



Broadchalke Road, Bishopstone,
Wiltshire

Ecological Appraisal

Project No

EC1973

Client

Cherrington Planning

Date

January 2026



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Technical check completed by:

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The advice which we have prepared and provided is true to the best of our knowledge and utilises information available at the time. The advice has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct.

Quality check completed by:

Kirsten Davison

Date

January 2026

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Summary

enims Ltd were commissioned to carry out a Ecological Appraisal (EA) of the site at Broadchalke Road situated near Bishopstone in Wiltshire (Grid Reference SU 07542 26336). This work was undertaken to support a planning application for a proposed residential development of the application site.

The main part of application site was of an agricultural nature, comprising modified grassland and old farm buildings relating to keeping of cattle. Small areas of woodland and scrub habitat was present within the main site and scrub and scattered individual trees were found along the boundary. A proposed sewage treatment area to the south of the development footprint was part of a wider, sheep grazed field that supported modified grassland. The habitats were species-poor but have potential to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats, nesting birds and reptiles.

The application site falls within the nutrient and recreational pressure catchment areas of important statutory designated nature conservation sites for which mitigation will be required. The sewage treatment area lies within coastal and floodplain grazing marsh habitat of principal importance and chalk river habitat is nearby. Pollution control measures will be required during works.

Prior to works commencing an updating badger survey should be conducted to confirm that no setts have been established which could be impacted by the works. Precautionary working methods should be followed during site clearance works with respect to badger, reptiles, nesting birds and other mammals.

The project is required to achieve 10% biodiversity net gain. Areas within the red line boundary have been designated specifically for habitat creation and enhancement measures in order to meet this statutory requirement.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local policy encourages projects to implement ecological enhancements. It is recommended that a biodiversity enhancement plan is produced to demonstrate the enhancements that will be incorporated into the development.



1 Introduction

1.1 Background to Commission

enims Ltd was commissioned by Cherrington Planning in January 2026 to undertake an Ecological Appraisal (EA) at Broadchalke Road situated near Bishopstone in Wiltshire (Grid Reference SU 07542 26336). The appraisal was carried out in order to provide baseline ecological information about the site and to identify any potential ecological constraints associated with the proposed development of the application site. The appraisal is being undertaken to support a planning application.

A previous EA was carried out on the same site by enims Ltd in January 2025. The appraisal was informed by habitat site visits carried out in June 2023, July 2024 and September 2024. Following comments from the council on the initial planning application, the scheme has been reduced in size and a new planning application is to be submitted. Due to the time passed since the last site visits, and the changeable nature of ecological data, an updated site survey was required to provide current information about the site and confirm no significant changes have occurred.

1.2 Scope of Report

The purpose of this EA is to: establish the current biodiversity value of the site, identify and assess any potential ecological constraints/impacts associated with the proposed development, and to provide recommendations for additional survey work if required. Avoidance, mitigation/compensation and/or enhancement measures are recommended where necessary to ensure compliance. The assessment is based on the following information sources:

- A desk study of the site and a 2km surrounding radius
- A habitat survey of the site boundary and immediate surrounds, in order to map habitats and identify features with potential to support protected or otherwise notable species
Reptile survey conducted by enims Ltd in 2024
- Design plans by DMW Architects 'Location and Block Plans – PL01 – Rev B (January 2026).

1.3 Site Description

The application site is located off Broadchalke Road near Bishopstone (around grid reference SU 07542 26336) and is situated within the administrative authority of Wiltshire Council. The application site includes the main development footprint to the north of Broadchalke Road and a proposed sewage treatment area to the south of the road. The main development footprint is approximately 1.2ha in size and mainly comprises of a grass field with trees and buildings. The sewage treatment area is approximately 0.2ha in size and is located within larger a grassland field.

Plans showing the location of the site and surrounding landscape are included in Figures 1 and 2 in Appendix A.

1.4 Project Overview

Proposals are for a residential development comprising 9 units with gardens and associated parking and access. Communal green space is proposed in the form of grassland and retention of existing wooded habitat. An area to the north of the new housing has been allocated specifically for habitat creation and enhancement. A package treatment plant will be installed in the area to the south of the road, connected to the residential development via drainage installed under the road, and the area will be enhanced following installation.

1.5 Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

The following key pieces of nature conservation legislation are relevant to this appraisal. A more detailed description of relevant legislation is provided in Appendix B:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 (as amended) /Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations);
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, as amended.

The National Planning Policy Framework (DfCLG, 2024) requires local authorities to avoid and minimise impacts on biodiversity and, where possible, to provide net gains in biodiversity when making planning decisions. Paragraph 187 states that “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geographical value and soils*”. Paragraph 193 sets out the principles that local planning authorities should apply when determining planning application and states that “*development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around development should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity*”.

Other planning policies at the local level, which are of relevance to this development, include CP50 and CP69 of Wiltshire Council’s Core Strategy 2015, which satisfies their obligations under the NERC Act. These two core policies require the protection of important nature sites, habitats and species in relation to development and seek enhancement for the benefit of biodiversity through the planning system. Wiltshire Council requires major applications to demonstrate a net gain for biodiversity through the use of Natural England’s Biodiversity Net Gain Metric.

2 Methodology

2.1 Overview

This EA has been prepared with reference to best practice as published by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017) and complies with British Standard 42020:2013 (BSI, 2013).

2.2 Desk Study

A desk study was carried out to determine if any statutory land designations occur within 2km of the site. Statutory nature designations, Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) and Ancient Woodland sites were identified using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (www.magic.gov.uk). Records of granted Natural England species licences from within 2km of the application site were also searched for using the MAGIC website. The Woodland Trust online Ancient Tree Inventory (<http://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk>) was reviewed for the locations of known ancient and veteran trees. Information provided on Wiltshire Council website for council owned countryside sites, country parks and open spaces was reviewed for the presence of any non-statutory designated nature sites located on site or within 2km (www.wiltshire.gov.uk).

Aerial photographs were reviewed to identify any habitats surrounding the site, or wildlife corridors connecting the site to other habitats. Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photographs and the MAGIC website were used to identify the presence of water bodies within 500m of the site, in order to establish if the land within the site could be used as terrestrial habitat for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*).

Records of non-statutory nature conservation site and protected or otherwise notable species within the site and up to 2km from the site boundary were obtained from the Wiltshire Council website (www.wiltshire.gov.uk).

The status of species is taken directly from the relevant legislation; the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework', local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and Birds of Conservation Concern (Stanbury et al. 2021)¹.

Scientific names are given following the species first mention. Thereafter, only common names are used.

2.3 Site Survey

The site survey was conducted on 23rd December 2025. Weather conditions on that day were overcast with temperatures around 7 °C.

The site survey was undertaken by Fraser Gurney, a Senior Consultant Ecologist at enims Ltd and an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM). Fraser is experienced in a wide range of field survey techniques and has particular expertise in bat and bird ecology, where he holds a Level 1 Bat Licence.

A habitat survey of the site was carried out, covering the entire area within the red line boundary, including any boundary features of interest. Habitats were described and recorded broadly in accordance with UK Habitat classification Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023). Habitats were also assessed

¹ The Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern refer to bird species of particular conservation concern for a number of reasons. In general terms, Red list species are globally threatened showing severe recent declines in population. Amber list species are species either with unfavourable conservation status or those species showing moderate recent declines in population; they may also include particularly localised species.

using the Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) criteria, as set out by JNCC (BRIG, ed. A. Maddock, 2011). HPI are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Incidental records of birds and other fauna noted during the course of the habitat survey were also compiled. The presence of invasive or injurious plant species as defined by Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were also recorded.

2.4 Protected Species Assessment

The habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species using a combination of desk study information and field observations carried out during the habitat survey. The assessment was based on professional judgement and best practice survey guidance methodology for identifying field signs of protected species. The potential for protected species presence was based on the following criteria:

- **Present** – Confirmed presence through first hand survey evidence or recent verified records
- **High Potential** – Local records highlight presence in the local vicinity. The site and immediate surrounds support good quality habitat or good connectivity to such habitat
- **Moderate Potential** – Habitat within the site provides key elements for any species or species group, although may be limited by factors including habitat area, isolation or disturbance. Desk study records highlight presence in proximity to site
- **Low Potential** – On-site habitat is of low or moderate quality for any species or species group, lacking key elements and limited by factors including habitat fragmentation and habitat area. Few or absence of local records, but within national distribution and thus cannot be completely discounted.
- **Negligible Potential** – Habitats within the site are very poor quality or completely absent for any species or species group. Desk study records are absent, the site is outside of the normal range of the species or species group, and the surrounding habitat is unlikely to support wider populations. Presence cannot be completely ruled out but it is considered 'reasonably unlikely' to support any species or species group.

When assigning a level of bat roosting potential (none, negligible, low, moderate or high) to a feature, the descriptions in Table 1 were considered.

Table 1. Criteria for the potential of features and habitats to support roosting and foraging/commuting bats (Collins, 2023).

Suitability	Description of roosting habitat	Commuting or foraging habitat
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels.)	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible	Negligible habitat features on-site likely to be used by roosting bats	Negligible habitat features on-site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
Low	A structure with one of more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gapped hedgerow or un-vegetated stream, but isolated, i.e., not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.

	surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.	Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees 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.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Continuous, high quality habitat that is a well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees 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.

2.5 Site Evaluation

An evaluation of the site was carried out in accordance with guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2016), which ranks the nature conservation value of a site according to a geographic scale of reference. The scale that measures conservation value is as follows: international, national, regional, county/metropolitan, district/borough, local/parish, or of value at the site scale. In evaluating the nature conservation value of the site, the following factors are also considered: nature conservation designations, rarity, naturalness, fragility, connectivity and relevant nature conservation aims and objectives for a given area, as contained in national and local biodiversity action plans and planning policies.

2.6 Survey and Assessment Limitations

The data and conclusions presented within this report are an evidence-based assessment of the current status of the application site. The data and conclusions do not provide a full and definitive survey of any protected species group. Evaluations have been made based on the results of this ecological assessment. The likely ecological constraints to the proposed development are detailed, as well as any need for further ecological survey and mitigation measures.

Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals, such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour. Therefore, the absence of evidence of a particular species should not be taken as conclusive proof that the species is not present, or that it will not be present in the future.

The survey was undertaken outside the recommended time period for UKHab habitat surveys of April to October. However, an assessment of the habitat types present and their suitability for protected and notable species could still be made. In addition, previous site visits have been carried out during the optimum time period. Therefore, there is confidence in the findings of this assessment and is not considered to be a limitation.

The data presented within this report is valid for 12 months before reassessment may be required.

3 Results

3.1 Designated and Notable Sites

3.1.1 Statutory Sites of Nature Conservation

There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 2km of the application site.

Table 2. Statutory designated nature sites within 2km of the application site

Site Name	Distance from site and orientation	Reason for designation
Throope Down SSSI	1.3km southeast of the site boundary	Botanically rich chalk grassland with good quality scattered scrub habitat. The green hairstreak <i>Callophrys rubi</i> , which is associated with scrub areas, occurs with butterflies more characteristic of open chalk grassland including the noteworthy adonis blue <i>Lysandra bellargus</i> and the small blue <i>Cupido minimus</i> .
Knighton Downs & Wood SSSI	1.3km south of the site boundary	Large area of botanically diverse calcareous grassland, scrub and semi-natural woodland supporting several plant and butterfly species of nationally restricted distribution. The downland forms an extensive, though fragmented, herb-rich grassland of a type once widespread on the south-west Wiltshire chalk. Woodland and scrub habitats support a variety of bird species.

Although beyond 2km, three important international sites are located within 20km which are vulnerable to nutrient inputs and recreational pressure:

- River Avon SAC; approximately 4km to the north
- The New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar; approximately 13km to the south-east
- Salisbury Plain SPA; approximately 18km to the north

In addition, there is one SAC designated for bats within 30km of the application site. Mottisfont Bats SAC is 23km to the east and supports an important population of the rare barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*. It is one of only six known maternity sites in the UK (2002 data) and the only one in Hampshire.

3.1.2 Non-Statutory Sites of Nature Conservation

No non-statutory, council owned listed countryside sites, country parks or open spaces are located on site or within 2km.

3.1.3 NERC Act HPI / Local BAP Priority Habitats

Consultation with the MAGIC Maps database showed multiple parcels of NERC Act Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI)/Local BAP habitats within 2km of the site:

- There are three parcels of Priority Habitat Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, the closest of which is located within the site boundary (proposed location of swage treatment plant on south side of Broadchalke Road).
- The River Ebble, a chalk river, is located 0.2km south of the site boundary.
- There are 33 parcels of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland, the closest of which is located 0.4km southwest of the site boundary.
- There are 24 parcels of Priority Habitat Lowland Calcareous Grassland, the closest of which is located 1.2km southeast of the site boundary.
- There are two parcels of Priority Habitat Traditional Orchard, the closest of which is located 1.6km east of the site boundary.
- There are two parcels of Priority Habitat Lowland Meadows, the closest of which is located 1.9km southeast of the site boundary.

3.1.4 Other Notable Designations

There are no Ancient Woodland sites mapped within 2km of the application site and no known ancient or veteran trees are indicated as being in close proximity to the site.

The site is located within Cranbourne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape. The National Landscape is part of the extensive belt of chalkland which stretches across southern England and is divided into its two areas by the fertile wooded Vale of Wardour. It is a very rural area with scattered villages and narrow roads. The National Landscape is rich in important ecological and prehistoric sites.

3.2 Habitats

Refer to Appendix C for a habitat map (Figure 3) and images of the application site (Photographs 1 - 10).

The main site is primarily agricultural comprising a field and three old farm buildings (B1 – B3). Areas of woodland and scrub habitat were also present on site, along with a few scattered trees. Residential properties were located to the east and west and an arable field was immediately adjacent to the northern boundary. The sewage treatment area comprised agricultural grassland with a unsealed, hardcore surface access track.

3.2.1 Modified Grassland g4

Approximately half of the main site is an agricultural field supporting modified grassland habitat. There were areas of disturbed, bare earth within the field from vehicle movements which provided some variation in sward height from the longer areas towards the field edge. The essential secondary code 16 tall forbs was present within this parcel.

The grassland was dominated by grass species, particularly false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*). Other species included cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), goat's beard (*Tragopogon pratensis*), pineappleweed (*Matricaria discoidea*) and buttercup (*Ranunculus sp.*). To the south and west of the grassland, common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) was also frequent throughout.

The sewage treatment area comprised short, modified grassland, which continued beyond the red line boundary across the wider field. The sward was short, with sheep present in the field, but a loose tussocky structure was evident. Cock's-foot, perennial rye-grass, buttercup, common nettle and creeping thistle were present.



3.2.2 Other Broadleaved Woodland w1g

Situated behind B1 was a small wooded area comprising ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees. The ground layer was dominated by ivy (*Hedera helix*) which also extended up into the shrub layer with a hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and apple (*Malus* sp.) sub canopy.

3.2.3 Dense Scrub h3

Scrub was present throughout the main site, especially around the developed land and buildings. Predominantly bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) scrub was present around the western and southern areas of the buildings. Along the southern border of the site an area of mixed scrub was present comprising secondary codes 16 (tall forbs) and 532 (scattered grass). Species included bramble, nettle, willow (*Salix* sp.), goat willow (*Salix caprea*), apple (*Malus* sp.), and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). Along the eastern border of the site and in the northeastern corner are areas of mixed scrub comprising essential secondary code 16 (tall forbs) and species including nettle, bramble, ivy, hawthorn, ash, holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*).

3.2.4 Buildings u1b5

Building B1 was a metal framed cow shed with low concrete block walls and an asbestos sheet roof. Old cow manure covered the floor. Building B2 was a ruined building lacking a roof and B3 was an old, corrugated metal sheet building covered in *Clematis* sp.

3.2.5 Other Developed Land u1b6

There is a farmyard sealed surface and driveway. The essential secondary codes 10 scattered scrub, 81 ruderal or ephemeral, and 82 vacant or derelict land, and the additional secondary code 532 scattered grass, were present within this parcel.

3.2.6 Artificial Unvegetated Unsealed Surface (u1c)

A small area of unsealed surface was present to the south of Broadchalke Road, associated with the existing access to the fields and use by farm vehicles.

3.2.7 Individual Trees

A large ash tree was present within the scrub along the north boundary and three young ash trees were growing from the footprint of B2. A willow tree was present within the sewage treatment area to the south of the road.

3.3 Protected Species Assessment

3.3.1 Badger

The previous site visits (enims Ltd, 2025) noted signs of badger presence within the main site including dung, snuffle holes, mammal paths, and spoil mounds. On the south side of Broadchalke Road, large mammal holes characteristic of badger were present in the scrub (SU 07603 26295 to SU 07609 26280). However, the updated visit noted no signs of badger, including around the previously noted large mammal holes.

The sloping banks present within the woodland habitat are optimal habitat for sett building.

3.3.2 Bats

Consultation with the MAGIC Maps database showed three European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) for bats granted within a 2km radius of the site boundary. These were granted for:

- 2014-630-EPS-MIT: The damage of a resting place for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) in 2014, 1.9km southeast of the site boundary.
- EPSM2013-6289: The destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat in 2013, 1.9km southeast of the site boundary.
- 2015-13077-EPS-MIT: The destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat and Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*) in 2015, 0.7km south of the site boundary. The licence was modified in 2016 (2015-13077-EPS-MIT-1) and 2017 (2015-13077-EPS-MIT-2).

All three buildings on site had negligible potential to support bat roosts.

Trees within the woodland habitat have potential to support roosting bats through features such as dense ivy stems, rot holes and lifted bark.

The on-site habitat is suitable for foraging and commuting bats. The application site is surrounded by expansive arable fields to the north, east and west but the woody habitats of the northern site boundary provide connectivity to a large woodland parcel approximately 2.5km to the north. There are good quality river habitats directly to the south, so the site may be relatively well used by bats and provide an important through-route between these two good quality resources.

3.3.3 Dormouse

Consultation with the MAGIC Maps database showed no EPSML for dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) granted within a 2km radius of the site boundary. Although primarily considered a woodland species, dormouse do utilise hedgerows and scrub habitats that are connected to woodland, particularly where large parcels of woodland are lacking. Scrub vegetation and trees are present on site but it is sub-optimal habitat, small in size and somewhat patchy, particularly in the west of the site where it extends off site. Given this it is considered unlikely that dormouse would be present on site and they are not considered further in this report.

3.3.4 Otter and Water Vole

Otter and water vole utilise rivers, streams, lakes and other wetland and water habitats. No such habitats are present on site or in close proximity to the main development site. The River Ebble is approximately 150m from the sewage treatment area and comprises grassland habitat unsuitable for otter holts or refuges. Therefore, these species are considered absent from the application site and not considered further in this report.

3.3.5 Nesting Birds

The buildings, woodland, scrub and scattered trees all provide suitable nesting habitat for a variety of widespread common and garden bird species. During the site visit, the presence of the following Schedule 1 birds was noted: red kite (*Milvus milvus*), redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), and fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*). Numerous other bird species were noted as present within, or in close proximity to, the site. This included farmland bird species lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), red-legged partridge (*Alectoris rufa*) and skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) on arable land north of the site. Additionally, the previous EA (enims Ltd, 2025) noted feathers and pellets of tawny owl (*Strix aluco*) beneath a perch in B1.

3.3.6 Great Crested Newt

Consultation with the MAGIC Maps database showed no EPSML, pond surveys or licence returns for great crested newts (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*) within a 2km radius of the site boundary. One pond was surveyed 3.7km to the west and one 5.4km to the east; both concluded absence of great crested newt. No waterbodies were present within the main site and none are mapped within 500m that have



connectivity to the site. Ordnance survey mapping indicates a ditch running adjacent to the proposed sewage treatment area, however, from the site survey this was found to be a shallow, grassed depression in the field. Overall, great crested newt is considered absent from the site and not considered further in this report.

3.3.7 Reptiles

Suitable foraging and commuting habitat for reptiles was present on the site in the form of woodland, scrub and grassland habitat. Holes in the ground between tree roots and a rubble pile provide potential refuge and hibernation habitat (Photographs 11 and 12, Appendix C). The rotting manure piles on site may provide a suitable site for egg laying by grass snake and the exposed, south-facing concrete at the interface with scrub habitat could present basking opportunities. A reptile survey carried out by enims Ltd in September and October 2024 (enims Ltd, 2024) did not find any reptiles, however, the site was still considered to have potential for occasional use by this species group should they be in the local area.

The fields to the south of Broadchalke Road have potential to support reptiles, particularly at the grassland interface with scrub and hedgerow habitat where it would be less disturbed by grazing animals.

3.3.8 NERC Act SPI/Local BAP Priority Species

Suitable habitat is present for common toad (*Bufo bufo*), brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) and hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) in the local area. Brown hare presence was noted during the site visit.

3.3.9 Other mammals

The presence of potential rat holes and droppings was noted during the site visit. The application site is suitable for use by rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*), fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) and species of deer.

4 Impact Assessment

4.1 Evaluation of Ecological Features

The application site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. Important priority habitats are present within the sewage treatment site. The modified grassland is a species-poor habitat which is widespread and likely to be in abundance in the surrounding local area. The woodland habitat is small in size, species-poor and does not meet the criteria for HPI. Plant species present are typical of an agricultural environment and of high nutrient inputs.

In themselves, the habitats are considered to have value at the site level. However, the habitats have potential to support protected species such as badger, bats, nesting birds and reptiles and this could increase the value of the site should they be present.

4.2 Discussion of Potential Ecological Impacts

4.2.1 Nature Conservation Sites

There are no statutory or non-statutory designed sites of nature conservation within or adjacent to the application site. Throope Down and Knighton Downs & Wood SSSI are both located a minimum 1.3km from the main development footprint, separated by roads and agricultural fields. The designated sites are unlikely to experience impacts such as urban effects and significant pollution due to the nature and scale of the development and the distance. The application site is well connected to the designated sites via a network of public right of way, therefore, it is likely that residents of the proposed development would visit the SSSI's on occasion. However, due to the scale of the development and the existing villages and hamlets already present in close proximity (Coombe Bissett through Bishopstone and Croucheston to Broad Chalke) it is not anticipated that the proposed development would lead to a significant increase in recreational pressure on the SSSI.

The application site falls within the River Avon catchment zone for which nutrient neutrality applies. Currently the River Avon SAC is receiving high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous and these nutrients are causing eutrophication and other negative impacts. Development that results in a net increase in population could result in additional nutrient loading. Due to the uncertainty that new development will not cause further impact, and in order to be precautionary, the recommended approach is for new development to achieve nutrient neutrality, which is a means of ensuring that new development does not add to existing nutrient loading. Further information can be found here: [Phosphorus and nitrogen mitigation - Wiltshire Council](#).

Natural England has standing advice on recreational pressure on the New Forest SAC, SPA and Ramsar sites which states that all new residential development within 13.8km of the designated sites will have an impact and mitigation is required. This is also considered to be the case for Salisbury Plain SPA, however, it is understood that the zone of influence for the SPA is 6.4km (Wiltshire Council, 2024) and therefore, the application site would fall outside this. Further information can be found here: [Biodiversity and development - Wiltshire Council](#).

4.2.2 NERC Act HPI/Local BAP Priority Habitats

Important coastal and floodplain grazing marsh is present within and adjacent to the sewage treatment area and chalk river habitats is located approximately 150m to the south. Very little permanent loss of the coastal and floodplain grazing marsh will take place, with the majority of the sewage treatment area



being used for habitat compensation measures. Due to the proximity, there is some potential for pollution inputs during construction activities and increased surface water run-off carrying pollutants onto the habitats during the operation phase of the development. The Nutrient Neutrality requirement, as set out in Section 4.2.1, would ensure that organic pollutants are appropriately managed during operation of the development.

4.2.3 Habitats

Proposals include the retention of the woodland habitat within the main site, along with the scrub and the tree on the north boundary. The remainder of the scrub will be permanently lost along with the modified grassland and buildings. Within the sewage treatment area there will be temporary disturbance of grassland during installation of the package treatment plant, with only very small permanent loss of habitat relating to the lid to the plant.

4.2.4 Protected Species

Badger

The habitats on site provide suitable habitat for sett building. No setts were found within the red line boundary during the site visits, however, badger are highly mobile species and there is always potential for setts to be established on site. Badger is protected from killing and injury, and their setts protected from damage and interference, under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. In addition, foraging and commuting badger may be harmed should they venture onto site during construction, for example, if they become trapped in excavations.

Bats

The removal of any trees with bat roosting potential could kill or injure individual bats and destroy, damage or disturb roosts. The woodland habitat on site is being retained and therefore direct roost loss or damage is not anticipated. However, the proposed development will be introducing humans, vehicles, and increased lighting to the area, which may lead to a reduction in foraging habitat and disruption of commuting routes. These changes could disturb bat species and negatively impact the conservation status of the local bat population. As species protected under European and national legislation, bats are fully protected from such impacts.

Nesting Birds

Vegetation clearance and removal of buildings could kill or injure nesting birds and destroy nests or eggs, should nesting birds be present at the time. Protection against such activities is afforded to all wild birds.

Reptiles

Clearance of habitat within the development footprint could kill, injure and disturb individuals.. As nationally protected species, such activities would constitute an offence. The risk is considered to be low, given the findings of the reptile survey of the main development footprint and the small works area of the sewage treatment site.

NERC Act SPI/Local BAP Priority Species

Species such as hedgehog and toad could be harmed on site when clearing vegetation, particularly if hibernating or sheltering beneath hedgerows and under piles of woody debris or leaf litter. Brown hare is a more mobile species so likely to be able to move away from harm, however, very young hare in nests may be less mobile.

Other mammals

Should rabbit burrows or fox dens be present within or close to the development footprint, excavation and movements of plant and machinery could cause the collapse of burrows leading the crushing or asphyxiation of any individuals present, which would be an offence under national legislation.

4.2.5 Summary

The following key ecological issues and constraints have been identified:

- Increased nutrient inputs and recreational pressure affecting important statutory designated sites;
- Potential for damage to adjacent HPI's through pollution;
- Potential for negative impacts on roosting, foraging and commuting bats utilising woody habitats;
- Potential for negative impacts on badger and reptiles that may be moving through the site at the time of works; and
- Potential for negative impacts on for nesting birds within buildings, trees and scrub habitats; and
- Potential for harm to BAP species or other mammals should they be present on site at the time of construction.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Overview

The assessment of the ecological constraints and subsequent recommendations are based on the current development proposals. If the development proposals change, this may alter the conclusions and advice in this report.

5.2 Nature Conservation Sites

The development will need to meet nutrient neutrality and recreational pressure requirements with regards to nearby internationally designated sites. A drainage specialist should undertake nutrient calculations and appropriate mitigation measures designed or implemented off-site where necessary. It is anticipated that a financial contribution will be required as part of strategic mitigation measures with regards to recreational pressure.

5.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain will apply for this project, and a mandatory 10% increase in biodiversity 'units' post-development will be required. A metric has been produced by the government which calculates the biodiversity units of the application site before and after development. As part of a planning application, the biodiversity baseline must be provided along with information on the proposed strategy for achieving 10% net gain. A completed Metric has been provided separately, based on indicative post-development proposals, to demonstrate the strategy for achieving 10% net gain on site.

5.4 Ecological Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Measures

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the mitigation hierarchy and promotes its use throughout the development planning process, in order to minimise harm to, and maximise benefits for, biodiversity. The NPPF highlights the primary objective for any proposed development should be avoiding adverse effects on biodiversity through good design. Any unavoidable adverse effects on biodiversity should be adequately mitigated to minimise any negative impacts. Compensation may be used after avoidance and mitigation measures have been fully considered, in order to address any residual impacts of the proposals.

5.4.1 NERC Act HPI/Local BAP Priority Habitats

Notable habitats should be protected from pollution through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), following guidance given in Pollution Prevention Guidelines 6 (PPG6). This will include measures (e.g., secure storage and handling of chemicals, impermeable parking for plant/vehicles, bunds and spill response plans) to prevent any contaminated releases such as fuel spills and polluting surface water run-off. The CEMP will also include dust suppression and noise reduction measures.

5.4.2 Habitats

The retained woodland habitat and trees on the northern boundary should be protected during construction in accordance with guidance given in an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, including installation of appropriate fencing and adoptions of measures to avoid detrimental damage to root systems.



5.4.3 Badger

Due to the previous signs of use of the site by badger and suitability for sett building, it is recommended that an updating survey is undertaken prior to construction commencing to ensure no setts have been constructed on site or within 30m of works.

Should a possible sett be found, further monitoring would be required to determine use by badger. Where an active badger sett is confirmed, appropriate mitigation should be put in place, which may include obtaining a Licence to disturb or destroy a sett.

Excavations should be backfilled or covered to prevent commuting badger from falling in. If this is not possible then a plank should be left in the excavation at an angle no greater than 45 degrees to provide a means of escape. The site should be left tidy and safe at night, with any chemicals and hazardous materials stored away securely.

5.4.4 Bats

The application site is currently unlit, as are the adjacent roadways, although there is some housing to the east and west likely providing some lighting pollution.

If site security lighting is deemed necessary during the construction period, lights should be directed downwards and into the site area, not upwards or onto adjacent surrounding habitat, and be motion sensitive.

External lighting throughout the development should be kept to a minimum and the biodiversity enhancement areas in the north and south of the application site must not be illuminated. The adjacent housing cul-de-sac 'Whitlock Rise' does not have external streetlighting, nor do the residential streets within Bishopstone to the south-west. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there should be a need for streetlighting within the proposed development either. Other external lights provided on buildings should be downward facing and warm white 2700K, as per the Lighting Management Plan designed for the project by Ecological Lighting Solutions and in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2023).

5.4.5 Nesting Birds

Removal of any suitable nesting habitat for birds (including buildings) should be undertaken outside of the main bird nesting season (i.e., works should take place September through February) to avoid acting unlawfully. If this is not possible, then vegetation/structures must only be removed following a nesting bird check carried out immediately prior to work (or within 24 hours) by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests must remain 'in situ' with an appropriate vegetation buffer until young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

5.4.6 Reptiles

A precautionary method of working (PMW) is deemed appropriate given the findings of the reptile survey and the small works area of the sewage treatment site. This would include a staged cut of vegetation under ecological supervision. Further details on the PMW are given in the reptile survey report (enims Ltd, 2024).

5.4.7 NERC Act SPI / Local BAP Priority Species and Other Mammals

The precautionary measures adopted for badger and reptiles, would also minimise the potential for harm to hedgehog, brown hare and other mammals. Undertaking cutting of grassland in September/October would further minimise the potential for harm to brown hare. Rabbit and fox holes should be dug back by hand carefully to ensure no individuals are present prior to machinery tracking over or excavation taking place.



5.5 Ecological Enhancement

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and local policy encourages developers to incorporate ecological enhancements into projects to achieve net gains for biodiversity. Generally, enhancements act to improve the quality of the habitat for the flora and fauna on and within the vicinity of the site. These enhancements can also provide aesthetic appeal, thus adding to the value of the project. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides guidance to planning authorities on how development proposals may provide enhancements to biodiversity, and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity in the wider area.

It is recommended that a Biodiversity Enhancement Plan is produced prior to construction to detail the final ecological features that will be incorporated into the development and their management requirements. Possible opportunities to enhance the wildlife potential are provided below.

- A range of boxes are available that provide a self-contained space for roosting bats. Some which can actually be incorporated into the walls of new builds, others may be attached to trees or the building exterior. These bat boxes can provide additional roosting features to those already available on-site, or provide new roosting space to encourage a wide range of bat species to utilise the surrounding area.
- The installation of bird boxes can provide additional nesting space for birds, secure from predatory animals such as foxes. Many small bird species, such as blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) and great tit (*Parus major*) will preferentially nest in nest boxes, where available, and boxes to suit different species should be offered. As a building development, there is an opportunity to provide nest boxes built into walls specifically for house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and swift (should buildings be tall enough). These are both on the red list of Birds of Conservation Concern.
- Installation of bee bricks would benefit invertebrates, integrated into buildings in a south-facing wall at a minimum height of 1m, with no vegetation obstructing the holes. Alternatively, bee posts or insect hotels could be considered in communal areas. Planting bee-friendly plants nearby would provide the bees using the bricks with a good quality foraging resource.
- The rural location of the development site provides suitable habitat for owls and kestrel. If appropriate, provision of nest boxes for such species would offer safe nesting sites overlooking foraging habitat in fields adjacent to the site.

6 Conclusion

The application site was comprised of relatively species-poor grassland, woodland and scrub habitat; which are common and widespread habitat types likely abundant in the local area. In themselves, the habitats have value at the site level only, however, it is the potential secondary function of supporting protected species that may elevate the ecological value. The proposed development may adversely impact upon bats, nesting birds and reptiles.

The application site lies within impact zones for internationally designated sites regarding nutrient pollution and recreational pressure as a result of increases in population as a result of new residential development. The development will be required to demonstrate Nutrient Neutrality and mitigate recreational increases, likely through a financial contribution.

Updating survey for badger setts should be carried out prior to commencement of construction due to the previous presence of badgers in the area. Precautionary working methods for badger, reptiles and nesting birds should be adopted during site clearance works.

A lighting strategy should be designed to minimise lighting disturbance for bats from the proposed development and to ensure no additional lighting onto boundary habitats.

Biodiversity net gain applies to this project and a 10% net gain is required. Areas within the red line boundary have been designed specifically for habitat creation and enhancement in order to address this statutory requirement.

The proposed development presents the opportunity to enhance the application site for species by providing additional bat roosting spaces and specialist bird nesting spaces.

7 References

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Appendix A: Site Plans



Figure 1. Location of application site (red outline/point) and surrounding landscape. QGIS 2026.



Figure 2. Application site boundary. QGIS 2026.

Appendix B: Legislation Information

Statutory Designated Sites

Particular national and international legislative instruments enable the designation of sites of conservation interest. These 'statutory designated sites' are then afforded varying degrees of protection under environmental legislation and government policy. The land designations considered by this study are set out below, with details of their associated legislation.

Designation	Protection
National Parks	National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; local planning policy.
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; local planning policy.
National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; local planning policy.
Ramsar sites	Ramsar Convention; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Countryside and Rights of Way act 2000.
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	EU Habitats Directive; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	EU Birds Directive; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Non-statutory designated sites, such as County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are local sites designated by Local Planning Authorities that are considered to be of significant nature conservation value. They often have an important role in the wider landscape by connecting statutory designated sites and can support European protected species and species listed under the Habitats Directive.

Ancient Woodland is a non-statutory designation, which is generally applied to woodlands known to predate 1600. Before this time woodland was rarely artificially planted, hence these woodlands are likely to be naturally established. Subtypes include Ancient Semi Natural Woodlands and Ancient Replanted Woodlands. Although tree cover in the latter has predominately been replaced, original features such as characteristic wildlife are retained. Ancient woodlands are protected under national planning policy. Current planning policy guidance requires that developments must not result in the loss or deterioration of Ancient Woodlands, which are a valuable biodiversity resource.

European Protected Species (EPS)

European protected species are protected in the UK by Regulation 40 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), with EPS listed under Schedule 2. This is the national implementation of the European Union's 'Habitats Directive' (Council Directive 92/43/EEC (a) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna). Protection is also afforded to any EPS under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), owing to their inclusion in Schedule 5.

These legislative instruments make it unlawful to intentionally, deliberately or recklessly capture, kill, injure or disturb in a place of shelter, any EPS. The damage or destruction of a breeding or resting place, whether intentional or reckless, also constitutes an offence.

The following are examples of EPS which are native to and residing in the United Kingdom:

- Sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*)
- Smooth snake (*Cornella austriaca*)
- Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*)
- Dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)
- Otters (*Lutra lutra*)
- Bats (all native species)

'Widespread' Species

Widespread Reptiles

Through inclusion in Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence under Section 9 to intentionally kill, injure or sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale, any living or dead widespread species of UK reptile, or any product derived from one.

In addition, all native reptiles are adopted as Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Water Voles

The water vole *Arvicola amphibius* is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Protection is afforded against killing and injury of water voles, as well as the damage, destruction or obstruction of burrows, or disturbance of burrows while in use.



Nesting Birds

Under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird; take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

There are 49 bird species listed as Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. These species are therefore material planning considerations.

Schedule 1 Listed Birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 there are special penalties for offences regarding birds listed in this Schedule. Additionally, it is an offence to disturb Schedule 1 listed bird or dependent young at nest.

Badgers

Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under this legislation, badgers and their setts are protected against all deliberate damage, destruction and disturbance. Badgers are widespread and abundant; their legal protection is primarily aimed at preventing blood sports, however there are still implications for developers.

NERC Act Habitats and Species

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st October 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act required the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

There are 56 Habitats of Principle Importance (HPI) included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats in England that were identified as requiring action in the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). These areas include terrestrial habitats such as upland hay meadows to lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Additionally, 943 Species of Principle Importance (SPI) were included in the S41 list. The species found in England were identified as requiring action under the former UK BAP, which has since been replaced by the Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. The priority species and habitats designed under S41 of the NERC Act will be considered as part of the constraints and opportunities assessment, thus identifying if these habitats will be impacted and also where opportunities are present to enhance the area for local priority species.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

All mammals receive some protection under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, which makes it an offence to intentionally cause unnecessary suffering of any wild mammal. The Wild Mammals Act may apply during site clearance works, particularly where burrowing animals such as foxes and rabbits are present as they could be crushed or asphyxiated in their burrows by heavy machinery.

Appendix C: Habitat Survey Results

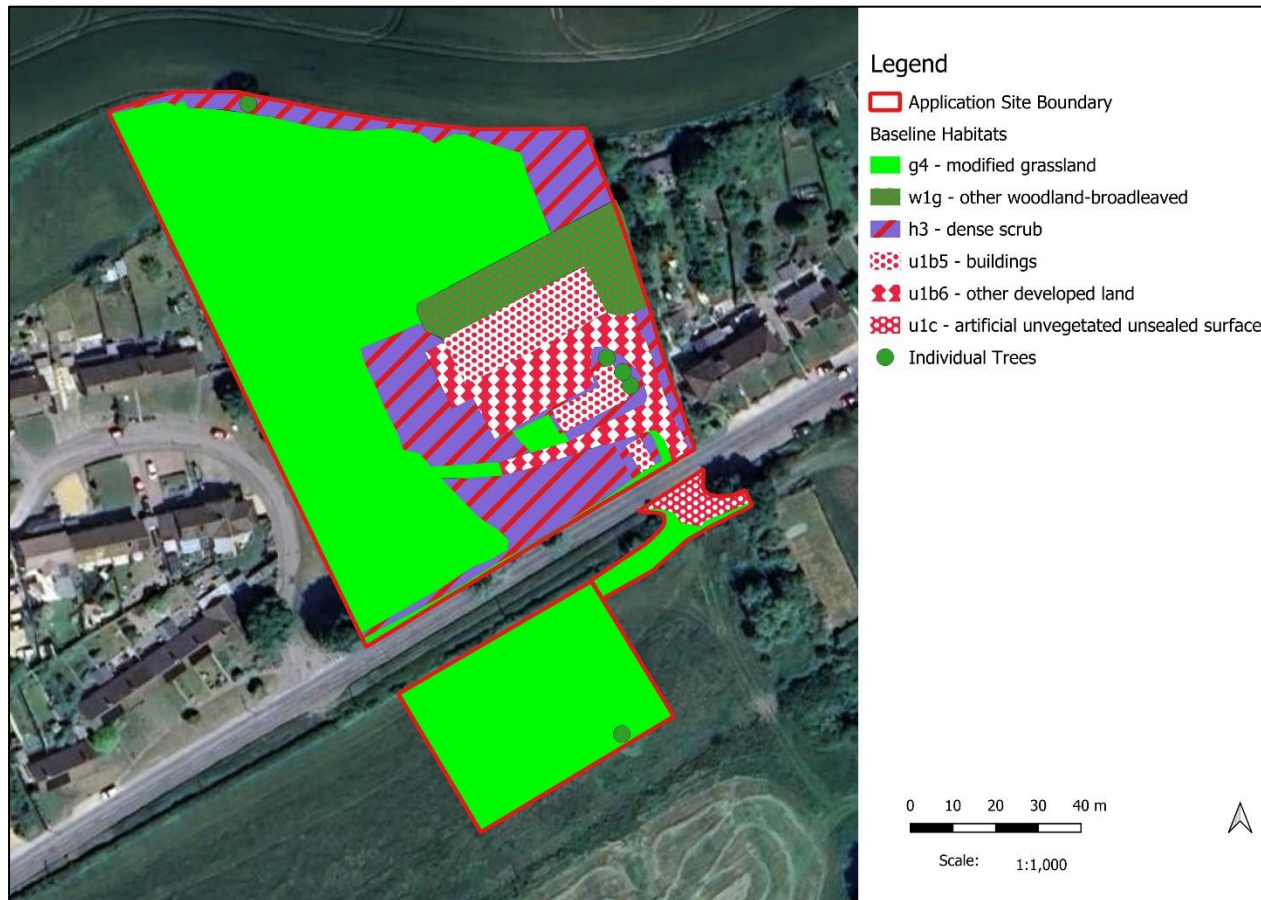


Figure 3. Habitat map. QGIS 2026.



Photograph 1.
Modified grassland occupying much of the site



Photograph 2.
Dense scrub



Photograph 3.
Scrub and woodland



Photograph 4.
Woodland



Photograph 5.
Hardstanding yard area and building B1



Photograph 6.
Hard standing driveway and dense scrub



Photograph 7.
Building B2



Photograph 8.
Building B3



Photograph 9.
Modified grassland and woodland



Photograph 10.
Mixed vegetation



Photograph 11.
Probable rat hole



Photograph 12.
Rubble pile