



EXTENDED PHASE 1 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

LAND IN EAST GRAFTON, MARLBOROUGH, WILTSHIRE,
SN8 3DB

FINAL REPORT

January 2026

Report conditions

<i>Report title</i>	Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment –Land in East Grafton, Marlborough		
<i>Client</i>	Fowler Architecture and Planning on behalf of the applicant		
<i>Report status</i>	Final		
<i>Survey date</i>	21/06/2023		
<i>Written by</i>	Izabel Phillips	<i>Date</i>	01/09/2023
<i>Amended by</i>	Izabel Phillips	<i>Date</i>	06/08/2024
<i>Updated by</i>	Elizabeth Emery ACIEEM PCAQT	<i>Date</i>	28/01/2026

Disclaimers

This report has been prepared by Phillips Ecology for the sole use of the client named above. Survey work, assessment, and report writing have been undertaken with all reasonable skill and care, and unless otherwise explicitly stated, is appropriate only for the work, scheme, or project brief provided by the client and intended purposes. The report may not be relied upon by any other party without the express agreement of the client and Phillips Ecology. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report.

Where data, drawings, plans or other technical information has been provided to Phillips Ecology for the purposes of preparation of this report, either by the client, their agents or other parties (including but not limited to biological data sets, laboratory results, and mapping), it has been assumed that the information is correct. No responsibility can be accepted by Phillips Ecology for inaccuracies in such data supplied by other parties.

No part of this report may be copied or duplicated without the express permission of Phillips Ecology and the client. Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work, under standard limitations of access to third party land and other limitations as described in the report.

It is the client's responsibility to note and comply as necessary with any recommendations made in this report, planning conditions derived from these, and any relevant licensing regimes. Phillips Ecology bears no responsibility for any failure to note and comply with legal requirements for works carried out by or on behalf of the client at the above site and for the project this report has been produced to support.

Executive Summary

- This extended phase 1 ecological assessment report has been prepared in order to support a planning application for the construction of a new dwelling on land in East Grafton, Marlborough SN8 3DB.
- An extended phase 1 ecological assessment of the application site was undertaken on the 21st June 2023.
- Report updates were subsequently written on the 28th January 2026, after confirming the land use and habitat conditions remained the same as the initial survey conducted in 2023.
- The site included the whole area within the application boundary.
- A data search extended to a 2km radius for statutory designated sites, and 1km radius for protected and priority species and priority habitats.
- The site itself comprises modified grassland with a small area of bare ground. The boundaries of the site are defined by stock fencing and native hedgerow.
- The site is considered to support suitability for foraging bats, badger and hedgehog, and low suitability for reptiles.
- Mitigation and precautionary avoidance measures have been provided for foraging and commuting bats, badger, hedgehog and common reptiles.
- Example enhancement measures aimed at improving biodiversity at the site have been provided.
- Information regarding the length of time the findings of this report are valid for can be found in Section 13.
- The proposal is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

Contents

Report conditions	ii
Executive Summary	iii
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Report purpose	1
1.2 Description of proposal	1
1.3 Report context	1
1.4 Scope of assessment	1
1.5 Survey area	1
1.6 Limitations	1
2. Data search	2
2.1 Methodology	2
2.2 Limitations	2
2.3 Results	2
2.3.1 Statutory designated sites	2
2.3.2 Ancient woodlands	2
2.3.3 Priority habitats	3
2.3.4 Protected species	3
3. Habitats	4
3.1 Methodology	4
3.2 Limitations	4
3.3 Existing records	4
3.4 Results	4
3.4.1 Modified grassland (g4)	4
3.4.2 Artificial unsealed surface	5
3.4.3 Native hedgerow	5
3.5 Assessment	5
4. Protected and notable species assessment	6
5. Bats	7
5.1 Methodology	7
5.2 Assessment methodology	7
5.3 Limitations	7
5.4 Results	8
5.5 Assessment	8
6. Badger	8
6.1 Methodology	8
6.2 Limitations	8
6.3 Existing records	8
6.4 Results	8
6.5 Assessment	8
7. Hazel dormouse	8
7.1 Methodology	8
7.2 Limitations	9
7.3 Existing records	9
7.4 Results	9

7.5	Assessment.....	9
8.	Hedgehog	9
8.1	Methodology	9
8.2	Limitations	9
8.3	Existing records.....	9
8.4	Results	9
8.5	Assessment.....	10
9.	Reptiles	10
9.1	Methodology	10
9.2	Limitations	10
9.3	Existing data.....	10
9.4	Results	10
9.5	Assessment.....	10
10.	Great Crested Newt	10
10.1	Methodology	10
10.2	Limitations	11
10.3	Existing records.....	11
10.4	Results	11
10.5	Assessment.....	11
11.	Breeding birds	11
11.1	Methodology	11
11.2	Limitations	11
11.3	Results	11
11.4	Assessment.....	12
12.	Discussion and Assessment of Impacts	13
12.1	Relevant legislation and policy	13
12.2	Designated sites.....	13
12.3	Habitats	13
12.4	Bats	14
12.5	Badger.....	14
12.6	Hazel dormouse	14
12.7	Hedgehog.....	14
12.8	Reptiles	14
12.9	Great crested newt.....	14
12.10	Breeding birds.....	14
13.	Requirement for further surveys.....	16
13.1	Bats	16
13.2	Badger.....	16
13.3	Hazel Dormouse.....	16
13.4	Hedgehog.....	16
13.5	Reptiles	16
13.6	Great Crested Newt.....	16
13.7	Breeding birds	16
14.	Mitigation recommendations.....	17
14.1	Introduction.....	17
14.2	Bats	17
14.3	Reptiles	17
14.4	Badger and hedgehog.....	18

15.	Enhancements	18
16.	Conclusion	19
17.	References	20
Appendix 1 – Application Site		27
Appendix 2 – Existing Habitat Map		28

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 new dwelling on land in East Grafton, Marlborough SN8 3DB located at SU 2551 6054.

1.2 Description of proposal

The current proposals are for the construction of a new dwelling within the northern area of the site, with associated garage and parking areas.

1.3 Report context

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 21st June 2023. The survey consisted of a field survey and desktop study in order to identify notable or protected sites, habitats or species potentially affected by the proposal under consideration. Updates were subsequently made on the 28th January 2026, following a change in landowner and planning proposals.

1.5 Survey area

The survey area comprised the site within the redline boundary, which included the existing paddock.

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 28th January 2026 with Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). The MAGIC database was consulted for records of statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the application site and a 1km radius for priority and protected species and habitats.

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

No statutory designated sites are located within a 2km radius of the application site. However, the site falls within the following Impact Risk Zone. Details are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Details of Designated sites within a 2km radius of the site

Site Name	Approx. distance and direction from the site	Reason for designation
Botley Down SSSI Impact Risk Zone	0km	The application site is located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for the River Test SSSI. The IRZ identifies that at this location, only the following proposals would be likely to have a harmful effect on the SSSI: ❓ Infrastructure: Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals. ❓ Air Pollution: Livestock & poultry units with floorspace > 500m², slurry lagoons > 750m² & manure stores > 3500t. ❓ Combustion: General combustion processes >50MW energy input. Incl: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/combustion. ❓ Discharge: Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 5m³/day to ground (i.e. to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream (NB This does not include discharges to mains sewer which are unlikely to pose a risk at this location).

2.3.2 Ancient woodlands

No blocks of ancient woodlands are located within a 1km radius of the application site, these are detailed in Table 2, below.

2.3.3 *Priority habitats*

The data search revealed the following priority habitats within 1km of the application site, the distance to the closest and direction is provided in brackets:

- Deciduous woodland (0.135km W)

2.3.4 *Protected species*

The data search revealed no records for protected species relating to European Protected Species (EPS) Mitigation licences or EPS survey licence returns within a 1km radius of the site.

3. Habitats

3.1 Methodology

The field survey was carried out on the 21st June 2023, by Izabel Phillips 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 UKHabs terminology. The habitats were confirmed to have remained the same classification and conditions in January 2026.

3.2 Limitations

No limitations to the survey were identified.

3.3 Existing records

The data search identified one priority habitat within the 1km radius, the closest block of deciduous woodland, is located 135m west of the site boundary.

3.4 Results

The site itself comprises a paddock which is utilised for grazing or hay. The paddock is entirely composed of modified grassland with a small area of unsealed surface which supports a water trough. The site is enclosed in stock fencing and a stretch of native hedgerow which runs along the A338 to the north.

The immediate landscape is predominantly rural in nature, comprising further grazed pasture and arable fields interspersed with a network of mature hedgerows and blocks of woodland.

The following UKHabs habitat types were recorded within the survey site.

3.4.1 Modified grassland (g4)

The site majority comprises modified grassland which has been sown and managed for the benefit of grazing. At the time of the survey, the grassland was ungrazed and unmown and had reached a uniform height over 70cm. The grassland is dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* with creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and white clover *Trifolium repens* and creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*.



Figure 1 – modified grassland within the application site.



Figure 2 –modified grassland within the application site.

3.4.2 *Artificial unsealed surface*

A small area of compacted hardcore forms a base for a water trough adjacent to the western site boundary.



Figure 3 – hardstanding beneath the water trough.

3.4.3 *Native hedgerow*

A 35m length of native hedgerow defines the northern boundary of the application site. The hedgerow is composed of the following species: hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, elder *Sambucus nigra* and spindle *Euonymus europaeus*.



Figure 4 – northern boundary native hedgerow

3.5 **Assessment**

The application site comprises a modified grassland paddock with a small area of artificial surface which supports the water trough. A native species hedgerow forms the northern boundary of the application 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
- Badger
- Hazel dormouse
- Hedgehog
- Reptiles
- Great crested newt
- 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.

<i>Grading criteria</i>	<i>Justification</i>
<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

There are no buildings or trees that will be affected by the proposal within the site, and therefore the bat survey considered the suitability of the on-site habitats for foraging and commuting bats only. This involve assessing the structure of the habitats present and their perceived value for foraging bats. In addition, the presence of suitable offsite foraging habitat was assessed and whether the site was connected to them.

5.2 Assessment methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support foraging and commuting bats in accordance with the BCT Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)(Table 3).

Table 3: Bat foraging suitability assessment guidelines

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Foraging/Commuting Habitats</i>
<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 tree, 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.

5.3 Limitations

No limitations were encountered during the course of the survey.

5.4 Results

Given the rural nature of the site and the mature trees and hedgerows present within close proximity of the site, it is considered likely that bats would forage and commute through the site. However, the site is dominated by modified grassland pasture which is common and widespread in the wider site.

5.5 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria set out in Table 3, the site is considered to support moderate suitability for bats as a foraging resource.

6. Badger

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

Phillips Ecology are not aware of records of badger in the vicinity of the site, although given the rural location it is considered that the species would likely be present.

6.4 Results

No evidence of badger activity, residence or foraging, was recorded during the survey. However, the site is located in a rural location and therefore it is considered that the species would likely be present in the local area, and therefore could access the site for foraging. Permanent grassland is considered to be an optimal foraging habitat for badgers and the site and wider area support extensive areas of this habitat type.

6.5 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 3 the site is considered to provide high potential for foraging badgers. This assessment is based on the rural location of the site and likely presence in the surrounding landscape.

7. Hazel dormouse

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

The data search did not reveal any records hazel dormouse within the 1km search radius.

7.4 Results

The habitats which will be impacted (modified grassland and hardstanding) are considered to be unsuitable for dormice because they do not support resources that would be required to support the species. The northern boundary hedgerow supports a suitable assemblage of woody species for dormice and the structure and connectivity supported by the hedgerow are favourable for the species. However, the hedgerow will be retained and protected by the proposal.

7.5 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 3, the areas of habitat that will be affected by the application are considered to support negligible potential for hazel dormice. This assessment is based on the lack of any suitable habitats on the site.

8. Hedgehog

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 Existing records

The data search did not reveal any records of hedgehogs within the 1km search radius.

8.4 Results

No evidence of hedgehogs, such as droppings, were recorded during the survey. However, the habitats on the site include pasture which is considered suitable for hedgehogs as a foraging resource. The hedgerow habitats is considered highly suitable for hedgehogs as a foraging resource, for nesting and hibernating.

8.5 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 3, there is considered to be high potential for hedgehogs 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 data

Phillips Ecology is unaware of any existing data for common reptiles.

9.4 Results

The application site supports modified grassland which has been left ungrazed during the spring and early summer. Whilst the structure of the grassland does support suitability for reptiles, reptile populations do not typically thrive in agricultural settings due to the frequent changing conditions of site habitats due to mowing and grazing. Any populations would likely be restricted to field margins where habitats are often subject less change. Reptile populations would be expected to expand and recede into available habitat from the field margins.

9.5 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 3, there is considered to be low potential for reptiles to occur on site.

10. Great Crested Newt

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 European-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

There are no positive GCN records within a 1km radius of the application site. The closest positive records for the species are 6km to the north and east.

10.4 Results

No standing waterbodies are located within a 500m radius of the application site. As such, there is considered to be no reasonable likelihood that the application site supports GCN.

10.5 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 3, the site is considered to support negligible potential for GCN.

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 in respect of breeding birds.

11.3 Results

During the survey the following species were recorded on, or flying over the site; house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*, barn swallow *Hirundo rustica*, goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* and great tit *Parus major*.

11.4 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 3, hedgerow within the application site supports suitability for blackbird, wren and gold finch. No further habitats with nesting suitability are present within the application site.

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 (such as great crested newt) 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 Habitat 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

There are no statutory designated sites located within a 2km radius of the site, nor does fall within statutory impact risk zone where mitigation measures would be required. Impacts on statutory designated sites are therefore not anticipated.

12.3 Habitats

The proposals will result in the loss of grassland that is assessed to be in poor condition, due to poor species diversity. The grassland was identified as supporting species that are common and widespread locally and nationally, with no rare or important assemblages of species identified. The habitat features of highest value is considered to be the native hedgerow, however, this will not be impacted by the proposals.

The impacts will occur to only a small area of a much larger site, and grassland habitats across the remainder the site will be retained.

Given the quality of the vegetation on the site, impacts on vegetation as a result of the proposals are considered to be low.

12.4 Bats

With regard to foraging and commuting bats, the site as a whole is considered to provide high suitability, however, the areas subject to the proposed works are small and lack any structured or mature habitats. Impacts on foraging and commuting bats will be associated with any increase in lighting at the site, rather than the removal of any areas of vegetation.

12.5 Badger

No conclusive evidence of badgers was recorded on the site and therefore the species is considered to be absent from the site as a resident. However, given the rural location of the site and habitats beyond its boundaries, it is considered that the species will be present in the local area.

Impacts will be associated with the construction phase, and any deep excavations that may be required, particularly if they are left uncovered overnight.

12.6 Hazel dormouse

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support suitability for dormice. Impacts on hazel dormouse are not anticipated.

12.7 Hedgehog

No evidence of hedgehog was recorded, but the site as a whole is considered highly suitable. The habitats to be impacted will be associated with the loss of foraging habitat and if deep excavations are left uncovered during the construction phase.

12.8 Reptiles

The site is considered to support low potential for common reptiles. Given the limited extent of suitable habitat available and its recent establishment in an agricultural setting, impacts on reptiles are considered low and can be mitigated through the implementation of precautionary measures.

12.9 Great crested newt

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support suitability for GCN, and the likelihood of the species being present is considered negligible. Impacts on GCN are not anticipated.

12.10 Breeding birds

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support suitability for nesting birds, therefore direct impacts on nesting birds are not anticipated.

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.

It is important that planning decisions are informed by the most up-to-date ecological survey information. As a result, there is a limited time frame that phase 1 and phase 2 surveys are valid before becoming outdated. This time frame can vary depending on any changes to the proposed project plans, but it is generally considered that phase 1 ecological surveys are valid for a period of 18 months (CIEEM, 2019). Where projects run for a longer period than 18 months, there may be the requirement to carry out further ecological surveys to ensure planning authorities have the most up-to-date survey information in order that they can make well informed, evidence-based decisions.

13.1 **Bats**

No further surveys are considered necessary for understanding impacts on foraging and commuting bats subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14.

13.2 **Badger**

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

13.3 **Hazel Dormouse**

Given that no habitat with suitability for the species will be impacted by the proposal, no further surveys are considered necessary.

13.4 **Hedgehog**

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

13.5 **Reptiles**

Given the lack of suitable habitat for reptiles to occur on the site, no further surveys are considered necessary.

13.6 **Great Crested Newt**

Given the absence of ponds within 500m of the application site, no further surveys are considered necessary.

13.7 **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 Introduction

The overarching aim of the ecological survey and assessment work carried out at the site is to inform the planning proposals in order to demonstrate how the development can proceed whilst avoiding or mitigating impacts on ecological receptors. The 'mitigation hierarchy' is an accepted approach which guides this process. The first consideration should always be to design a scheme that avoids the identified impact. Where this is not possible the next step should be to mitigate any impacts that cannot be avoided. The third, which should be used as a last resort, is compensation: this should only be used to off-set any unavoidable impacts.

14.2 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 and operational phases. The following lighting measures are recommended:

- ❑ Construction works between March and October should be undertaken during daylight hours only to avoid disturbance to bats that may forage and commute through or near the site.
- ❑ All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT, 2023).
- ❑ The brightness of the lighting should be as low as possible (for example bollard lighting) and kept at a low level and directed away from the boundary features. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them and, should be turned off when not required.

14.3 Reptiles

Given the limited extent of suitable habitat available and its recent establishment in an agricultural setting, it is not considered necessary to carry out further presence/likely absence surveys. However, it is recommended that a precautionary approach to the removal of this habitat is adopted. This is detailed as follows.

Pre-construction

Any tall grassland within application site will be cut to ground level in a two-stage process. The grassland will be strimmed to 15cm and then cut to ground level the next day. Cutting the vegetation in this manner is consistent with the typical management of the site and will ensure that any reptiles are persuaded into adjacent habitats prior to commencement of the development.

Construction phase

No accumulations of brash or rubble should be stored within the building footprint or works area, to prevent reptiles from using them for basking and/or egg laying.

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.

Materials must be stored on unvegetated areas of the site, and not the wider site, where suitable reptile habitats will be retained.

All trenches will be left covered at night. They must be checked in the morning before they are filled in.

14.4 **Badger and hedgehog**

All trenches excavated during the construction phase of the development should be covered overnight or fitted with earth or wooden ramps to enable any badgers and hedgehogs which become trapped to escape.

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:

- ② The modified grassland within the application site boundary but outside the footprint of the proposed works will be enhanced through changes to the management whereby the mowing/grazing regime is reduced, to enhance sward diversity. This will involve an early spring cut, followed by a second later autumn cut to allow grasses and herbs to seed. The grassland will also be sown with a neutral grassland seed mix, which will improve species diversity and provide a rich nectar source for invertebrates.
- ② Small native trees will be planted within the retained grassland areas.
- ② A new native species hedgerow will be planted around the perimeter of the application site.

16. Conclusion

The extended phase 1 ecological assessment has confirmed that the site does not support any priority habitats or assemblages of notable species.

The site supports suitability foraging and commuting bats, hedgehog and foraging badger. The site is considered to provide low suitability for common reptile species.

Precautionary measures have been provided to ensure impacts on protected species are avoided.

Opportunities for enhancements have been provided.

17. References

- **Altringham J D, 2003**, British Bats, Collins New Naturalist
- **Anon, 2001**, *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines*, English Nature, Peterborough.
- **Barn Owl Trust, 2012**, *Barn Owl Conservation Handbook*. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.
- **Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2017**. *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. CIEEM, Winchester
- **Clark, M. 2017**, *Badgers*. Whittet Books Ltd, Essex
- **Collins, J. (ed.) (2023)** *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
- **English Nature, 2002**, Barn owls on site – A guide for developers and planners
- **Gent T and Gibson S 1998** *Herpetofauna Workers Manual JNCC*
- **Hill, D., Fasham, M., Tucker, G., Shewry, M., Shaw, P. (2005)** *Handbook of Biodiversity Methods – Survey, Evaluation and Monitoring*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- **ILP and BCT, 2023** *Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night: Guidance Note GN08/23*. ILP, Warwickshire.
- **Joint Nature Conservation Committee. 1993**. *A Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Peterborough: Joint Nature Conservation Committee.
- **Mitchell Jones AJ, 2004**, *Bat Mitigation guidelines*, English Nature
- **Mitchell Jones AJ and McLeish A P, The Bat Workers Manual, JNCC**
- **Morris, P. A. (2006)** *The New Hedgehog Book*. London, Whittet Books.
- **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**, Ch 3, s. 40
- **Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. 2000**. *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)*. Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143 - 155.
- **Pearce G. E., 2011**, *Badger Behaviour, Conservation & Rehabilitation*. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter.
- **Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win I. (2021)**. The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds* 114: 723-747.

Appendix 1 – Application Site



Appendix 2 – Existing Habitat Map

Land in East Grafton - On-site Habitat Existing



Map contains Google Satellite Imagery

Scale 1:500

PHILLIPS
ECOLOGY

KEY

- Red Line Boundary
- Hedgerow
 - Native hedgerow
- Habitats
 - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
 - Modified grassland

Map produced using Biodiversity
Metric QGIS Template



07760 208562

info@phillipsecology.co.uk

www.phillipsecology.co.uk

Hampshire office:
Clifton Cottage
Bucks Head Hill
Meonstoke
Hampshire
SO323NA

