

Land rear of The Old Railway Hotel, Porton

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey Report



23rd October 2025

Document Control

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The views and opinions contained within the document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to work

Executive Summary

Purpose of the report

To provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the proposed development site, involving,

- Evaluation of its conservation status based on a desktop review that summarises information collated on protected species and nature conservation designations in the area.
- Assessment of habitat composition on site, derived from a UKHabitat 2.0 survey.
- Assessment of the likelihood of protected, or otherwise notable, species occurring on site.

Context of the development

The proposed development:

- Construction of three new dwellings

Methods

The project requirement was to assess the existing ecological value of the site, identify potential ecological issues associated with the proposed development and make recommendations for general mitigation, compensation, enhancement and further surveys, as appropriate. A desk study and a UKHabitat 2.0 survey were carried out.

Key issues

The Site had LOW potential for commuting and foraging badger to pass through Site. Due to the trees along the eastern Site boundary, there was LOW potential for roosting, foraging and commuting birds and bats.

There was also LOW potential for reptiles along the tree line along the eastern Site boundary. There may have also been suitable habitat in the now trimmed scrub habitat.

Further surveys required

None

Conclusions

The statutory metric was run on the 23rd October 2025, the proposed development will yield a 65.47% net loss in biodiversity on site. The proposed development will require 0.74 area habitat units to achieve 10% biodiversity net gain. See Appendix 2 for full results.

Declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this document is truthful and accurate at the time of completion.

Project manager: Daniel Ahern CEnv MCIEEM FLS

Signature:



Lead ecologist & Report writer: Ashleigh Cairns

Signature:



Date: 23rd October 2025

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. In September 2025, Daniel Ahern Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Spruce Town Planning to undertake an ecological appraisal of the land to the rear of The Old Railway Hotel, situated to the southeast of Porton. The purpose of the survey was to provide an assessment of the current ecological conditions and to evaluate the ecological constraints in order to inform development proposals.
- 1.1.2. The purpose of this report is to identify key ecological constraints, in order to inform the project planning such that significant ecological impacts are avoided or minimised. It also aims to highlight any further ecological surveys that may be required to inform any future Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), so that they can be appropriately designed. Finally, the report aims to provide the information required in order to develop appropriate mitigation or compensation measures.

1.2. Site description

- 1.2.1. Land rear of The Old Railway Hotel, hereafter referred to as 'the Site', measures approximately 0.13ha and is situated on Winterslow Road, which runs to the south of the Site (approximate OS grid reference: SU 19209 36342), see Fig. 1 below.
- 1.2.2. The Site is mainly comprised of g4 – modified grassland and individual trees. There were also the foundations of a previously demolished building surrounded by an area of recently trimmed scrub.
- 1.2.3. The proposed developments and alterations to the site are as follows:
- Constriction of three new dwellings

Figure 1. Site location with the red line boundary.



2. Planning & Legislation

2.2. Legislation

The following legislation informed the survey approach and considerations.

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- Environment Act 2021

2.3. Planning policies

- 2.3.1. This report is prepared with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

3. Methods

3.3. Desk study

- 3.2.1. The following publicly accessible websites were searched for relevant ecological information:
- <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>
 - <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1376> (summary of nature conservation legislation)
 - www.ukbap.org.uk (archived 2012)
 - www.gridreferencefinder.com for aerial photography
 - <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>
- 3.2.2. Data relating to statutory & non-statutory sites and all protected species records within 1km of the red line boundary was requested from the Wiltshire & Swindon biological records centre (WSBRC).

3.3. Field survey

- 3.3.1. A UKHab 2.0 habitat survey of the site was undertaken with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017).
- 3.3.2. The survey was conducted on the 30th September 2025 by Ashleigh Cairns.
- 3.3.3. The weather conditions were good with an average temperature of 17°C.
- 3.3.4. During the survey, dominant plant species were recorded, and habitats were classified according to their vegetation types, as identified in the UKHab 2.0 users handbook. Target notes (TN) were taken to denote species and habitats of conservation interest and to describe the vegetation in areas that were too small to map. Evidence or habitat suitable for any legally protected species was recorded, where appropriate.
- 3.3.5. The presence of any Category 9 invasive non-native plant species was recorded.
- 3.3.6. The results are presented in the standard format with habitat descriptions and a UK Hab 2.0 map (see Figure 3).
- 3.3.7. The site was inspected for direct evidence and habitat suitability for protected and notable species. Particular attention was given to those species listed under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). This included searching for signs of badger activity and habitats suitable for amphibians, dormice, bats and reptiles.
- 3.3.8. In the event that habitats suitable for protected species are identified, it may be necessary to undertake further seasonal surveys to confirm presence/absence. In the event that no suitable habitats or features are

identified, a UK Hab 2.0 survey is sufficient to determine the potential impacts associated with a proposed development.

3.4. Limitations

- 3.4.1. The data provided by the online resources were not exhaustive. It is possible that species and habitats not found in the data search occur within the vicinity of the proposed development site.
- 3.4.2. The details within this report will remain valid for a period of 12 months; beyond that date it is advised that a review of ecological conditions is undertaken.

4. Baseline Ecological conditions

4.2. Desk study

- 4.2.1. The WSBRC data search confirmed that there was one statutory wildlife site recorded within 1km of the Site, the details of which are in Table 1 and Figure 2 below.

Table 1. The details of the statutory wildlife sites within 1km of the Site.

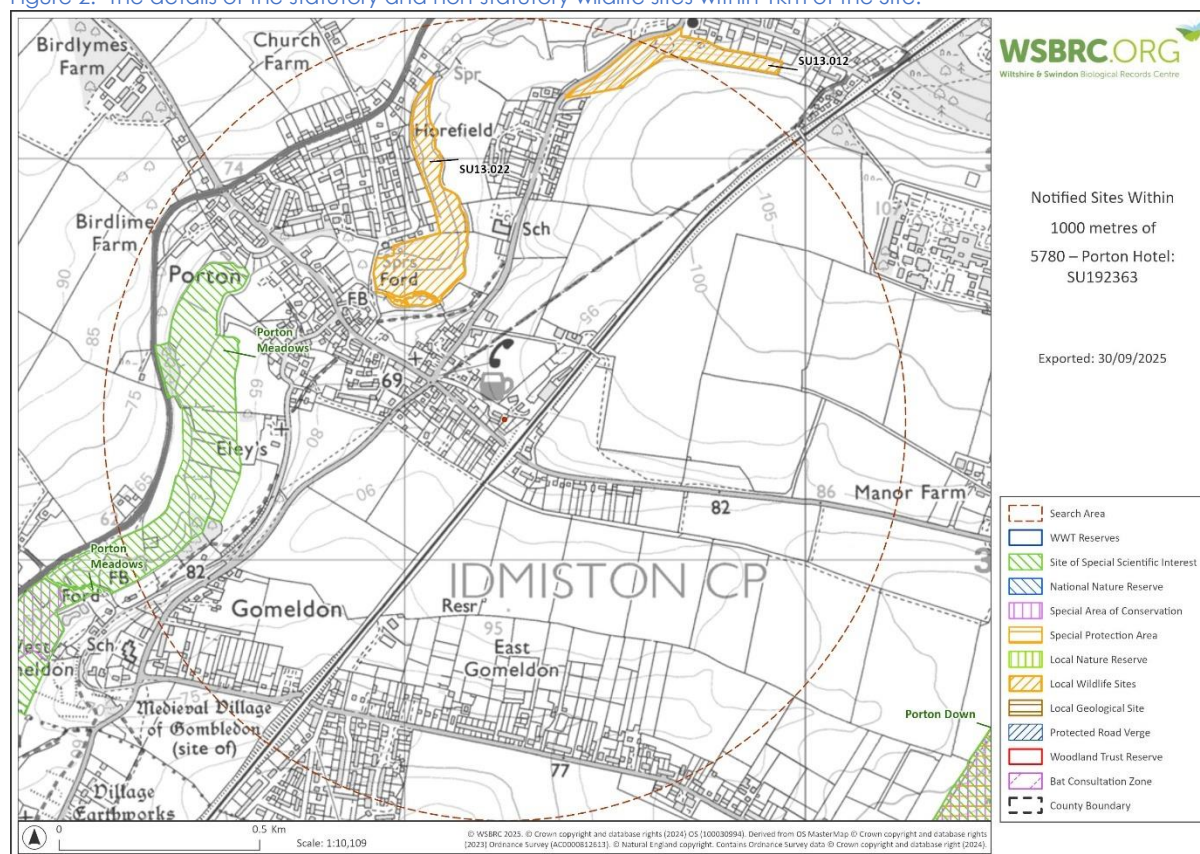
Designation	Name	Area (ha)
SSSI	Porton Meadows	17.3

- 4.2.2. The WSBRC data search confirmed that there were two non-statutory wildlife sites recorded within 1km of the Site, the details of which are in Table 2 and Figure 2 below.

Table 2. The details of the non-statutory wildlife sites within 1km of the site.

Designation	Name	Area (ha)
LWS	Idmiston Down - East	2.6
LWS	Porton Meadow - East	5.02

Figure 2. The details of the statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites within 1km of the Site.



4.2.3. No bat EPSLs have been granted within 1km of the site.

4.2.4. Protected species records for the following taxa recorded within 1km of the Site are set out in Table 3, below.

Table 3. Protected species records within 1km of the Site.

Species name	Number of records
Amphibians	
common frog	28
common toad	9
Birds	
barn owl	9
black redstart	5
corn bunting	2
cuckoo	1
fieldfare	339
garganey	2
greenfinch	105
grey partridge	15
house martin	57
house sparrow	205
kingfisher	14
lapwing	66
linnet	153
merlin	1
mistle thrush	52

nightingale	1
peregrine	1
red kite	51
redwing	260
skylark	30
spotted flycatcher	1
starling	428
stone-curlew	9
swift	83
yellowhammer	52
Mammals	
badger	6
brown hare	2
brown long-eared bat	3
common pipistrelle	40
myotis bat species	2
noctule	10
otter	6
pipistrelle bat species	11
polecat	2
serotine	14
soprano pipistrelle	6
unknown bat species	3
water vole	73
Reptiles	
common lizard	4
grass snake	2
slow worm	83

4.2. Site survey

4.2.1. Habitat type and areas recorded on and adjacent to the Site are set out in Table 4, below.

4.2.2. A UKHab 2.0 map of the site is set out in Figure 4 below.

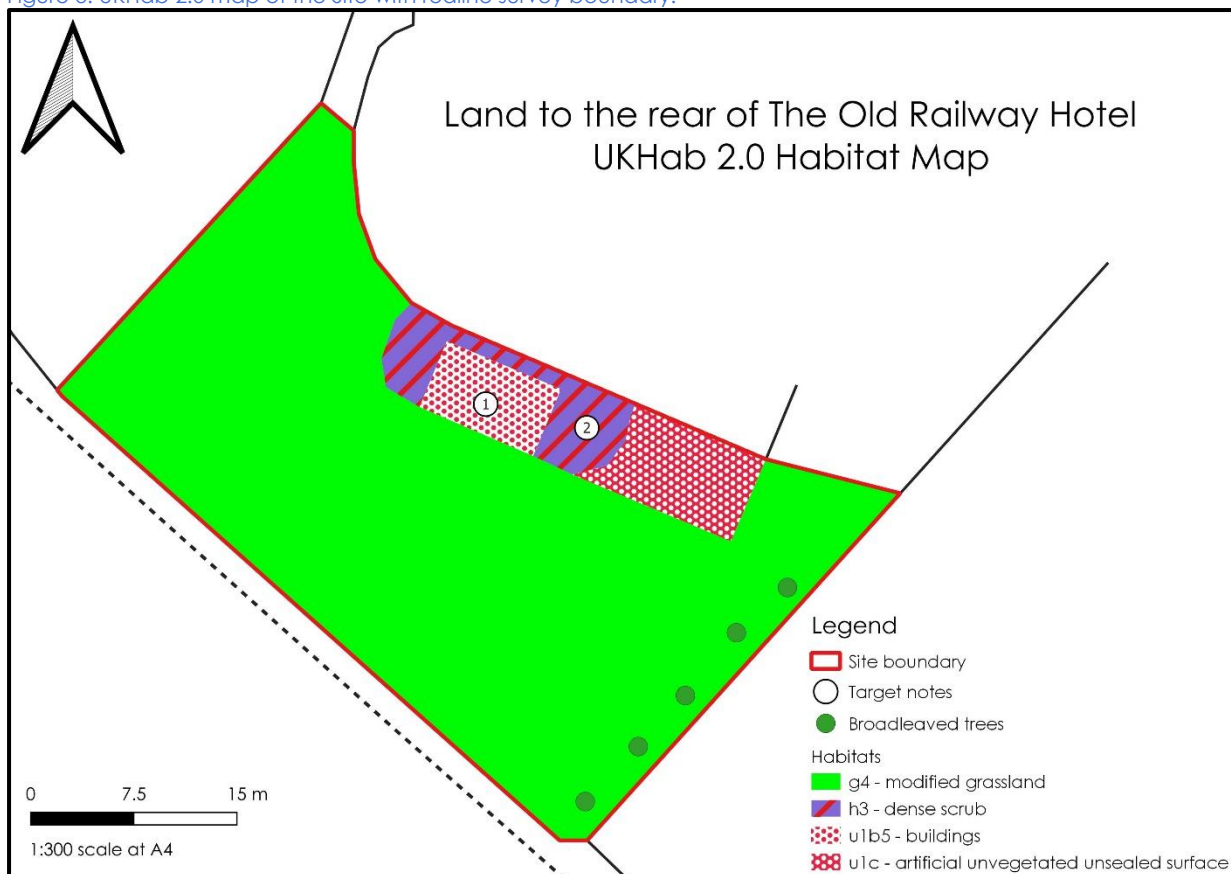
Table 4. UKHab 2.0 types recorded on or adjacent to the Site.

UKHabitat type	Species recorded	Percentage present
g4 -200 – modified grassland – tree	Perennial Rye-grass - <i>Lolium perenne</i>	65%
	Greater plantain – <i>Plantago major</i>	5%
	Common nettle - <i>Urtica dioica</i>	5%
	Common dandelion - <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	5%
	Broad leaved dock – <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	5%
	Bramble – <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	5%
	Yarrow – <i>Achillea millefolium</i>	2.5%

	Cow parsley - <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> Moss species Common ivy - <i>Hedera helix</i> Marsh thistle – <i>Cirsium palustre</i> Trees: Sycamore – <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> Hawthorn - <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	2.5% 2.5% 1.25% 1.25%
h3 – dense scrub target note – had been recently trimmed	Butterfly bush – <i>Buddleja davidii</i> Bramble – <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Unknown
u1b5 - buildings target note – demolished building	-	-
u1c – artificial, unvegetated, unsealed surface	-	-

4.2.3. No category 9 invasive plants were recorded within the survey area.

Figure 3. UKHab 2.0 map of the Site with redline survey boundary.



4.2.4. Table 5 contains details of the potential for protected species and groups to be present.

Table 5. Protected species potential on Site.

Species (group)	Habitat availability	Records	Impact assessment
Amphibians	NEGLIGIBLE	common frog and common toad	The closest pond is over 150m northeast of the Site in a garden centre. No suitable habitats on Site for amphibians.
Badgers	LOW	yes	No evidence recorded on or adjacent to the Site. Records within 1km of Site, therefore LOW potential for commuting badger to pass through Site.
Bats	LOW roost, foraging & commuting	brown long-eared, common pipistrelle, myotis species, noctule, pipistrelle species, serotine, soprano pipistrelle and unknown bat species	Trees on eastern boundary may have PRF's, however there was thick ivy which prevented an accurate assessment of the trees. No trees were marked for removal. Suitable habitat along the east boundary for foraging and commuting bats.
Birds	LOW nesting, foraging and commuting	yes, see table 4	Suitable nesting and foraging habitat in the trees along the eastern boundary. May have been suitable habitat in recently trimmed scrub on Site.
Dormice	NEGLIGIBLE	no	Habitats on Site do not connect to the wider environment.
Otter	NEGLIGIBLE	yes	no suitable habitat recorded on Site. The nearest river is over 200m north of the Site boundary with significant linear and urban boundaries.
Reptiles	LOW	common lizard, grass snake and slow worm	Suitable habitat on the east boundary of the Site under the treeline. May have been suitable habitat in recently trimmed scrub on Site.
Water vole	NEGLIGIBLE	yes	no suitable habitat recorded on Site. The nearest river is over 200m north of the Site boundary with significant linear and urban boundaries.

5. Ecological constraints and opportunities

5.2. Designated nature conservation sites

- 5.2.1. The WSBRC data search confirmed that there was one statutory and two non-statutory wildlife sites recorded within 1km of the Site. The nearest non-statutory wildlife site, Porton Meadow – East LWS, is located approximately 320m to the northwest of the Site boundary.

- 5.2.2. It is considered highly unlikely that the proposed development will have a significant negative impact to the conservation status of any of the statutory or non-statutory wildlife sites present within 1km of the Site.

5.3. Habitats

- 5.3.1. The proposed development of the Site will result in the modification and loss of g4 – modified grassland and the demolished building foundation. The modified grassland habitat is widespread in the area and as such, the impact is assessed to be restricted to Site level.
- 5.3.2. None of the trees on the eastern Site boundary are marked for removal.
- 5.3.3. The statutory metric was run on the 23rd October 2025, the proposed development will yield a 65.47% net loss in biodiversity on site. The proposed development will require 0.74 area habitat units to achieve 10% biodiversity net gain. See Appendix 2 for full results.

5.4. Fauna

- 5.4.1. The Site predominantly had NEGLIGIBLE and LOW potential for protected species (groups).
- 5.4.2. The trees on the eastern boundary of the Site may have PRF's for bats present, however due to the thick ivy growth, an accurate assessment could not be made. Since the trees are not marked for removal, the Site was assessed to have LOW bat roost, foraging and commuting potential.
- 5.4.3. There should be no additional external lighting to ensure that there is no change to the ambient night time light levels as a result of the proposed development.
- 5.4.4. There was LOW potential for nesting birds to be impacted by the works since the trees are not marked for removal on the eastern Site boundary. There was also LOW potential for foraging and commuting birds to pass through Site.
- 5.4.5. There may have been suitable habitats in the scrub prior to strimming and in the tree line on the eastern boundary for reptiles. However, since the scrub has since been trimmed and the trees are not marked for removal, the Site was assessed as having LOW potential.
- 5.4.6. Due to the number of records and some suitable habitat surrounding the Site, there was LOW potential for commuting or foraging badger to pass through Site.

- 5.4.7. Any ground excavation works should be fenced off at the end of the work day with Herris fencing to prevent access to terrestrial mammals. Any excavation works should include a ramp to installed as an exit route for any animals that may fall in.
- 5.4.8. If any protected species are found during construction, works should stop immediately and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted.

5.5. Requirements

Habitat enhancement measures:

- 5.5.1. One Vivaro Pro bat brick - https://www.nhbs.com/build-in-woodstone-bat-box-uk-brick-size?bkfno=256321&ca_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23069538718&gclid=CjwKCAjwpOfHBhAxEiwAm1SwEtHbtQRcBLdXZO1BhIP2bYdHIUtZvUROy_PBYcieZnCh83EKSt8T-BoCy_sQAvD_BwE. Installed at a height of at least 3m above the ground on the west elevation of each new building.
- 5.5.2. One Woodstone bird box - https://www.birdfood.co.uk/national-trust-woodstone-32mm-nest-box-green?utm_source=google_shopping&gclid=EAlalQobChMI-ef86JqD_glVjdPtCh21_QonEAQYASABEgLZcPD_BwE. Installed at a height of at least 3m above the ground on a west elevation of each new building.
- 5.5.3. One insect block - https://www.birdfood.co.uk/woodstone-insect-block-grey?utm_source=google_shopping&gclid=EAlalQobChMIrZm8-ZqD_glVEmHmCh2g5g_FEAQYAiABEgJu4fD_BwE. Installed at a height of 1.5m above the ground on a south facing tree or on each new building.

6. References

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- Rose, F. (1981) *The Wild Flower Key*; Frederick Warne
- Rose, F. (1989) *Colour Identification Guide to the Grasses, Sedges, Rushes and Ferns of the British Isles and North Western Europe*; Viking
- UKHab Ltd (2023) *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (<https://www.ukhab.org/>)

7. Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – Site photographs

Photo 1 – top of Site, facing southeast



Photo 2 – top of Site, facing southwest



Photo 3 – foundations of demolished building



Photo 4 – pile of recently strimmed scrub



Photo 5 – bottom of Site, facing trees on eastern boundary



Photo 6 – bottom of site facing southern boundary



APPENDIX 2 – Biodiversity net gain results

Land to the rear of the Old Railway Hotel

Return to results menu

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ▲

On-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.98	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.34	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	-0.64	-65.47%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

On-site net gain is less than target set ▲

Off-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-0.64	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	

Ensure bespoke compensation has been agreed where stated ▲

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-0.64	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	-65.47%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	

Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲

Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲
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Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.98	1.07	0.74
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

Input errors/rule breaks present in metric ▲