

EXTENDED PHASE 1 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

LAND ADJACENT TO OAK BANK, WANDLEYS LANE, WALBERTON, WEST
SUSSEX, BN18 0QR

FINAL REPORT

January 2022

Report conditions

<i>Report title</i>	Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment – Land Adjacent to Oak Bank, Walberton		
<i>Client</i>	Mr and Mrs Corbett		
<i>Report status</i>	Final		
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Executive Summary

- This extended phase 1 ecological assessment report has been prepared in order to support a planning application for the proposed construction of a single dwelling and detached garage with new access, on the land adjacent to Oak Bank, Walberton.
- An extended phase 1 ecological assessment of the application site was undertaken on the 5th January 2022 by Katy Goddard of Phillips Ecology.
- The survey area comprised the entire site within the red line boundary. A data search extended to a 1km radius for statutory designated sites, protected species, priority species and priority habitats.
- The site is considered to support opportunities for protected and priority species including foraging/commuting bats, hedgehogs and breeding birds.
- No further survey work is considered necessary.
- With the implementation of precautionary construction avoidance measures, impacts on protected and priority species will be avoided.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Report purpose

This report has been prepared in order to present the extended phase 1 ecological assessment undertaken for the proposed construction of a single dwelling and detached garage with new access on the land adjacent to Oak Bank, Walberton (central grid reference: SU 95287 06629).

1.2 Description of proposal

The current proposals comprise the construction of a single dwelling, detached garage and a new entrance from Wandleys Lane within the extended garden of the existing dwelling.

1.3

Report context

Pario architecture have prepared a planning application for the proposed construction of a new dwelling, garage and entrance on the land adjacent to Oak Bank, Walberton. It is anticipated that the planning authority, Arun District Council, will request that the planning application is accompanied by an ecological assessment. Phillips Ecology have been instructed by the Applicant to undertake this assessment.

1.4 Scope of assessment

An extended phase 1 ecological assessment was carried out on the 5th January 2022. The survey comprised a field survey and desktop study in order to identify notable or protected sites, habitats or species potentially affected by the proposal under consideration.

1.5 Survey area

The survey area comprised the entire site within the red line boundary. A data search extended to a 1km radius for statutory designated sites, protected species, priority species and priority habitats.

1.6 Limitations

Limitations which are specific to each phase of the assessment are given in the relevant sections, below.

2. Data search

2.1 Methodology

A desk-based assessment was undertaken by Phillips Ecology on the 7th January 2022 with Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). The MAGIC database was consulted for records of statutory designated sites and priority habitats for the application site and a 1km radius.

2.2 Limitations

The data search results are bound by the following statement contained within MAGICs general disclaimer: *“The materials contained on this website are of a general, informational, nature. We have used reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the contents of the pages on this site but the information does not constitute advice and must not be relied on as such”.*

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Statutory designated sites

A single statutory designated site is located within a 1km radius of the application site. South Downs National Park, England's newest national park comprising 1627 sq km of chalk downland, is located 615m north of the site. No other statutory designated sites are located within a 1km radius of the application site.

2.3.2 Ancient woodlands

Five compartments of non-statutory ancient woodland are located within a 1km radius of the application site. This is detailed in table 1, below.

Table 1 Ancient woodlands within 1km of the application site

Woodland Name	Approx. distance and direction from the site	Reason for designation
Unnamed compartment	0.57km N	This 0.6ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Slindon Wood	0.65km N	This 38.5ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Slindon Wood	0.77km NNW	This 23.8ha site is designated for its ancient replanted woodland.
Slindon Wood & Common	0.9km NNE	This 0.4ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.
Wanley's Copse	0.3km ESE	This 2.1ha site is designated for its ancient and semi-natural woodland.

2.3.3 *Priority habitats*

The data search revealed the following priority habitats within 1km of the application site:

- Lowland meadows
- Broadleaved deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchards
- Wood-pasture and parkland

3. Habitats

3.1 Methodology

A field survey was carried out on the 5th January 2022 by Katy Goddard of Phillips Ecology. During the survey, all broad habitat types were identified and a list was compiled of characteristic plant species within each habitat type. These habitats are described below in accordance with Phase 1 habitat terminology.

3.2 Limitations

The habitat survey was carried out during January which is outside the optimal period for recording vascular plant species. Whilst certain species would not have been evident if present, it was possible to identify vegetation to effectively classify habitat types in accordance with Phase 1 habitat terminology.

3.3 Existing records

The data search revealed that priority habitats associated with the local landscape within 1km of the site comprise lowland meadows, broadleaved deciduous woodland, traditional orchard and wood-pasture and parkland.

3.4 Results

The following Phase 1 habitat types were recorded within the survey site.

3.4.1 Neutral species-poor semi-improved grassland (B2.2)

The majority of the site comprises amenity grassland (Figure 1) made up of grass species including perennial rye *Lolium perenne* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*. The lawn is interspersed with herbaceous species including creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, common yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, comfrey spp *Symphytum spp*, thistle spp *Cirsium spp* and hairy bittercress *Cardamine hirsute*. A long pile of old turf was present in the western end of the grassland, adjacent to the dividing hedgerow. A bonfire was also present within the grassland.

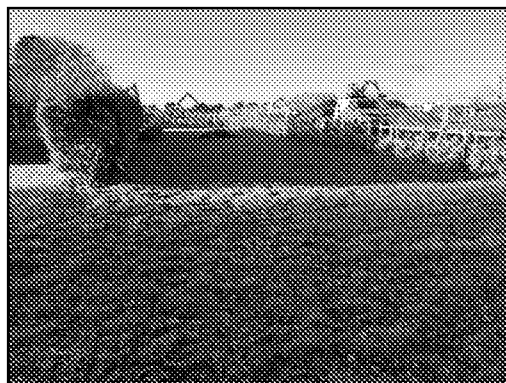


Figure 1 – grassland dominating the site

3.4.2 Boundaries (J2)

The north-eastern and north-western boundaries of the site appear newly instated with post and rail fencing and young cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* plants staggered inside the fencing (Figure 2). The south-western boundary is partly open to the existing garden and driveway with an isolated length of garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium* hedgerow dividing the sections of the garden (Figure 3), spanning the length of the existing dwelling. The south-eastern boundary is comprised of a mix of post and wire fencing and wooden panel fencing. A semi-mature oak *Quercus robur* and shrubs including garden privet are also present (Figure 4).

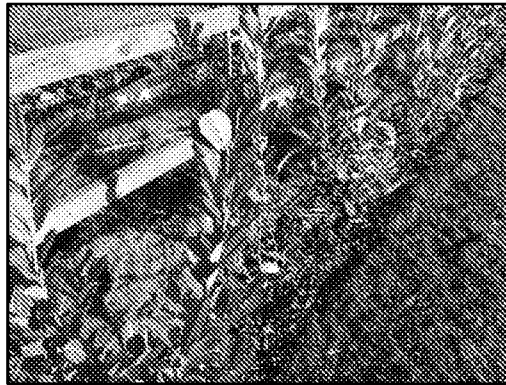


Figure 4 – newly instated fencing and cherry laurel on the north-eastern boundary

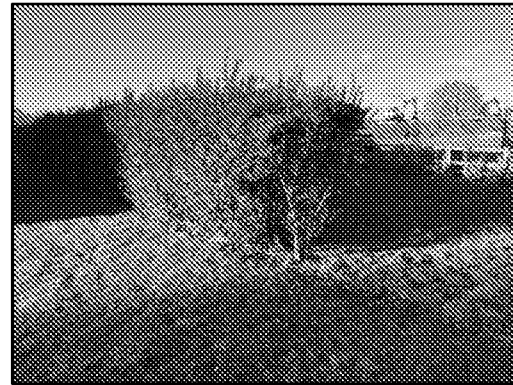


Figure 5 – garden privet hedgerow on the south-western boundary

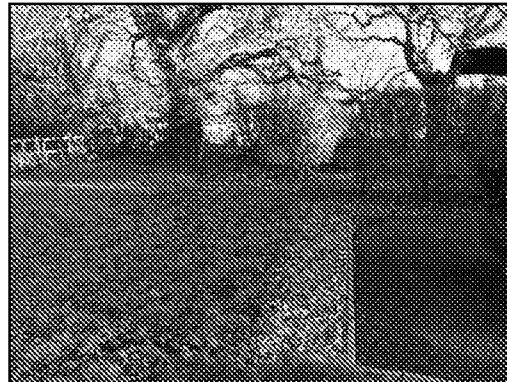


Figure 3 – fencing, oak tree and shrubs on the south-eastern boundary

3.4.3 Bare ground (J4)

The south-eastern end of the site is comprised of bare ground with scattered emerging herbaceous species including lords and ladies *Arum maculatum*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, primrose *Primula vulgaris*, creeping buttercup, common nettles *Urtica dioica*, cat's-ear, ground ivy and bedstraw spp *Galium spp*.



Figure 3 – Bare ground at the south-eastern end of the site

4. Protected and notable species assessment

The scope of works, data search and habitat assessment have informed the scope of the protected and notable species assessment. On this basis, the following protected and priority species have been considered further within this report:

- Bats (foraging and commuting)
- Badgers
- Hazel dormice
- Hedgehogs
- Reptiles
- Great crested newts
- Breeding birds

The surveyed site has been assessed for its potential to support the above-named protected species based upon the criteria in Table 2.

Table 2 Protected species grading criteria

Grading criteria	Justification
<i>Negligible</i>	Site is entirely unsuitable for species. Presence of species highly unlikely.
<i>Low</i>	Minimal suitable habitat present or, if present, highly degraded/fragmented. Minimal linkage to suitable habitat beyond site. Presence of species unlikely.
<i>Moderate</i>	Presence of some suitable habitat features for species. Surveyed site within/close to known range or known occurrence but factors such as isolation/fragmentation may reduce potential. Presence of species is more likely than not.
<i>High</i>	Presence of optimal habitat features for species. Surveyed site within known range/close to known occurrence. Excellent connectivity to optimal habitat. No justification for discounting presence of species.
<i>Confirmed presence</i>	Species confirmed on site through direct sighting, presence of field signs (e.g. scat, hair, prints, nest, eggs, habitation etc.) or through desk-based assessment.

5. Bats

5.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support foraging and commuting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition).

No structures are present within the zone of impact and the proposal will not result in the oak tree being felled, therefore, the survey did not comprise a detailed inspection of potential roost structures/trees.

5.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

5.3 Assessment methodology

The site's suitability for supporting commuting and foraging bats will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 3 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 3 Suitability assessment guidelines

Suitability	Description of Foraging/Commuting Habitats
<i>Negligible</i>	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
<i>Low</i>	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or un-vegetated stream, but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats. Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
<i>Moderate</i>	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
<i>High</i>	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of tree and woodland edge. High quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

5.4 Existing records

Survey work carried out by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd for the neighbouring development recorded at least 8 species using the site for foraging and commuting, including along the boundary adjacent to this site (FPCR 2016).

5.5 Results

The site majority is dominated by amenity grassland. The oak tree on the south-eastern boundary is within a line of trees spanning Wandleys road which is connected to a wider network of treelines, hedgerows and a block of woodland. Tree lines, hedgerows and woodland edge habitats are favoured by bats for commuting and foraging. The diverse range of vegetation species and structural diversity within the local area will support an abundance of invertebrates and provide a sheltered environment for foraging bats.

5.6 Assessment

When considered in view of the criteria set out in Table 3, the site is considered to support moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats. This assessment is based on the presence of continuous habitat which is connected to the wider landscape.

In the context of the wider landscape, the habitats within the application site are considered unexceptional for foraging and commuting bats. They are, nevertheless, suitable for commuting and foraging bats and it is highly likely that bats will commute and forage through the site as a component of their wider foraging range.

6. Badgers

6.1 Methodology

The survey involved a detailed investigation of the site to identify evidence of badger residence, foraging or territorial activity. This includes badger setts, latrine sites, dung piles, well-used trails, prints and hairs. Particular emphasis was placed on locating badger setts, paths and signs of territorial activity such as dung piles and latrines.

6.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

6.3 Existing records

No evidence of badger activity was recorded on the neighbouring development land (FPCR 2016).

6.4 Results

Shallow mammal diggings were identified within site however these are considered likely to be evidence of rabbits because rabbit droppings were also recorded nearby. No evidence of a badger sett was recorded within the application site. Suitable habitat for the formation of a sett and foraging is present within local landscape however the land immediately to the northern elevations of the site is currently being redeveloped and the local disturbance may reduce the likelihood of badgers in the immediate area.

6.5 Assessment

Badgers are considered to be absent from the site however there is the potential for badgers to utilise foraging opportunities surrounding and within the site.

7. Dormice

7.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the suitability of habitat on site to support hazel dormice. Key habitats are woodland, scrub and hedgerows, particularly where these offer dense vegetation within which to nest/hibernate and key resources such as hazel nuts, fruiting/nectar-rich plants (e.g. hawthorn, bramble) to provide a continuum of food resources throughout the active season and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* (for nesting material). Landscape-scale habitat linkages such as hedgerows are fundamental for dormouse presence where small scale or sub-optimal habitats are recorded within a site.

7.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

7.3 Existing records

No dormice were identified during surveys in 2014 on the neighbouring development, the eastern boundary of which joins the oak tree within this site (FPCR 2016).

7.4 Results

The tree line within which the oak tree sits could be utilised by expanding dormice populations if well connected to optimal habitat such as broadleaved woodland and scrub, the former of which is present within the local area. The remainder of the site is considered wholly unsuitable for supporting dormice because the stretch of hedgerow and shrubs are isolated and the grassland does not support resources that would be required to support dormice.

7.5 Assessment

The oak tree is not proposed to be felled as part of the plans. The remainder of the site which will be impacted is considered to support negligible potential for dormice.

8. Hedgehogs

8.1 Methodology

The site was assessed for its suitability to support hedgehogs based on the presence of favoured habitats such as woodland edges, hedgerows, grassland and suburban habitats.

Hedgehogs are most abundant within gardens, parks and amenity land close to or within human settlements. They are generally scarce in areas of coniferous woodland, marshes and moorland, probably because of a lack of suitable sites and materials for the

construction of winter nests (Morris, 2006). Any evidence of hedgehog activity such as prints or droppings would be recorded.

8.2 Limitations

Low detections rates are associated with evidence of hedgehog activity; therefore, absence of evidence does not confirm the absence of hedgehogs. For this reason, the assessment of the likely presence/absence of hedgehogs has largely been informed by the species' local distribution and the habitats within the site and local area.

8.3 Results

The grassland and hedgerow habitat within the site has the potential to support foraging hedgehog although no direct evidence was noted.

8.4 Assessment

There is considered to be moderate potential for hedgehog to occur on site.

9. Reptiles

9.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support reptile populations. Key habitat features include tussocky/patchy grassland, scrub edge, linear watercourses, ponds, compost heaps, brash piles and rubble/soil heaps. Linkage to suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape will increase the potential for reptiles to occur, although populations can occur within isolated/fragmented habitats even within urban areas.

9.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

9.3 Existing records

A single grass snake was identified on the neighbouring development land during a 2014 refugia survey. A precautionary mitigation plan to retain the low population on site was implemented (FPCR 2016).

9.4 Results

The managed lawn which dominates the site does not exhibit sufficient cover to support reptiles. The hedgerow on site does not offer optimal conditions for reptiles however it does provide some shelter. The ongoing redevelopment adjacent to the site is likely to have resulted in a loss of suitable habitat bordering this site as well as causing local disturbance, reducing the likelihood of reptiles being present on this site.

9.5 Assessment

There is considered to be low potential for reptiles to occur on site.

10. Great Crested Newts

10.1 Methodology

Great crested newts are only present in their breeding ponds during the spring and early summer – for the rest of the year, they will be dispersed across the surrounding area, generally in grassland, scrub, woodland and hedgerows, although they may be found in gardens and brownfield sites. They can travel some distance from their breeding ponds, and as a general rule, developments within 500m of such a pond may have the potential to have an impact on GCN, although to a certain extent, this does depend on any intervening habitat or barriers to dispersal.

An assessment was made of any waterbodies and terrestrial habitat within the site for their suitability to support populations of amphibians. Suitable waterbodies will generally be characterised by the presence of good quality water, diverse macrophyte cover and an absence of fish. For the protected great crested newt, each waterbody is normally assessed using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) system (Oldham et al., 2000) and assigned a grading score between zero (poor suitability) and 1 (excellent suitability).

10.2 Limitations

The HSI for great crested newts is a measure of habitat suitability. In general, ponds with high HSI scores are more likely to support great crested newts than those with low scores. However, in isolation, the system is not sufficiently precise to allow the conclusion that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not do so (Oldham et al., 2000).

10.3 Existing records

No great crested newts were recorded on the neighbouring development land or within two local ponds surveyed during 2014 (FPCR 2015a and 2016).

10.4 Results

The site does not support any freshwater waterbodies however two freshwater bodies were identified within 500m of the application site, approximately 150m ESE and 230m SE. The latter was inspected as part of the neighbouring development 2014 surveys and was considered unsuitable for supporting great crested newts and the former was no longer present. The hedgerow understorey and managed lawn provide sub-optimal terrestrial habitat for great crested newts.

10.5 Assessment

Given the lack of a network of suitable ponds within 500m on site and the limited suitable terrestrial habitat on site being isolated, the site is considered to support negligible potential for great crested newts.

11. Breeding birds

11.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support breeding bird species. Nesting birds will utilise a broad range of habitats, including built structures, trees, scrub, isolated shrubs, dense herbaceous vegetation (terrestrial and aquatic) and open grassland. All bird species and evidence of breeding activity (active or inactive) observed on site were recorded.

11.2 Limitations

No limitations were encountered during the survey.

11.3 Existing records

A breeding bird survey of the neighbouring development land recorded 29 bird species on site (FPCR 2015b).

11.4 Results

The tree, hedgerow and shrubs within the site are considered to support nesting opportunities for bird species.

11.5 Assessment

Habitats within the site are considered to support nesting opportunities for various bird species. Overall, the site is considered to support moderate potential for breeding birds.

12. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts

12.1 Relevant legislation and policy

Circular 06/2005 identifies that applicants should not be required to provide information on protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood that they will be present and affected by the proposed development. The site is considered to support habitats with suitability and potential for protected species and these may be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal triggers 'reasonable likelihood' under the Circular.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations) may apply should protected species be confirmed on site.

In the case that a European protected species is found to be present and impacted by the proposal, the local planning authority will be required to engage with the Habitat Regulations. Permission will be granted unless:

- a) the development is likely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations, and
- b) is unlikely to be granted an EPS licence from Natural England to allow the development to proceed under a derogation from the law (under licence).

When considering whether Natural England would not be unlikely to grant a licence for the identified impact, the local planning authority must consider the three tests which are set out in the Habitat Regulations:

1. the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment' (Regulation 53(2)(e));
2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 53(9)(a)); and
3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 53(9)(b)).

Natural England will grant a licence if the development proposal is able to meet the three tests.

12.2 Designated sites

The proposal will not result in the direct loss of the identified designated site. Nor will it result in the direct loss of any habitat that could be considered functionally linked supporting habitat for any designated site.

12.3 Habitats

The main habitats which will be directly impacted by the proposed development are amenity grassland which will be removed and an isolated length of hedgerow which will be relocated. As the vegetation to be removed is managed, easily replicable and of low

botanical value, it is considered that there will be no impact to habitats of ecological importance such as priority habitats as a result of its loss.

12.4 **Bats**

The application site is considered to support moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats. This suitability is associated with the south-eastern boundary. Although a new access will be opened within the boundary, the oak tree which lies within the line of trees along Wandleys Lane will be retained. However, illumination of the habitats would render them unsuitable for foraging and commuting bats despite their retention, resulting in an overall loss of foraging/commuting habitat on site.

12.5 **Badgers**

The site supports moderate suitability for badger. Therefore, impacts to badgers could occur during construction if trenches are left open. Impacts on badgers associated with loss or damage of setts or loss of foraging habitat are not anticipated.

12.6 **Hazel dormouse**

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support potential for dormice. Therefore, no impacts on dormice are anticipated.

12.7 **Hedgehog**

Impacts on hedgehogs are likely to be associated with the removal of grassland habitat on site and if trenches are left open.

12.8 **Reptiles**

The proposal will result in the disturbance of small areas of habitat which is considered to support low suitability for common species of reptile. Therefore, there is considered to be potential for impacts upon these species associated with the relocation of the hedgerow.

12.9 **Great crested newts**

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support potential for great crested newts. Therefore, no impacts on great crested newts are anticipated.

12.10 **Breeding birds**

The proposal will result in the loss and relocation of suitable breeding bird habitat. The removal and relocation of this habitat has the potential to damage or destroy active bird nests if carried out during the breeding bird season which is generally seen as extending from March to the end of August, although may extend longer depending on local conditions.

13. Requirement for further surveys

Further surveys are required where there is a reasonable likelihood that a protected species will be present and impacted by the proposed development. An assessment into the requirement for further surveys is presented below, however in summary, no further surveys are considered necessary.

13.1 Designations

No further surveys are considered necessary.

13.2 Habitats

No further surveys are considered necessary.

13.3 Bats

The affected areas of habitat within the site are considered to be unexceptional in the context of the local area as a foraging or commuting resource. Therefore, further survey is considered unnecessary for understanding impacts on foraging and commuting bats, subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14.

13.4 Badgers

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14, no further surveys are considered necessary.

13.5 Hazel dormice

As no impacts to dormice are anticipated, no further recommendations in relation to dormice are considered necessary.

13.6 Hedgehog

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14, no further surveys are considered necessary.

13.7 Reptiles

Given the small scale of the proposal and the site's limited suitability for more sedentary species such as slow-worm, there is not considered to be a high enough risk to reptiles for it to be reasonable to require that specific surveys are carried out. Precautionary measures have been specified in Section 14 to ensure that any potential impacts are avoided.

13.8 Great Crested Newts

As no impact to great crested newts are anticipated, no further recommendations in relation to great crested newts are considered necessary.

13.9 Breeding birds

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14, no further surveys are considered necessary in respect of breeding birds.

14. Mitigation recommendations

14.1 Bats

In order to limit any effects on foraging and commuting bats, external lighting should be limited to only that which is absolutely necessary for safety purposes, both during the construction phase and once the proposals are complete. The following lighting measures are required:

- Lighting to the completed development should be as low brightness as possible, kept at a low level and directed away from all boundaries. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them.
- All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT, 2018).

14.2 Badgers

In order to avoid harm to badgers during the construction works, any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any badgers which fall in to leave on their own accord.

14.3 Hedgehogs

In order to avoid harm to hedgehogs during the construction works the following precautionary measures will be employed:

- Any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any hedgehogs which fall in to leave on their own accord.
- Any accumulations of brash will be dismantled by hand in a sensitive and careful manner.
- The bonfire on site must be checked for hedgehogs prior to lighting.

14.4 Reptiles

There is limited potential for reptiles to be present and to be impacted by the development works given the nature of the proposed works. However, as no detailed surveys have been undertaken, a precautionary approach to the site development is recommended, as follows:

- The grassland must be maintained to a short sward by mowing.
- The hedgerow should be relocated from mid-March onwards (when reptiles have emerged from hibernation). The hedgerow should be dug up using handtools only.
- All waste shall be placed directly into a skip so that rubble piles and therefore potential hibernation areas are not created in areas which will subsequently be disturbed by site works.
- Piles of loose sand or other granular materials into which reptiles could bury are not to be left around the site. All such materials will ideally be delivered in bags

and kept in such bags until required for use. Bags should be stored on pallets. If it is essential that they are delivered loose, they should only be dug into by hand.

- No bonfires will be made or lit on site.
- New shelter features in the form of two brash piles will be created within the base of the existing boundary hedgerows. The centre of the brash piles will be compacted whilst the outer layers will be laid loosely.

14.5 **Breeding birds**

Care should be taken that the development does not disturb breeding birds. The bird nesting season is taken to be March to August, inclusive. Any removal/relocation of suitable nest habitat will either need to be undertaken outside of this period or else checked by an experienced ecologist to ensure that no nesting birds are present. If occupied nests are present then the nest must not be removed, and clearance can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

15. Enhancements

The delivery of biodiversity enhancement on development sites is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where opportunities exist it is best practice to provide enhancement features which encourage greater biodiversity within development sites in accordance with the NPPF and Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under the NERC Act.

Opportunities for enhancement which are proportionate to the scale of the development include:

- The provision of new bird nesting opportunities in the form of three bird boxes comprising a mix of swift, hole and open fronted nest boxes. These could be installed in suitable locations on the new dwelling, existing dwelling or within the wider site.
- The provision of bat boxes. Two boxes installed as high as possible, at least 3m above ground, in sheltered positions on the south-eastern and south-western elevations of the tree would be appropriate

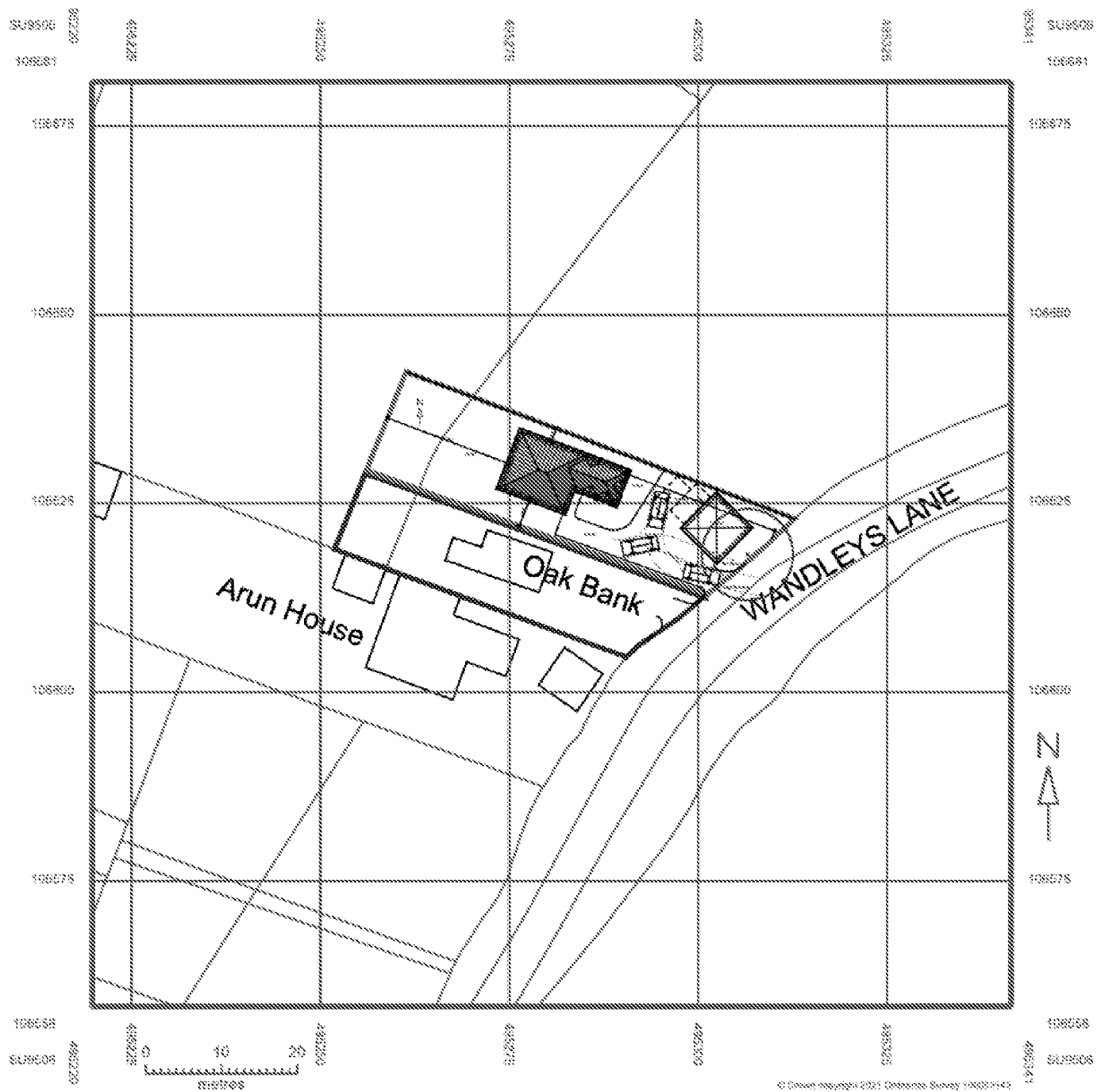
16. Conclusion

The extended phase 1 ecological assessment has confirmed that the site supports opportunities for a range of protected species including foraging and commuting bats, hedgehogs and breeding birds. Given the scale of the proposal, it is possible to deliver the scheme with a range of measures which avoid impacts on the identified ecological receptors. These include sensitive lighting and timing of the works. Opportunities for ecological enhancement have been suggested for the site.

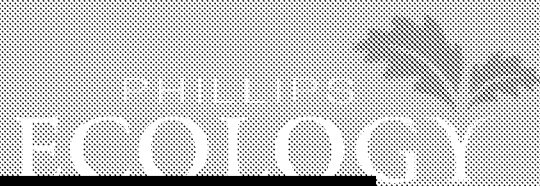
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Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan



Site location Plan - 1:1250



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