging birds, mammals and reptiles. The amenity grassland will be impacted by the proposed scheme and is assessed to be of site value but is easily re-created and will still be present as a site habitat once the development is completed.

Scattered trees

The site contains a mixture of linear scattered trees on the south boundary with the railway with the majority of specimens being maturing sycamore. Specimens are maturing but again they are still young under 35years old and offer good bird nesting opportunities but no roosting potential for bats. The trees do provide some limited foraging potential for wildlife although but the main purpose is as a Rookery. The scattered trees are assessed to be of local value due to the Rookery.

Scrub

The majority of the south of the site (90%) is covered by low growing bramble scrub with occasional plant specimens such as; hedgerow cranesbill, yarrow, nettle and bristly ox-tongue. This scrub habitat supresses other plant species and provides a low value habitat for foraging wildlife. The scrub habitat is assessed to be of site value.

Hard standing

The site contains concrete and gravel hard standing and while this can be good for basking wildlife the limited value of the other habitats on site makes it less attractive for basking animals such as reptiles and insects. The hard standing is assessed to be of negligible value in this site context.

Buildings

The buildings on site are over 100 years old with multiple extension, different roof structures and provide good habitat for bird and bat species. The building will not be directly impacted by the proposed works but is assessed to be of local value to birds and bats.

Non-Native Invasive Species

The site at the time of survey does not contain any non-native invasive species listed on schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Protected and Otherwise Notable Species

The site has limited opportunities for low numbers of common species primarily as a foraging and bird breeding resources but opportunities for permanent occupation by wildlife on site are limited due to the habitat types with the exception of the Rookery.

Table 5 Potential protected species associated with the site as a foraging resource

	European importance	***National importance***	***NERC section 41 species***	***Local BAP species***
Bats	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bird assemblage		Yes	Yes	Yes
Hedgehog			Yes	Yes
Reptiles			Yes	Yes
Amphibian species			Yes	Yes
Badger		Yes		
Dormouse		Yes	Yes	Yes

Bats

The site has resources for bat foraging and there are multiple opportunities for bat roosting within the site buildings. The buildings will not be directly impacted by the proposed works but any bat roosts on site may be indirectly impacted by additional lighting of new building structures. The site is assessed to be of low value to foraging bats and high value for roosting bats within the buildings not the trees which are too immature with no features for roosting bats.

Birds

The wider landscape (within 2km) has records of a total of 23 species which are listed on section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as Species of Principle Importance for Nature Conservation and 10 species listed as schedule 1 birds. The site does not have sufficient habitats or connection to the wider landscape to support all such species for breeding but could support birds such as house sparrow. The site has the ability to support some of the species listed in table 3 for occasional foraging. The general area has potential to hold low numbers of

common foraging bird species and has potential to support breeding birds within the trees and there is currently a breeding Rookery of 33 nests on site. The site is assessed to be of local value to common, NERC and schedule 1 bird species as a limited foraging resource and high value as a breeding site within the trees for Rooks. The trees will not be significantly impacted by the proposed work according to the current plans.

Hedgehog

There are 38 local records of hedgehog within 2km of the site and they are likely to occur close to the site or even on site as they will forage in the habitats of this site and other residential gardens in close proximity and rail side verge. The habitats on site have value for foraging hedgehog and the site has sufficient cover to support breeding hedgehog within the plot both before and after the proposed development. The proposed works are unlikely to significantly impact upon hedgehog habitat or breeding provided the works are undertaken with ecological guidance. The site has been assessed to be of moderate value for foraging and breeding hedgehog.

Reptiles

The site does contain habitat which is used by reptile species such as slow worms especially associated with deadwood/leaf litter and rubble habitat. But the scrub habitat reduces the foraging opportunities for reptiles but the links to other residential and caravan park gardens can provide enough habitat mixes for reptiles especially species such as slow worms which like compost and leaf litter. The proposed works will not impact directly or indirectly upon reptile habitat or breeding sites but local reptile species would benefit from the retention of the deadwood from any tree works and rubble/stone piles. The site has been assessed to be of moderate/low value for reptile species.

Amphibian species

The site does contain suitable foraging habitat for common amphibian species but contains no areas suitable for breeding amphibian species and the local area does not contain ponds suitable for breeding amphibians. The site is assessed to be of low value to foraging amphibians and negligible value to breeding amphibians.

Badger

[redacted]

Dormouse

The site does not have sufficient quality habitats or resources to support dormice and the site is not linked to a suitable habitat that may contain a source population therefore reducing the chances of occurrence on site. The site is assessed to be of negligible value to dormice.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The PEA concludes that any proposed development of the site at Waterbury house will not significantly adversely change the ecological baseline which is low value or impact directly or indirectly on ecological receptors but that further surveys will be required for the site for birds, reptiles and bats but only if the current building is significantly impacted by the scheme.

The site does not contain habitats that are nationally or locally significant and does not contain any priority habitats as listed in the NERC Act 2006. The remaining habitats on site are of low conservation value and easily re-created. The site does not sit adjacent to habitats or sites that are locally or nationally significant and any proposed development of the site will not on its own or in combination affect the integrity or designatory features of such sites and will not lead to permanent habitat loss of significant habitats.

The proposed works does not have the potential to significantly impact directly upon protected species, species of principle importance for nature conservation and locally listed BAP species in the long term. However, plans for the site should include measures to promote local wildlife species that have the potential to use the site in low numbers such as reptiles, birds, bats and hedgehog. Plans should also consider the lighting of the new scheme to restrict light spill into current site habitats to aid night-time wildlife.

Overall the site has been assessed as being of low ecological value due to the limited value of the habitats on site and the moderate size of the site. The site does provide opportunities for foraging and commuting wildlife as part of the larger residential garden, caravan park and rail verge complex locally. Any development of the site as is currently proposed will not significantly impact on local ecological resources and will not significantly adversely change the ecological baseline. If the scheme implements the recommendations below then the ecological baseline can be significantly enhanced and become more beneficial for local wildlife.

10.RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made for the site:

- Undertake a survey of the site for common reptiles
- Undertake a survey of the site for nesting birds prior to any site clearance if during the bird breeding season
- Undertake a survey for bats if the new scheme proposes lighting that may impact bats species and local foraging resources.
- Retain the south boundary trees were it is safe to do so to preserve the site Rookery.
- Provide deadwood habitat on site close to the boundaries.
- Any development of the site provides biodiversity net gain by providing locally x2 bird boxes for common bird species such as house sparrow (priority species) which are locally abundant. See appendix 2
- Any development of the site provides biodiversity net gain by providing locally x2 bat boxes suitable for pipistrelle species located on the new built structure or adjacent trees and positioned to avoid light spill from the property or local municipal lighting.
- Provide x2 insect hotels/bug boxes to provide opportunities for local insect population mounted on trees/fence or property.
- Provide a hedgehog nest box on site within the retained boundaries
- Any landscape design for the site should where possible aim to use 75% native species in any design to help local native wildlife species.

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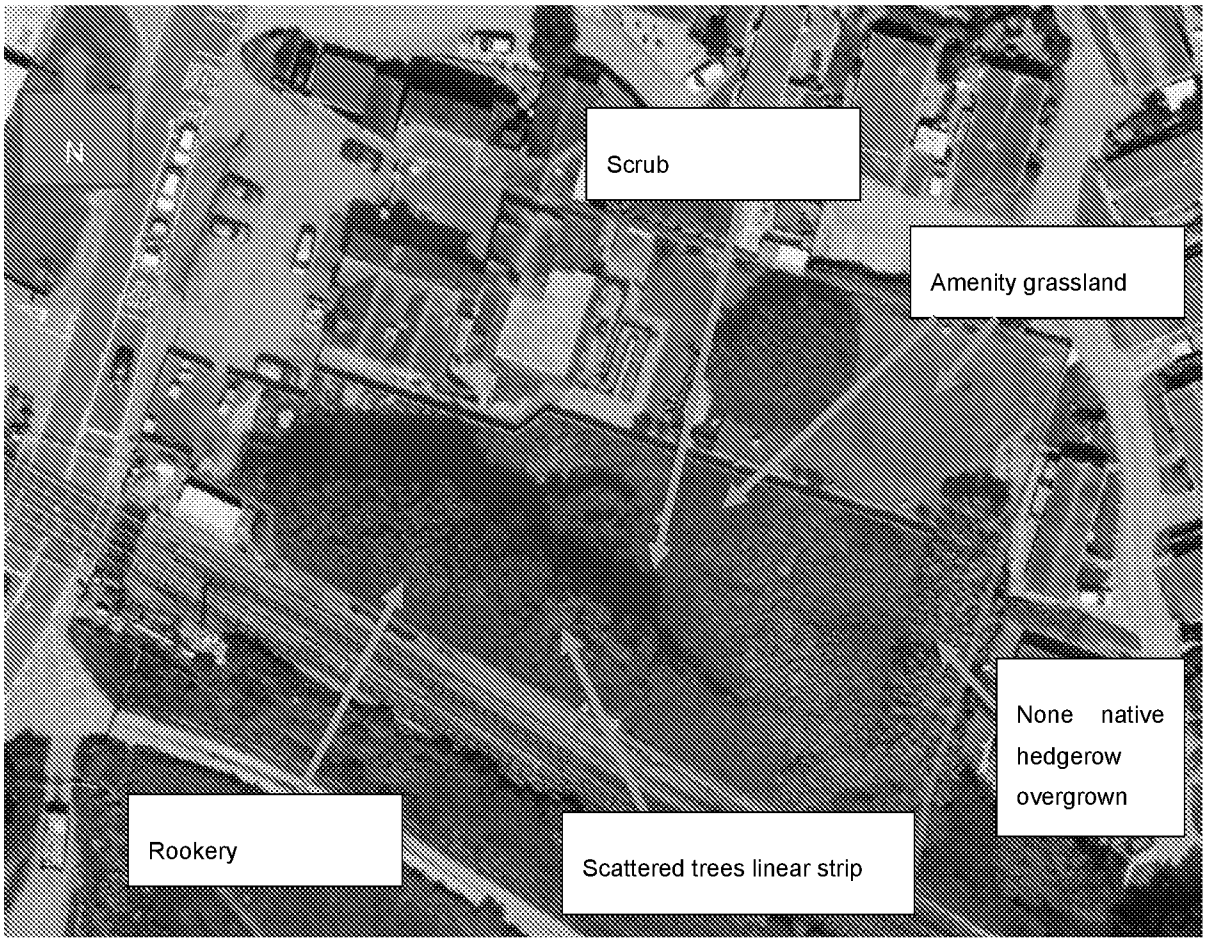
11.APPENDIX 1 - Habitat Map



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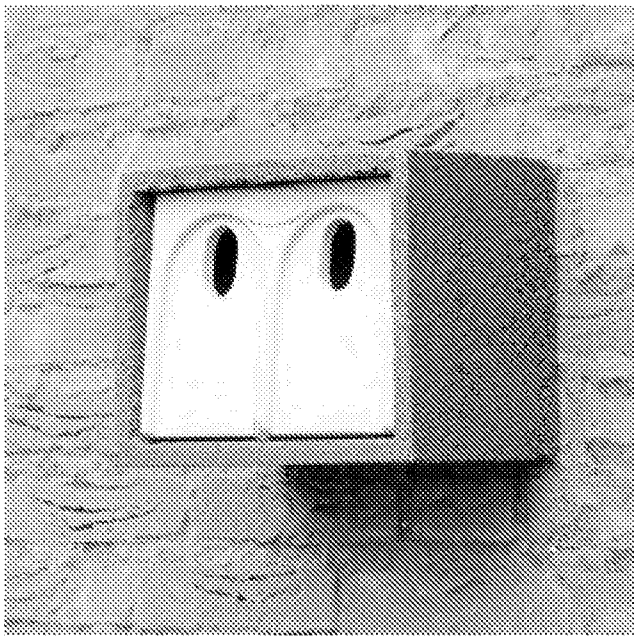
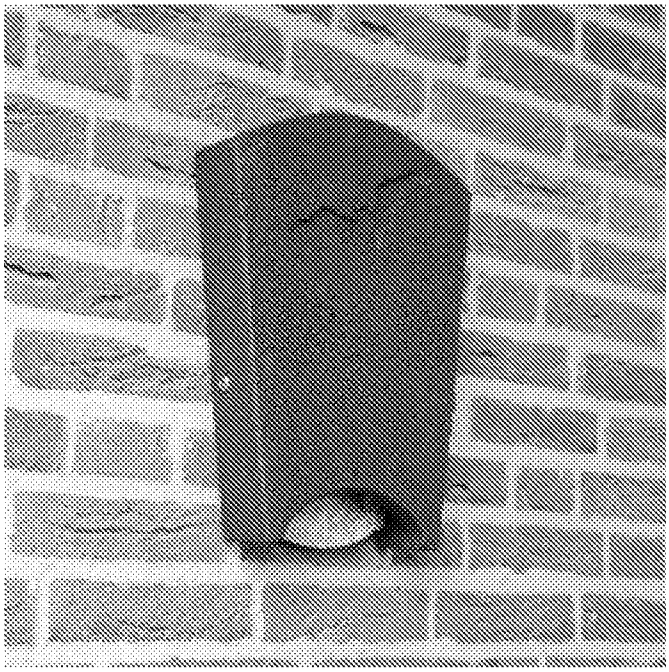
12.Appendix 2 Ecological enhancements

House sparrow nest box mounted at approx. 2.5m east or north facing



Bat box suitable for pipistrelle bats mounted at approx. 3m south or west facing



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Insect hotel

Hedgehog nest box