ELLENDALE
ENVIRONMENTAL

Pickwick Road, Corsham
Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)

For LP Planning

27th June 2023

South Office
41 Esmead
Chippenham, Wiltshire
SN15 3PR

North Office
292 Portobello High Street
Edinburgh
EH15 2AS

0131 563 9326
info@ellendale-environmental.co.uk

Version

VERSION	DATE	AUTHOR	REVIEWED	APPROVED
CIC v1.0	20/06/23	Ophélie Lasne	Stewart Parsons	21/06/23
CIC v1.1	26/06/23	Ophélie Lasne	Stewart Parsons	27/06/23

Disclaimer

Copyright © Ellendale Environmental Limited. All rights reserved.

This report has been produced by Ellendale Environmental Limited within the terms and conditions of the contract with the client and taking account of the resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. It has been prepared for the sole use of the client and their professional advisors.

Ellendale Environmental Limited accepts no responsibility for any use of or reliance on the contents of this report by any third party.

The report, and the information contained in it, is intended to be valid for a maximum of 12 months from the date of the survey, providing no significant alterations to the site have occurred.

Contents

Executive Summary 4

1. Introduction 6
1.1 Commission 6
1.2 Site Details 6
1.3 Survey Objectives 7

2. Methodology 8
2.1 Data Search 8
2.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey 8
2.3 Preliminary Protected Species Walkover 8
2.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment 8
2.5 Survey Area 9
2.6 Survey Limitations 9
2.7 Surveyor 9

3. Results 10
3.1 Desk Study 10
3.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey 12
3.3 Preliminary Protected Species Walkover 16
3.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment 17

4. Conclusions 19
4.1 Conclusion 19
4.2 Mitigation 20
4.3 Enhancements 20

5. Target Notes 21
5.1 Botanical Target Notes (TN) 21
5.2 Animal Target Notes (AN) 21

6. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Map 22

Executive Summary

Ellendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by LP Planning, on behalf of their client, to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) in support of a planning application for an area of land at Pickwick Road, Corsham, Wiltshire ('the site'). It is proposed to develop the site for two residential properties to replace the existing mobile home present on the site ('the proposed development').

Surveys undertaken at the site as part of the PEA included a Phase 1 Habitat survey, a protected species walkover and a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA). The Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken following a Phase 1 survey methodology to list the plant species associated with each habitat. The preliminary protected species walkover was conducted for the site and the surrounding area, and the PRA was undertaken for the buildings and trees present on the site.

The site is located within a residential area to the west of Corsham and is approximately 0.05 hectares in size. There are five Phase 1 habitat types recorded on the site, including built-up areas, poor semi-improved grassland and scattered scrub.

The site is bounded by residential properties, fences and roads, which will restrict the movement of protected species into and out of the site. Furthermore, the site is dominated by hardstanding which does not provide habitat for protected species.

The site provides limited suitable habitat for common reptile and amphibian species, with shrubs providing cover. However, the site's location will limit movements into and out of the site, and no evidence of these species was noted to be present at the time of the survey.

The survey was conducted during the breeding bird season; however, no nests were noted to be present.

The site does not provide suitable habitat for badger, with no suitable habitat for foraging or breeding. No evidence such as latrines, diggings or setts was recorded, and this species is not considered to be present.

Trees present within the site were not suitable for roosting bats and did not have features such as cracks, crevices or splits that could support bat species.

The buildings are assessed as providing Negligible Roost Potential and no evidence of bat activity or roosting bats was found during the survey. No further surveys for bats are recommended.

Overall, the site is assessed as providing low suitability to support protected species. No evidence of protected species was detected during the survey and none can realistically be anticipated here.

Recommendations have been made for modest post-construction ecological enhancements at the site that are proportionate with the low level of environmental impact from the proposed development.

1. Introduction

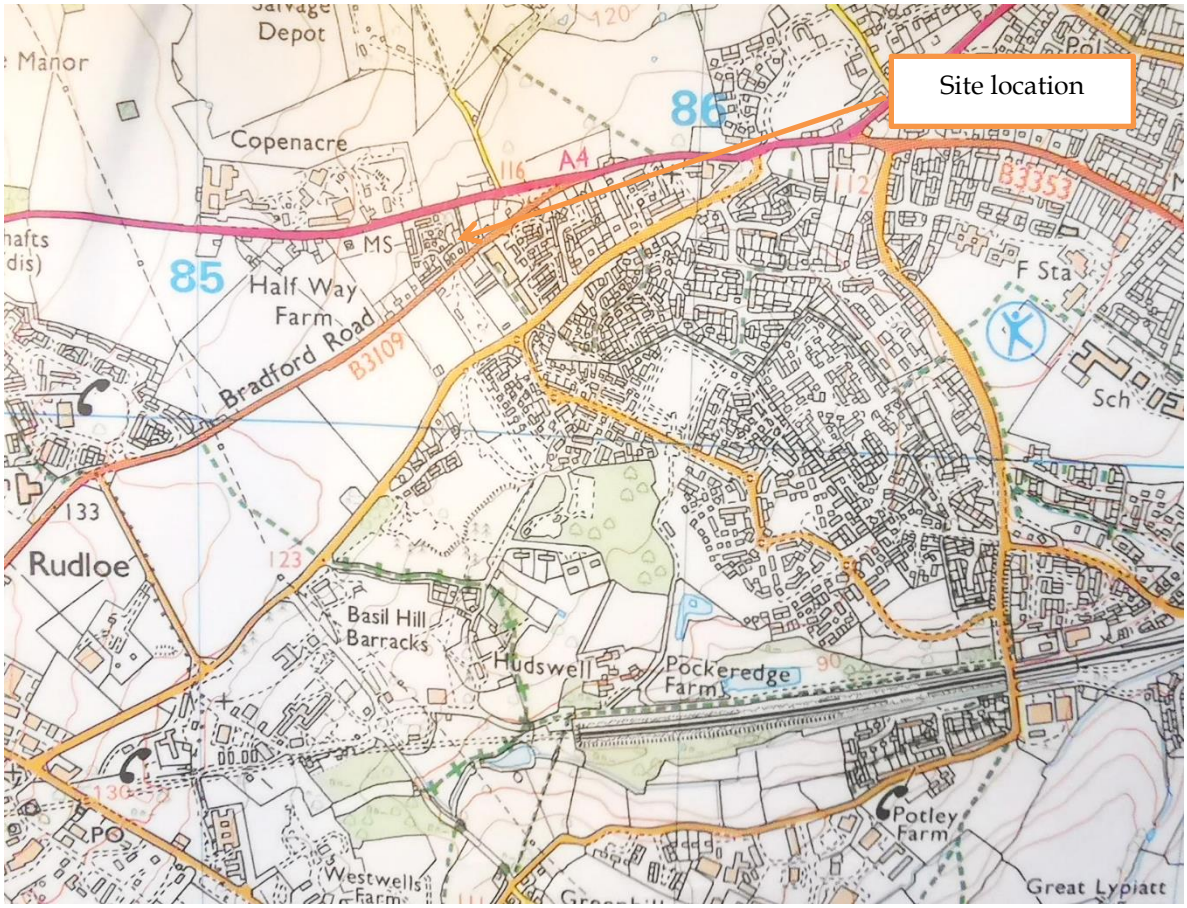
1.1 Commission

Ellendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by LP Planning, on behalf of their client, to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) in support of a planning application for an area of land at Pickwick Road, Corsham, Wiltshire ('the site'). It is proposed to develop the site for two residential properties to replace the existing mobile home present on the site ('the proposed development').

1.2 Site Details

The site is located at Pickwick Road in Corsham, Wiltshire, SN13 0QR at OS grid reference ST 85530 70348.

Figure 1: Site location



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Mapping Map Explorer 156 Scale 1:25000 by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100054247.

1.3 Survey Objectives

On the basis of the brief provided by the client, Ellendale Environmental conducted an ecological survey of the site and a 50m buffer (where accessible and appropriate) to fulfil the following needs:

- Obtain baseline information on the current habitats and ecological features in and around the site;
- Identify any further specialist surveys that may be required;
- Identify the presence (or potential presence) of any protected species whose disturbance may require consent under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) or the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended); and
- Identify any species or habitats which may require special mitigation during the development of the site.

2. Methodology

2.1 Data Search

Publicly available databases, including MAGIC and the NBN Atlas, were consulted for historical evidence of:

- Statutory land-based designations;
- Non-statutory land-based designations; and
- Protected and notable species.

The data search was conducted within a 2km (5km for bats) radius of the site boundaries.

2.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

A Phase 1 Habitat survey of the site area was undertaken, and the habitats present on the site were mapped following the Phase 1 survey methodology (JNCC, 2010), listing the plant species associated with each habitat. This methodology was a Phase 1 habitat survey, whereby all habitats were surveyed and recorded onto a base plan, and any habitats that were considered to be of potential interest to nature conservation were recorded through the use of target notes to annotate a Phase 1 habitat map.

2.3 Preliminary Protected Species Walkover

The site and surrounding areas were examined for signs of protected species. The presence/potential presence of protected or notable species of conservation concern was recorded using target notes, following the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management guidance (CIEEM, 2012).

2.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

An inspection of the buildings and trees within the site was undertaken from ground level, looking for evidence of bats, bat roosting sites and possible bat access/egress points.

In examining the buildings and trees for bats, particular attention was given to any crevice in which bats may roost. These were inspected for bat droppings, bat urine, feeding remains, oil staining from the fur of bats (indication of frequent use of a

particular site), and wear of substrates caused by the movement of bats in and out over a long period of time.

2.5 Survey Area

The survey covered the entire site and areas within 50m (where accessible and appropriate).

2.6 Survey Limitations

The aim of this survey was not to record every species present on the site, as one survey acts as a snap-shot, recording only those species which are present at the time or whose presence can be indicated through the occurrence of field signs, such as feeding remains, droppings or places used for shelter or foraging.

Evidence collected has been used to draw conclusions about the flora and fauna within the boundary of the site and to provide an assessment of their ecological and nature conservation value.

Weather was not a limiting factor to the survey. The prevailing conditions at the time of the survey are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey weather conditions

SURVEY DATE	TEMPERATURE (˚C)	WIND SPEED (MPH)	CLOUD COVER/ PRECIPITATION
06/06/23	11.7	0.0	100% cloud cover, dry.

2.7 Surveyor

The survey was undertaken by Stewart Parsons, Director and Principal Ecologist of Ellendale Environmental, who is a full member of CIEEM and Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv). Stewart has over 19 years' professional experience of ecological surveys across the UK.

The survey was assisted by Ophélie Lasne, Assistant Ecologist of Ellendale Environmental and a qualifying member of CIEEM, who has experience of undertaking PEAs.

3. Results

3.1 Desk Study

A 2km data search for existing designated sites and biological records was undertaken from MAGIC and the NBN Atlas.

Statutory Designated Sites

The following statutory designated sites were identified within 2km of the site:

- Corsham Railway Cutting Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located 0.9km south-east of the site;
- Box Mine SSSI is located 1.5km south-west of the site;
- Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) is located 1.5km south-west of the site; and
- The Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located 1.5km south-west of the site.

These designated sites and their qualifying features are not considered to be at risk from the proposed development.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

The Bristol and Bath Greenbelt is located 1.7km west of the site. This designated site and its qualifying features are not considered to be at risk from the proposed development.

Protected and Notable Species

The following terrestrial protected species were identified within 2km of the site boundaries by the data search:

- Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (13 records, the closest of which is located 0.2km North-east of the site, recorded in 2016);
- Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* (seven records, the closest of which is located 1km east of the site, recorded in 2021); and

- White-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* (one record, located 2km north-west of the site, recorded in 1995).

The following bat species were identified within 5km of the site boundaries by the data search:

- Serotine bat *Eptesicus serotinus* (20 records, the closest of which is located 3km south-west of the site, recorded in 2016);
- Bechstein's Bat *Myotis bechsteinii* (four records, the closest of which is located 2.5km north-east of the site, recorded in 2019);
- Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii* (22 records, the closest of which is located **160m north of the site at OS grid reference ST 85500 70500**, recorded in 1984);
- Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* (15 records, the closest of which is located 2.5km south-west of the site, recorded in 1989);
- Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri* (32 records, the closest of which is located **160m north of the site at OS grid reference ST 85500 70500**, recorded in 1984);
- Noctule bat *Nyctalus noctula* (12 records, the closest of which is located 4.9km south-west of the site, recorded in 2022);
- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (21 records, the closest of which is located 1km east of the site, recorded in 2022);
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (six records, the closest of which is located 1km east of the site, recorded in 2021);
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* (13 records, the closest of which is located 2.5km south-west of the site, recorded in 1989);
- Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* (78 record, the closest of which is located 2km south-east of the site, recorded in 1985); and
- Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* (86 records, the closest of which is located 2km south-east of the site, recorded in 2016).

Bird Species

Approximately 103 bird species have been recorded within 2km of the site and are shown on the NBN Atlas; however, none of these records are within the site boundaries.

3.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

The site is located to the west of Corsham, within a residential area, and is approximately 0.05 hectares in size. It is bounded to the south by Bradford Road, beyond which are residential properties. To the east and west, further residential properties are present. A golf shop and an associated parking area are located to the north of the site. The site comprises mainly hardstanding and overgrown vegetation. Waste, including cardboard and packaging, was noted to be present throughout.

There are five Phase 1 habitat types recorded on the site, including boundary features, namely:

- J.3 Built-up areas;
- B.6 Poor semi-improved grassland;
- A.2.2 Scattered scrub;
- A.2.1 Dense scrub; and
- J. 3.4 Fence.

J.3 Built-up area

The main area of the site is occupied by a mobile home located to the south. The mobile home is approximately 12m long by 7m wide and was found to be in a poor condition with boarded up doors and windows and was not in use at the time of the survey. The structure has a metal subframe that is raised approximately 30cm from the ground with wooden lined walls and a low pitched roof covered with roofing felt. The mobile home appears to have been broken into at a previous time.

A small garage is present to the north-west of the site and is approximately 3.5m wide and 6m long. The garage is constructed from concrete sheet walls with a low pitched roof constructed from a timber frame with a single layer of cement sheets present. The garage has a single metal door on the south of the building that was found to be tight fitting with no gaps present.

A wooden shed is present to the south-east of the site and was in poor condition, with windows missing and a broken door. The shed was surrounded by dense scrub, much of which covered the structure.

Photograph 1: showing a view of the mobile home



Photograph 2: showing a view of the wooden shed



Hardstanding is present at the front of the site, along with the access to the site and adjacent golf shop and parking area. The hardstanding extends into the site and around the mobile home, with a small, terraced area present and an access path around the structure. Vegetation is present in places, extending over the hardstanding and from under the mobile home, with species present including bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* saplings and ivy *Hedera helix*.

B.6 Poor semi-improved grassland

A small area of poor semi-improved grassland was noted to be present to the north of the site and the mobile home and was noted to have been recently mown at the time of the survey. The grassland is species-poor with species present including perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*.

Photograph 3: showing a view of the poor semi-improved grassland



A.2.2 Scattered scrub

Scattered scrub is present around the boundaries of the site within areas of overgrown amenity planting. There are no signs of current management on these areas and species present include sycamore, bramble, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* and willow herbs *Epilobium sp*. Ornamental species, including pampas grass *Cortaderia selloana,* were also noted to be present.

Photograph 4: showing a view of scattered scrub within the site



A.2.2 Dense scrub

An area of dense scrub is present at the front of the mobile home and southern boundary of the site. Species present include sycamore, clematis *Clematis spp*., buddleia *Buddleia davidii*, lilac *Syringa spp*., red valerian *Centranthus ruber*, willow herb, ivy and brambles.

Photograph 5: showing a view of the dense scrub at the south of the site



J. 3.4 Fence

A wooden fence approximately 2m high is present around the site and was noted to be in good condition with some areas having been replaced and repaired.

3.3 Preliminary Protected Species Walkover

The site is located within a residential area in Corsham and is bounded by residential properties, fences and roads, which will restrict the movement of protected species into and out of the site. The site is dominated by built-up areas and hardstanding which do not provide suitable habitat for protected species.

It was noted during the survey that the adjacent golf shop has access to the site and that it has been used for the storage of materials and may also be used by staff during their breaks. This activity will deter protected species from using the site.

The vegetation present within the site provides the most suitable habitat for protected species, namely nesting birds. Common passerine bird species were noted to be present during the survey which was conducted during the breeding bird season; however, no nests were noted to be present. The vegetation present provides suitable foraging habitat for bird species.

The site provides limited suitable habitat for common reptile and amphibian species, with shrubs providing cover. However, the site's location will limit movements into and out of the site, and no evidence of these species was noted to be present at the time of the survey. No waterbodies are present that could support the breeding cycle of amphibian species and no refugia were present for either reptile or amphibian species.

The site does not present suitable habitat for badger *Meles meles*, with no suitable habitat for foraging or breeding. No evidence such as latrines, diggings or setts was recorded, and this species is not considered to be present.

Overall, the site is assessed as providing low suitability to support protected species and no evidence of protected species were detected during the survey.

3.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The site comprises several buildings, namely a mobile home, a garage and a small wooden shed.

The mobile home was noted to be in poor condition throughout with damp noted and rotten timbers present around the soffits of the structure. The mobile home has been boarded up indicating it has been vandalised at some time. This activity will deter bats from using the structure. No gaps were noted around the roof of the building that could support roosting bats and no evidence of bats was found.

The garage was noted to be in good condition and no access/egress was noted to be present for bats to enter. The roof structure of the building does not provide suitable habitat for roosting bats and no evidence of bat activity, such as droppings, was noted to be present on the external roof or walls of the mobile home or garage.

The small wooden shed was noted to be in poor condition with windows missing and a broken door, allowing wind and rain to enter which makes it unsuitable for bats which prefer dry and stable conditions to roost.

The buildings are assessed as providing Negligible Roost Potential and no evidence of bat activity or roosting bats was found during the survey. No further surveys for bats are recommended.

Trees present within the site were not suitable for roosting bats and did not have features such as cracks, crevices or splits that could support bat species. The vegetation preset within the site may provide some foraging habitat for bat species.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Conclusion

The site is located within a residential area in Corsham and is bounded by residential properties, fences and roads, which will restrict the movement of protected species into and out of the site. The site is dominated by hardstanding which does not provide suitable habitat for protected species.

It was noted during the survey that the adjacent golf shop has access to the site and that it has been used for the storage of materials and may also be used by staff during their breaks. This activity will deter protected species from using the site.

The vegetation present within the site provides the most suitable habitat for protected species, namely nesting birds. Common passerine bird species were noted to be present during the survey which was conducted during the breeding bird season; however, no nests were noted to be present. The vegetation present provides suitable foraging habitat for bird species.

The site provides limited suitable habitat for common reptile and amphibian species, with shrubs providing cover. However, the site's location will limit movements into and out of the site, and no evidence of these species was noted to be present at the time of the survey.

The site does not present suitable habitat for badger, with no suitable habitat for foraging or breeding. No evidence such as latrines, diggings or setts was recorded, and this species is not considered to be present.

Trees present within the site were not suitable for roosting bats and did not have features such as cracks, crevices or splits that could support bat species. The vegetation preset within the site may provide some foraging habitat for bat species.

The buildings are assessed as providing Negligible Roost Potential and no evidence of bat activity or roosting bats was found during the survey. No further surveys for bats are recommended.

Overall, the site is assessed as providing low suitability to support protected species and no evidence of protected species were detected during the survey.

4.2 Mitigation

Site personnel should be made aware of protected species and if any are recorded on site, all works should stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted.

Nesting Birds

Should any vegetation of the site require removing, this should be undertaken out with the breeding bird season (March – August, inclusive), as all nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). If works are undertaken within this period, a nesting bird survey would be required no more than 24 hours prior to the works. If nesting birds were found, these areas of the site would need to be protected from disturbance until the young have fledged naturally.

4.3 Enhancements

The following recommendations are made for modest post-construction ecological enhancements at the site which are proportionate with the low level of environmental impact from the proposed development:

- Bird nesting boxes (both small-hole and open-fronted) should be placed within the site to create nesting opportunities for small bird species as part of the overall design; and
- Bat boxes should be placed on or around the site boundaries or incorporated within the buildings, if possible, to create roosting opportunities for bat species as part of the overall design.

It is important that, where possible, opportunities to create new ecological features or enhance existing ones are fully explored. The following measure would benefit the development by introducing ecological enhancements and should be encouraged:

- Planting of native shrubs in appropriate areas of the site will bolster the existing habitat and provide connectivity between existing habitats. Species beneficial to wildlife include hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana,* holly *Ilex aquifolium* and cherry *Prunus avium*.

It is recommended that an ecologist contributes to any detailed landscape designs, planting lists and post-construction management to ensure a biodiversity net gain for the site.

5. Target Notes

5.1 Botanical Target Notes (TN)

TN1 – A garage present at the north-west of the site.

TN2 – An area of hardstanding overgrown by vegetation. Waste was noted to be present in this area.

TN3 – An area of poor semi-improved grassland that has recently been mowed.

TN4 – A small square concrete planter was noted to be present within the grassland.

TN5 – A wooden fence was noted to be present around the site.

TN6 – Trees and scrubs were noted to be present throughout the site.

TN7 – An area of hardstanding is present to the front of the mobile home and forms a small terrace.

TN8 – A mobile home is present on site and was noted to be in poor condition.

TN9 – An area of hardstanding is present within the driveway allowing access and parking.

5.2 Animal Target Notes (AN)

AN1 – The garage was noted to be in good condition and is not suitable for roosting bats. No evidence of roosting bats was noted to be present externally.

AN2 – The garage was noted to be in poor condition and is not suitable for roosting bats. No evidence of roosting bats was noted to be present externally.

AN3 - The small wooden shed was noted to be in poor condition with windows missing and a broken door. It is not suitable for roosting bats and no evidence of roosting bats was noted to be present externally.

6. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Map



ELLENDALE ENVIRONMENTAL

Drawing Title;
Pickwick Road, Corsham
Extended Phase 1 Map

Client;
LP Planning

Date;	**Drawn By;**
26/06/23	**OL**
Project Number;	**Version Number;**
EEL631	**v1.0**

Woodland and scrub
- Scattered scrub
- Dense/continuous scrub

Grassland and marsh
- Poor semi-improved grassland

Miscellaneous
- Fence
- Hardstanding
- Buildings

Target notes
- TN

Animal notes
- AN