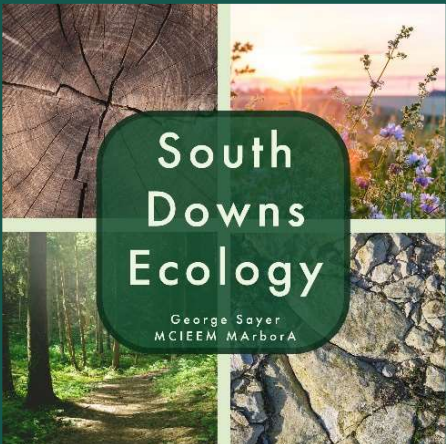




Ecological Impact Assessment

Building at 1 Station
Road, Ford



South
Downs
Ecology

George Sayer
MCIEEM, MarborA

Ecological Impact Assessment

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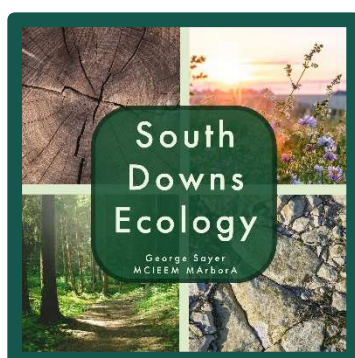
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Produced by George Sayer MCIEEM MArborA, South Downs Ecology

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Summary

The applicant has commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Impact Assessment of the construction of a building at 1 Station Road, Ford (*TQ 00114 04041, hereafter referred to as 'the site'*).

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was carried out on the 14th November 2023 by George Sayer (*BSc (Hons) Environmental Sciences, PgDip Endangered Species Recovery, MArbora, MCIEEM, NE Licence Holder – Bats Level 2 and GCN - Ecologist*).

The proposal area consists of an area of modified grassland.

The nearby rife is potentially a priority habitat and the entire site is designated as Coastal and Floodplain Grazing marsh.

The proposals are construction of a building to store animal equipment.

The proposals are not anticipated to have any significant impact upon ecology; the grassland offers no real potential for protected species. The adjacent rife offers some potential for common waterbirds and water voles. No further surveys are currently recommended at the site for these proposals, but mitigation and compensation measures are proposed.

The minor loss of priority habitat at the site would require mitigation in the form of seeding the surroundings with a coastal and floodplain grazing marsh seed mix to re-provide this priority habitat on the site. Further seeding and other enhancements are recommended which would result in a Biodiversity Net Gain. This is detailed in a separate assessment.

The proposals are not considered to have a negative impact upon habitats or protected species, most notably Bewick's swan for which the Arun Valley SPA is designated. Once mitigation and enhancements are considered, could result in a minor net gain. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant Arun Local Plan Policies, the NPPF (2024) and relevant legislation.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The applicant has commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Ecological Impact Assessment of proposals for a new building at 1 Station Road, Ford (TQ 00114 04041, hereafter referred to as 'the site').
- 1.2 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was carried out on the 14th November 2023 by George Sayer (BSc (Hons) Environmental Sciences, PgDip Endangered Species Recovery, MA ArborA, MCIEEM, NE Licence Holder – Bats Level 2 and GCN - Ecologist).
- 1.3 The following ecological impact assessment report has been completed by George Sayer. The purpose of the assessment has been to identify whether any potential impacts upon protected species, habitats or designated sites might occur, and to propose mitigation or avoidance measures where necessary.
- 1.4 Based on the results of the appraisal, recommendations for potential ecological enhancements have been provided.

Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.5 The site consists of a narrow rectangular area of existing grassland of 0.584Ha, situated north of 1 Station Road. The area consists of level grassland with a hedge separating the site from Station Road to the east and a rife, separating the site from a large field designated as Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh to the west. Open grazing marsh exists to the north. Several existing buildings are present on the site as is an informal hardcore track leading to the proposal area.
- 1.6 The surroundings consist of grazing and arable land; the commercial area of Ford and residential areas of Yapton. The land is open and low-lying with the River Arun present 200.0 m west.
- 1.7 Within 500.0 m there is a widened area of ditches with scrubby woodland, 150.0 m north-west and numerous other ditches. Patches of scrubland are noted on the eastern side of Station Road. An area of deciduous woodland is noted 150.0 m south. No other woodland is present in the immediate vicinity.

Proposals

- 1.8 The proposals are for the installation of a building to be used for the storage of animal equipment.

2.0 Scope of Assessment

1. *Categorise habitats present on the site;*
2. *Identify habitat which may have potential for protected species;*
3. *Identify whether any signs of protected species are present on-site;*
4. *Recommend whether further surveys are required, or whether there would have any relevant constraints with regards to protected species;*
5. *Identify any potential impacts of the development which have occurred or could occur and set out appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures;*
6. *Provide recommendations 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 within the Arun District; the proposals should be assessed against the Arun District Local Plan 2011-2031. Local Planning Policy relevant to this site include Policies ENV SP1 (*Biodiversity*), W SP1 (*Flooding and Drainage*), ENV DM1 (*Designated Sites of Biodiversity and Geological Importance*), ENV DM3 (*Biodiversity Opportunity Areas*), ENV DM4 (*Protection of Trees*), ENV DM5 (*Development and Biodiversity*) AND GI SP1 (*Green Infrastructure and development*) of the Arun Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted 2018).

- 3.1 *The Arun District adopted Plan (adopted 2018) Policy H SP2 states development must:*

Protect, conserve or enhance the natural environment, landscapes and biodiversity;

- 3.2 *Policy ENV SP1 states:*

Arun District Council will encourage and promote the preservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment through the development process and particularly through policies for the protection of both designated and non-designated sites.

- 3.3 *Policy W SP1 states development will be supported when it:*

Takes account of flood risk and promotes the incorporation of appropriate mitigation measures into new development, particularly Sustainable Drainage Systems that reduces the creation and flow of surface water and improves water quality;

- 3.4 *Policy ENV DM1 Designated Sites of biodiversity or geological importance states:*

a. Proposed development likely to have an adverse effect on land with the designated features of any Site of Biodiversity or Geological Importance as listed in Tables 17.1 - 17.7 or any subsequently designated sites (either individually or in combination with other developments), will not normally be permitted. Consideration will be given to the exact designated features present on the site, their scarcity/rarity and recognition of the protection offered by their existing status. Development on wildlife sites with the highest value will only be permitted exceptionally where the following can be demonstrated:

- i. There is no alternative solution (which shall be adequately demonstrated by the developer).*
- ii. There are reasons of public health or public safety or Adoption Arun Local Plan 2011-2031 (July 2018) Arun District Council 209 17 Natural Environment*
- iii. There are benefits of primary importance to the environment or iv. There are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. Notwithstanding the above however, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.*
- b. In determining any planning application affecting Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance the Council will ensure that the intrinsic natural features of particular interest are safeguarded or enhanced having regard to;*
 - i. The European, National or Local status and designation of the site;*
 - ii. The nature and quality of the site's features, including its rarity value; iii. The extent of any adverse impacts on the notified features of interest; iv. The need for compensatory measures in order to re-create remaining features of habitats on or off the site. c. Where appropriate the Council will ensure the effective management of designated sites through the imposition of planning conditions or Section 106 agreements as appropriate.*

3.5 Policy ENV DM3 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas states that development shall:

- a. Retain and sympathetically incorporate locally valued and important habitats, including wildlife corridors and stepping stones*
- b. Be designed in order to minimise disturbance to habitats*

Development proposals that do not reasonably address opportunities for enhancing these through their design, layout and landscaping or access/management shall not be permitted. Where a development scheme would result in a habitat loss, mitigation measures will be proposed as part of the proposed scheme and such measures agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to the determination of any planning application. Within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) identified on the Policies Maps or where likely to have an impact on species or habitats within the BOAs, any application for planning permission shall include a properly conducted survey of the presence of that species and habitat and impact(s) that development may have on the BOA.

3.6 Policy ENV DM4 Protection of trees states that:

Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order(s), (TPO) identified as Ancient Woodland, in a Conservation Area or contributing to local amenity, will not be damaged or destroyed now and as they reach maturity, unless development:

- a. Would result in the removal of one or more trees in the interests of good arboricultural practice. This shall be demonstrated by the developer following the advice of a suitably qualified person which shall be guided by BS 5837 (2012). Details of any advice received having regard to BS 5837 (2012) shall be submitted, in writing, as part of a planning application; or*

- b. Would enhance the survival and growth prospects of other protected trees;*
- c. The benefits of the proposed development in a particular location outweigh the loss of trees or woodland, especially ancient woodland.*

Where planning permission is granted in any of the above instances, conditions shall be used to ensure that, for any trees which are removed as part of a development, at least an equivalent number of a similar species and age (where practical) are planted on the proposed development site. Sufficient space for replacement trees to mature without causing future nuisance or damage shall be provided. The planting of new trees shall form an integral part of the design of any development scheme. Proper provision must be made for the protection and management of trees or areas of woodland on-site when undertaking development. A management plan shall be provided as part of a planning application in accordance with BS 5837 (2012) in order to ensure that trees are adequately protected during development and appropriately maintained in the future. Conditions for the continued protection of trees on sites shall be included in any planning permission given. Where there are existing trees on or adjacent to a development site, developers shall be required to provide:

- d. Land and tree surveys*
- e. A tree constraints plan*
- f. An arboricultural impact assessment to include a tree protection plan and arboricultural method statement*

These will ensure that development is planned to take a comprehensive view of tree issues at an early stage in the design process and that development works do not have a negative impact on existing trees.

3.7 Policy ENV DM5 Development and biodiversity states that:

Development schemes shall, in the first instance, seek to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and protect existing habitats on site. They shall also however incorporate elements of biodiversity including green walls, roofs, bat and bird boxes as well as landscape features minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats (whether designated or not). Development schemes shall also be appropriately designed to facilitate the emergence of new habitats through the creation of links between habitat areas and open spaces. Together, these provide a network of green spaces which serve to reconnect isolated sites and facilitate species movement. Where there is evidence of a protected species on a proposed development site, planning applications shall include a detailed survey of the subject species, with details of measures to be incorporated into the development scheme to avoid loss of the species. This involves consideration of any impacts that will affect the species directly or indirectly, whether within the application site or in an area outside of the site, which may be indirectly affected by the proposals. All surveys shall be carried out at an appropriate time of year and shall be undertaken by a qualified and, where appropriate, suitably licensed person. All developments shall have regard to Natural England's standing advice for protected species.

3.8 Policy GI SP1 Green Infrastructure and development states:

The existing Green Infrastructure Network, as shown on the Green Network Maps for each parish and town, must be considered at an early stage of the design process for all major development proposals.

All major development must be designed to protect and enhance existing Green Infrastructure assets, and the connections between them, in order to ensure a joined up Green Infrastructure Network. The Green Infrastructure Network must be protected from light pollution to ensure that areas defined by their tranquillity are protected from the negative effects of light in development.

Where compatible with nature conservation objectives, development proposals must identify opportunities to connect existing Green Infrastructure assets with the coast, the South Downs National Park or to the District's inland villages. Opportunities to enhance the network should take account of the multiple functions of Green Infrastructure assets and should be based upon those opportunities set out in the supporting text.

Legislation

- 3.9 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this EclA includes:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
 - The Protection of Mammals Act 1996.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 All widespread reptiles are protected against killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, with rarer reptiles receiving further protection under EU regulation. Reptiles must also be given consideration under the NERC Act 2006 as part of the planning process.
- 3.13 Great crested newts (GCN) are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a GCN or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.
- 3.14 Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence to harm badgers or disturb badgers and their setts.

- 3.15 Water voles are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is a priority conservation species. It is an offence to intentionally capture, kill or injure water voles, damage, destroy or block access to their places of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), disturb them in a place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), possess, sell, control or transport live or dead water voles or parts of them (not water voles bred in captivity).
- 3.16 In the UK, dormice are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and have significant further protection as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Dormice are also a 'Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity' listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC). It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a dormouse or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.
- 3.17 All other mammals receive general protection against cruelty, inhumane killing or injuring under the Protection of Mammals Act 1996.
- 3.18 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory from 12 February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. There are a number of exemptions. This site is not considered exempt.

4.0 Methodology

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) within 12.0 km of the site; national statutory designated sites (SSSI, NNR, LNR) within 2.0 km of the site; and non-statutory designated sites (SNCI) and priority habitats within 1.0 km of the site. Any sites of relevance to the proposals are summarized below and their significance considered in the context of the development proposals.
- 4.2 A search was 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, and the timescales, a full data search from SxBRC was not considered appropriate. This is in accordance with CIEEM current guidance for such projects.

Site Visit

- 4.3 A site visit was conducted on 14th November 2023. Habitats were recorded broadly according to the UK-Habs Classification System as described within the UK Habitats Manual v2.01 (UKHab Ltd 2023). All habitats present on-site were recorded on a UKHab map (Figure No. 01 – Site Habitat Plan).
- 4.4 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.
- 4.5 The site was assessed by an experienced, licenced bat surveyor (*George Sayer 2018-34434-CLS*) for its potential to support roosting bats; although it is noted that no buildings are impacted by proposals and no significant trees are present. The bat roost assessment was conducted following the Bat Conservation Trust - Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (2023).
- 4.6 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 the Survey Guidelines and all reasonable effort has been made to identify evidence of protected species. Whilst the survey is now beyond the usual 18-month limit of validity for surveys, the site has been well-maintained since and as such no changes are likely to have occurred.

Ecological Impact Assessment

- 4.7 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, 2024). 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.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 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 sites social and economic value.

5.0 Baseline Ecological Conditions and Protected Species Assessment

Desktop Study

Designated Sites and Habitats within 12.0km

- 5.1 The following 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.

Table No. 01 – Statutory Sites within 2.0 km

Site	Description	Location
Arun Valley (SAC, SPA, RAMSAR,	<i>Designated an SAC for its population of ramshorn snail Anisus vorticulus. The Arun valley is one of the three main population centres for this species in the UK. This site includes two of its core sites in the wash lands of the Arun floodplain (Pulborough Brooks and Amberley Wild Brooks SSSIs). Designated an SPA for its population of Bewick's swan Cygnus columbianus bewickii and for supporting over 20,000 wildfowl. RAMSAR designated for the matrix of floodplains, wet meadows and ditches, the site supports seven wetland invertebrate species that are listed as threatened in Britain, one of which is endangered, and there are four nationally rare and four nationally scarce plant species.</i>	9.4 km NE
Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC, SSSI	<i>An example of mature beech Fagus sylvatica woodland located on the steep scarp face of the South Downs. The site has developed over chalk which is overlain in places by a clay-with-flints capping. Beech dominates in a mosaic with ash Fraxinus excelsior woodland, scrub and grassland. Much of the beech woodland is high forest but with some old pollards.</i>	9.4 km NW

- 5.2 The site is within 12.0 km of the Arun Valley SPA, and as such any potential impacts upon Bewick's swan must be considered.
- 5.3 No non-statutory designated sites are recorded in or around Ford.

Habitats

Desk Study

- 5.4 Within 1.0km of the site there are Priority Habitats of saltmarsh and mudflat (surrounding the River Arun), intertidal mud (the entirety of the River Arun at this location), large areas of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh including the site, Traditional Orchard, Deciduous Woodland, Ancient Woodland.

Site Assessment

- 5.5 The site is given over to the existing building and surroundings, which are discussed further below.

U1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 5.6 One small building sits upon a concrete base which forms a small yard outside. The habitat offers **negligible ecological value**.

U1b5 – Building

- 5.7 The smaller building is formed of timber with a metal roof. The larger is a slated-roofed garage/storage building. The habitat offers **negligible ecological value**.

U1c – Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface

- 5.8 An access track is present running north along the eastern side of the site, formed of compacted crushed material. The habitat offers **negligible ecological value**.

R1g 41 – Other Standing Water (non-priority pond)

- 5.9 A small duckpond lined with a butyl liner and currently used by geese is present in the grassland. The pond is very small, appears very turbid and contains no vegetation. The habitat offers **negligible ecological value**.

G4 19 502 - Modified Grassland (Seasonally-wet Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh)

- 5.10 The site is formed of grassland which appears to be almost entirely composed of perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*. The grass is level and sparse. Patches of grass are currently under c.3cm of water and much of the sward is yellowing, which might be a symptom of waterlogging.

- 5.11 The entire area is designated on MAGIC Mapping as 'Priority Habitat – Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh'. It is noted in the UK Habitat Classification definition that modified grassland may contain modified grasslands. Historical imagery (Google, 2001-2023) shows both that the area has been regularly grazed by horses or mown, and that the adjacent larger areas of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh have also been ploughed and re-seeded in the recent past. As such the work is unlikely to have significantly reduced the ecological value of the habitat, albeit that diversity has likely been higher in the past. The habitat currently offers **site ecological value**, but as a priority habitat could become of higher value.

H2a6 11 - Other Native Hedgerow (Priority Habitat) with Trees

- 5.12 The eastern boundary is lined with a hedge formed largely of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* with rare field maple *Acer campestre* and elder *Sambucus nigra*, abundant bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and occasional dog rose *Rosa canina*. The hedge is a priority habitat with some connectivity and offers **local ecological value**.

R2b 81 505 – Other Rivers and Streams (Rife with Ruderal / Ephemeral and Inundation Vegetation)

- 5.13 The western boundary is lined with a rife, which would appear to be part of the Binsted Rife which is present further north. The rife runs south past the site and then turns east just north of 1 Station Road, before reaching the River Arun c.200.0 m south-east of the site area.
- 5.14 The rife is c.4-5.0 m wide at this point, with steep banks sloping into what is currently relatively deep and turbid water. The western (off-site) bank is lined with c.2.0 m of dense reeds *Phragmites australis* and a single hawthorn shrub and bramble behind, whilst the eastern (site) bank is lined with c.2.0 m of sparse reed and mixed ruderals such as bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echioides* and broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*. The area of bank behind the building is disturbed and displays sparse ruderals such as meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris* and nettle *Urtica dioica*. Some of the disturbance appears to be the result of installation of a timber post and rail fence between the building and the rife; there remains some timber and other materials from the relocation and fence on the edge of the bank behind the building. Some areas of the rife contain further reeds whilst the section behind the building contains drifts of duckweed *Lemna minor*.
- 5.15 At this stage it cannot accurately be determined whether the rife is of sufficient quality to be considered a priority habitat; presence of Habitats Regulations Annex II species such as great crested newt would confer this status, whilst currently it is assumed that agricultural nutrients probably impact the rife and as such it is not a priority habitat. The habitat offers **local ecological value**.

6.0 Protected Species Assessment

Bats

Desk Study

- 6.1 There are no EPSM licences within 2.0 km of site with the nearest just over 2.0 km east at Lyminster for common pipistrelle. Brown long-eared, noctule and serotine are recorded in licences locally and the expanses of open water and floodplain would be suitable for Daubenton's bats and Nathusius' pipistrelle. The local colonies of Barbastelle bats from Slindon and Goodwood do not appear to forage as far east as Ford.

Site Assessment

- 6.2 The buildings on site are modern structures offering **negligible bat roost potential**. No significant trees are present on the site.
- 6.3 The immediate surroundings are rural and moderately suitable for bats; the paucity of dense hedges, treelines and woodland in the surroundings reduce their suitability somewhat but the rife is likely used by foraging bats. The grassland is considered of **low site potential** for foraging and commuting bats. The hedge and rife are considered of **local value**.

Birds

Desk Study

- 6.4 Numerous bird species are present in the local area, including a number of farmland species and woodland specialists. The site is within the Arun Valley SPA which is designated for Bewick's swan. This species is not well recorded locally, although evidence suggests they have been sited at the HMP Ford to the south.

Site Assessment

- 6.5 The grassland is too enclosed, regularly used, and the sward generally too short to support ground nesters such as skylark. The narrow form of the field, its roadside location, presence of domestic geese and the proximity to 1 Station Road would preclude larger wintering fowl such as Bewick's swan or brent goose. The adjacent fields to the west and north would be suitable for such species, being open and a mixture of arable and grassland. Waterfowl such as kingfisher, snipe and warblers might use the rife habitats.
- 6.6 The hedges are suitable for birds such as house sparrow and blackbird. The site would also be suitable for barn owl, albeit with a lack of suitable nest sites in the vicinity. The building would have been suitable for swallows. The habitats are of **site value**.

Reptiles

Desk Study

- 6.7 There are limited records of widespread reptiles within 2.0km of the site.

Site Assessment

- 6.8 The grassland is too short to provide shelter or forage and is highly unlikely to support reptiles. The remainder of site offers small amounts of suitable foraging and shelter in the rife and hedge margins. The grassland is currently waterlogged and unlikely to support hibernation but the surrounding hedges may do. The habitats are of **site value**.

Amphibians

Desk Study

- 6.9 There are no records of Great Crested Newts (GCN) within the immediate surroundings, with the nearest positive GCN survey licence return being just over 2.0 km south at Atherington. This suggests either limited survey effort due to lack of local development, or lack of suitable terrestrial habitats.

Site Assessment

- 6.10 The grassland is too short to provide shelter or forage for amphibians and is highly unlikely to support reptiles. The remainder of site offers small amounts of suitable foraging and shelter, with the rife and hedge margins being particularly suitable due to the presence of the rife. The duck pond offers negligible potential. The grassland is currently waterlogged and unlikely to support hibernation, but the surrounding hedges may do. The habitats are of **site value**.

Dormice

Desk Study

- 6.11 There are records of dormice in the immediate vicinity, with numerous records from the monitoring at Binsted Woods c1.8 km north-west. There are no records or licence returns closer than this, with habitats south of the woods poorly connected.

Site Assessment

- 6.12 The hedge to the east is formed of suitable species, but is truncated both at the railway to north and at the rife and driveway of 1 Station Road to south. The habitats on site are of **negligible value**.

Water Vole

Desk Study

- 6.13 There are records of water vole in the immediate vicinity, with numerous records from the monitoring at Binsted c1.6-1.8 km north-west. There are also records from Black Ditch, east of the Arun, and it is assumed that suitable parts of the Arun itself must harbour water voles. There are no records closer than this, possibly due to a lack of survey effort.

Site Assessment

- 6.14 The grass vegetation on-site is too short to be suitable for water voles. The rife and the bankside vegetation is highly suitable with steep soft banks, dense reeds and a reasonably depth of water. The habitats on site are of **site value** with the rife itself of **local value**.

Other

- 6.15 No potential for or evidence of any other protected species such as badger, otter, rare plants or notable invertebrates was recorded. There is potential for hedgehogs to forage in the grass given its size and the surroundings. No impacts upon other protected species are considered likely and have not been assessed further.

7.0 Evaluation of Impacts and Mitigation

Designated Sites

Potential Impacts

- 7.1 The proposals would not have any direct impact upon statutory sites given its small scale and nature. The site is within 12.0 km of the Arun Valley SPA, within which impacts upon Bewick's swan must be considered. Given its overall low suitability for such birds and existing disturbance levels, impacts are considered to be low but would extend disturbance from recreation, cars and light slightly further north. Any such birds should they use the adjacent fields are partially screened by the reed fringe of the rife. The impacts are considered too minor to merit a full Assessment under the Habitats Regulations.
- 7.2 No impacts upon local sites are predicted.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.3 The new building should be screened with native hedging to the north, to limit potential disturbance to qualifying features (Bewick's swans).

Residual Impacts

- 7.4 The impacts will be negligible.

Habitats

Potential Impacts

- 7.5 The proposals would remove small areas of modified grassland to install the building, in an area designated as Priority Habitat Coastal Floodplain And Grazing Marsh. The impacts would be of **low magnitude** at the **site-local level**.
- 7.6 The proposed siting of such a building in proximity to the rife might result in runoff of foul water into the rife, resulting in degradation through poisoning and eutrophication. This might then flow into the Arun. The building is small and the plans do not suggest any type of foul water connection. This would be a **negligible impact**.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.7 The minor loss of modified grassland for the building could be compensated through some enhancement of grassland to the fringes of the site. New hedging would also be planted to screen the proposals. This is described in more detail in the enhancements section and the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

Residual Impacts

- 7.8 Once mitigation is taken into account, the impacts will be negligible. There is potential for a habitat gain on the site.

Bats

Potential Impacts

- 7.9 The works are unlikely to impact bats in any significant way. The presence of the building would not block or alter any likely commuting routes. There is potential for lighting to be used on and within the building; this might result in lightspill of surrounding habitats.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.10 Any external lighting shall be the minimum required; no floodlighting shall be permitted and no lighting shall be installed onto the northern elevations. Lighting shall be set on controls such that PIRs are not triggered by passing wildlife. Lighting shall only be used when the building is in use and must not be set to turn on automatically. Luminaires shall be designed to point downwards to at least 45 degrees below horizontal to reduce lightspill and the southern luminaire adjusted to angle at least 30 degrees south-east (rather than due south). Windows shall be fitted with blinds or one-way glass to minimise light spill.
- 7.11 A hedge shall be planted to the northern and western boundary to screen the land beyond from lightspill.

Residual Impacts

- 7.12 Some residual impacts through lighting would remain but this is unlikely to be significant.

Nesting Birds

Potential Impacts

- 7.13 It is considered highly unlikely that any nesting birds would be disturbed through the proposals.
- 7.14 Some impacts on birds which use coastal floodplains such as lapwing or curlew are possible but very minor. Such impacts might occur through noise, light, and presence of dogs.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.15 A hedge shall be planted to the northern and western boundary to screen the land beyond from disturbance.

Residual Impacts

- 7.16 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Reptiles and Amphibians

Potential Impacts

- 7.17 The proposals would have minimal impact on reptiles with grassland being well-maintained.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.18 The margins of the grassland and river banks shall be allowed to grow longer to create reptile and amphibian habitat. This alongside enhancement of grassland to achieve better condition grassland would be adequate to replace any lost habitat.

Residual Impacts

- 7.19 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Water Voles

Potential Impacts

- 7.20 Water voles are known to use banksides up to 7.0 m from the watercourse in most situations. The building is over 10.0 m from the watercourse. As such the likelihood of any impact is extremely low given the land here is well-maintained grassland.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.21 The area shall be kept well-maintained prior to works. The margins of the river shall be allowed to grow into longer habitat to provide better habitat for water voles.

Residual Impacts

- 7.22 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Other

Potential Impacts

- 7.23 There is a low possibility of hedgehogs being disturbed but this is highly unlikely.

Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.24 The compensation measures for reptiles and amphibians would adequately aid hedgehogs.

Residual Impacts

- 7.25 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

8.0 Ecological Enhancements

8.1 In accordance with current Local and National Policy, the proposals should aim to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain. This is detailed in the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. The most beneficial enhancements would involve the following:

- Installation of bird nesting features to the hedges;
- Installation of log piles to the corner of the site, most notably near the hedges and on the top of the rife bank, to benefit reptiles, amphibians, hedgehogs and invertebrates;
- Reseeding of any bare patches with a wildflower grassland to increase species diversity;
- Wildflower to the main grassland shall be a mix specifically designed for coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, or wet meadow;
- The banks of the rife shall be seeded with a water's edge, wetland or similar mix;
- The hedge margins shall be seeded with a hedgerow or woodland edge mixture;
- New hedging shall be planted to the north of the site;
- Installation of bird boxes (1no. swift box to the northern gable apex and 1no. general bird box to the northern or eastern elevation);
- Installation of a bat box (1no. crevice bat box to the southern elevation).

8.2 Should the above be complied with and implemented correctly, it is likely that the proposals would result in an overall Biodiversity Net Gain.

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 low value grassland surrounded by hedges and rife of higher value.
- 9.2 The proposals are not anticipated to have any significant impact upon ecology; the proposals are unlikely to have negatively impacted upon designated sites, but might have minor impacts on habitats and protected species and technically result in the loss or degradation of a small area of priority habitat. These impacts could be compensated with basic measures.
- 9.3 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 minor net gain. The proposals would therefore accord with the relevant local and national planning policies and the relevant legislation.

10.0 References

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11.0 Species Lists

Modified Grassland

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Bristly Oxtongue	<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	F
Broadleaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	F
Cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	F
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	O
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	F
Dovesfoot Cranesbill	<i>Geranium molle</i>	F
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	R
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	F
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	F
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	D
Reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	LD
Tobacco Plant	<i>Nicotiana sp.</i>	R

Trees and Hedges

Common Name	Scientific Name	DAFOR
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	R
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	A
Dog Rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	F
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	R
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	O
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	D

12.0 Appendix A - Site Photos

Photo 1 – View of the site from the south, looking north to the proposal area.



Photo 2 – View of the proposal area looking north-east.



Photo 3 – View of the proposal area looking east to the hedge.



Photo 4 – View of the building on site looking west.



Photo 5 – View of the site looking north from the building to the proposal area, showing waterlogging to the centre of site.



Photo 6 – View of the site looking south from the proposal area along the rife to the building.



13.0 Figure No. 01 – Site Aerial



14.0 Figure No. 02 – Site Habitat Plan

