



Land at Hodd's Hill Cottage, Baydon Manor Farm,
SN8 2HG

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



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Notice to Readers:

The results of the survey and assessment work undertaken by All Ecology are representative at the time of surveying.

Every endeavour has been made to identify the presence of protected species on site, where this falls within the agreed scope of works.

The flora and fauna detailed within this report are those noted during the field survey and from anecdotal evidence. It should not be viewed as a complete list of flora and fauna species that may frequent or exist on site at other times of the year.

Up to date standard methodologies have been used, which are accepted by Natural England and other statutory conservation bodies. No responsibility will be accepted where these methodologies fail to identify all species on-site.

All Ecology cannot take responsibility where Government, national bodies or industry subsequently modify standards.

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Reference to sections or particular paragraphs of this document taken out of context may lead to misrepresentation.

Summary

In July 2026, All Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a site known as Land at Hodd's Hill Cottage, Baydon Manor Farm, SN8 2HG. The site is part of a paddock bound by hedgerow and fence.

The site is the subject of a planning application for the erection of a house and garage with the creation of associated driveway and gardens.

The site lies within an area covered by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (AONB); however, in terms of ecology there are no statutory designated sites local to the application site which the proposals could potentially impact. No significant impacts to sites in the wider area are predicted.

The effect of the development has been considered and key constraints identified. The habitats present on site are of low – moderate ecological value in terms of their vegetation. The hedgerow is of moderate value and will be retained with the existing field entrance used to access the proposed development. The loss of grassland is not significant and new residential garden and planting of additional native hedgerow is expected to provide similar ecological value to that currently present.

The habitats on site have limited potential to support protected or notable species. The following species/groups are either present, potentially present, or could be encouraged onto the site and the recommended actions are as follows:

- Bats – There are no buildings on site and no suitable roosting features were recorded in trees and therefore roosting bats are absent. The site is dominated by short grassland which is poor foraging habitat but the field boundary hedgerow and trees provide potential for foraging. The loss of low value habitat in the form of grassland is not deemed significant and new gardens including new hedgerow will provide habitat of similar foraging value. The boundary hedgerow is likely to be of some value to bats but provided that lighting of the hedgerow and trees is avoided, no further surveys for bats are required.
- Badgers and other mammals – The grassland which dominates the site is of low value and no evidence of wild mammal presence was recorded. Precautionary methods of working are advised with regards to the potential for passing Badgers, Hedgehogs or presence of other common small mammals.
- Birds – Nesting opportunities in the field boundary hedgerow and trees; these will be retained and no further surveys are required at this time. Any future pruning of hedgerow and trees to be carried out outside the bird nesting season of March – August unless a nesting bird survey confirms absence.

Suggestions for enhancement are given.

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1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 In July 2026, All Ecology was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a site known as Land at Hodd's Hill Cottage, Baydon Manor Farm, SN8 2HG. The site is part of a paddock and is of approximately 0.35 ha in area bound by hedgerow and fence. The site is in a rural location with the surrounding landscape formed of a mosaic of pasture and arable land bound by a network of field hedgerows and small pockets of woodland.
- 1.2 The site is the subject of a planning application for the erection of a house and garage with the creation of associated driveway and gardens.

Objectives and Aim

- 1.3 The main objectives and aim of the survey were to identify features of ecological interest, undertake a basic search of habitats present for evidence of use, or potential use, by protected species, and to identify any other possible ecological constraints to the proposed redevelopment.

Site Location & Aerial Photograph



Figure 2: Site location.



Figure 3: Aerial photo (site boundaries indicated).

2.0 Methodology

Personnel

- 2.1 The survey was carried out by James Godbeer BSc Hons MCIEEM, an ecologist with over 19 years' experience working as a consultant. James has extensive experience of managing environmental contracts, and particular experience in surveying, assessment and mitigation for rare and protected species. He has considerable knowledge of the development and planning process including Ecological Impact Assessments, sustainable ecological design and he has completed ecology chapters of Environmental Statements. James holds a number of protected species licences including bats (all species, all counties, Class Licence Registration No. 2015-12313-CLS-CLS), and Great Crested Newts (Class Licence Registration No. 2019-44282-CLS-CLS). He has successfully obtained European Protected Species mitigation licences for a number of bat species including Lesser Horseshoe, Greater Horseshoe, Serotine, Brown Long-eared, Common Pipistrelle and Natterer's bats, for a number of roost types including maternity and hibernation sites.

Desk Survey

- 2.2 Online OS maps and aerial photographs were inspected for the presence of ponds in the surrounding area. Additionally, MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside, 2025) was used to establish the distance and direction of any statutory designated sites within the search area.

Field Survey

Habitats

- 2.3 The site was visited on the 15th July 2026 and surveyed in accordance with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) Phase I Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010). This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential that might warrant further study.

Fauna

- 2.4 The habitats present on the site were searched for signs of animal activity. Hedgerow trees were assessed for potential to support bat roosts by visually inspecting them from the ground using binoculars and high-powered torches where appropriate. Potential roosting features such as gaps, holes, cavities or splits were recorded and then inspected where possible for signs of bats, which including grease/urine stains, scratch marks, droppings or the bats themselves.
- 2.5 The site and surroundings, for a minimum distance of 30 m where access was available, were searched for signs of Badgers. These include setts, latrines, dung pits, snuffle marks or hairs caught in hedges or on fencing. A casual search for any signs of Dormice such as gnawed nuts, or nests was also carried out.
- 2.6 Incidental observations of invertebrates and birds were recorded and a search made for any signs of previous nesting.

- 2.7 Any refuges on site such as logs or other debris were lifted and inspected for reptiles and amphibians. In regards to Great Crested Newts, ponds within 250 m of the site were subject to Assessment to determine their suitability for this species as required.

Equipment

- 2.8 Equipment used to aid the survey included a high-powered torch, ladder, binoculars and a camera.

Valuation of Ecological Features

- 2.9 The valuation process used in this report follows the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018).
- 2.10 The presence of injurious and legally controlled weeds has also been taken into account.

Nomenclature

- 2.11 The English name only of flora and fauna species is given in the main text of this report; however, scientific names are used for invertebrates where no English name is available. Vascular plants and charophytes follow the nomenclature of The Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) 2007 database (BSBI, 2007) with all other flora and fauna following the Nameserver facility of the National Biodiversity Network Species Dictionary (<http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nbn/>), which is managed by the Natural History Museum.

Limitations

- 2.12 The site itself was fully accessible with no limitations to undertaking the survey in accordance with the stated methodology.

3.0 Results

Desk Survey

- 3.1 The site lies within an area covered by the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, which is formally designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); however, there are no other statutory designated sites within 1 km of the application site with the closest being the Kennet & Lambourne Floodplain Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located approximately 3.5 km to the south.

Field Survey

- 3.2 The following table presents a description of the habitats present.

Table 1: Details of habitats present on the site.

Habitats	Description
g4: Modified grassland	The application site is a paddock of horse grazed short grassland dominated by Perennial Rye-grass with frequent Creeping Buttercup, occasional Broad-leaved Dock, Cock's-foot, Yorkshire-fog and rare Dandelion. A small area of frequent Scarlet Pimpernel is present in the northwest corner of the site with Hogweed, Ivy, Garlic Mustard, Cock's-foot, Common Nettle, Broad-leaved Dock and Creeping Bent recorded in field margins along the north and east boundaries.
h2a5 11: Species-rich native hedgerow with trees	The east boundary is defined by a native hedgerow and trees with an existing field entrance at its north end. The hedge is formed of Hawthorn, Holly, Elder, Hazel and Pedunculate Oak. Fence defines other paddock boundaries.

Fauna

- 3.3 The following table assesses the potential for other protected species to be present.

Table 2: Protected Species Assessment

Fauna	Description
Bats	Habitats (roosting): No buildings on site. Trees within hedgerow were inspected for potential roosting features of which none were recorded. Roosting bats are expected to be absent. Habitats (foraging/commuting): The hedgerow on the east boundary of the site provides foraging opportunities and although grassland that dominates the site provides little value, it is expected bats will forage over the paddock grassland in association with the hedgerow. The hedgerow also provides a potential flight line for bats to move through the area with connectivity to other linear habitats to the south; however, this linear habitat is isolated to the north. Site hedgerows are not well connected to into the local area and are unlikely to be important to commuting bats.

	Presence/absence: Although the site provides foraging and commuting opportunities for bats habitats are generally sub-optimal and although small numbers of common species are expected to utilise the site the potential for more notable species would appear to be limited and the application site is not likely to be important to bats. .
Badgers	Habitats: The grassland provides foraging habitat with the hedgerow providing cover and therefore areas of higher potential for the construction of setts. No evidence of Badgers on site or in adjacent areas. Presence/absence: No evidence of presence recorded. Badgers will be generally absent with potential currently limited to passing individual Badgers.
Dormice	Habitats: The field hedgerow provides potential for Dormouse but the site itself which is entirely grassland is unsuitable. The hedge is not well connected to good Dormice habitats, such as extensive woodland, in the local area. Presence/absence: No evidence of presence. Presence/absence unknown but Dormice are likely to be absent given the limited area of suitable on-site habitat and connectivity of hedgerow to optimum habitats in the wider area.
Otters & Water Voles	Habitats: None present. Presence/absence: Absent.
Other Mammals	Habitats: The proposed development area has poor habitat for mammals being entirely short grassland. Hedgerow on the boundary of the field provides cover for common small mammals, and Hedgehogs could cross the site. Presence/absence: No evidence was recorded of mammals. Common mammals may pass through the site occasionally but notable species are expected to be absent.
Birds	Foraging Habitats: The grassland provides a limited resource but the field hedgerow with trees provides good foraging opportunities although limited in area. Nesting Habitats: Hedgerows and trees provide nesting opportunities. The field is small and the paddock grassland is generally unsuitable for ground nesting birds given its short, grazed nature. Presence/absence: No evidence of previous nesting was noted but old nests could have been missed in the denser parts of the hedgerow. Nesting birds are expected to nest in hedgerow and trees in future.
Reptiles	Habitats: The grassland is short with poor structure for reptiles and therefore unsuitable. The site is poor for reptiles. Presence/absence: Expected to be absent.
Amphibian	Terrestrial Habitats: The grassland on the site is short and therefore poor terrestrial habitat. The hedgerow provides cover and foraging opportunities. Aquatic Habitats: None present on site. In regards to the potential for Great Crested Newts to be present in the local area, there is one pond within 250 m of the application site located approximately 210 m to the northwest. This pond was found to be dry at the time of the survey and terrestrial vegetation found to be growing within the pond location indicates that the pond remains dry for the majority of the year, if not entirely..



11: Dry pond

Pond Location:

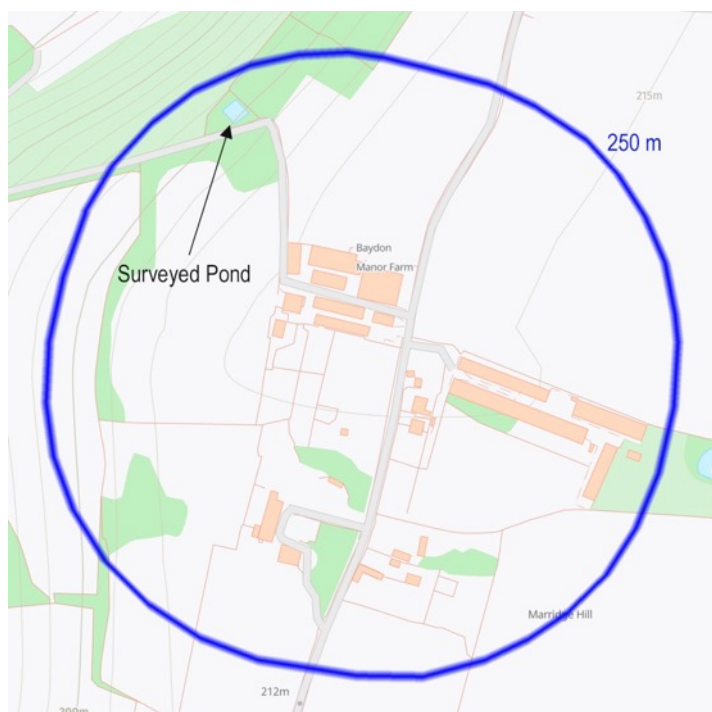


Figure 4: Pond location plan.

Presence/absence: Amphibians including Great Crested Newts are expected to be generally absent from the only pond within the search area given that this pond is likely to remain dry during the newt breeding season. Amphibians are expected to be absent from the application site which provides low value terrestrial habitats.

Invertebrates

Habitats: The short, species-poor grassland is low value habitat but the hedge and trees provide limited areas of interest.

Presence/absence: Common invertebrates are expected to be present but the potential for notable species to be present is minimal.

4.0 Development Constraints and Recommendations

Development Proposals

- 4.1 The site is the subject of a planning application for the erection of a house and garage with the creation of associated driveway and gardens.

Habitats

- 4.2 The grassland on site was identified as modified grassland with low species diversity. In order to qualify as a NERC Priority Habitat, grassland typically has to be unimproved (good semi-improved grassland can also qualify) and would have to be examples of grasslands such as lowland calcareous grassland or lowland dry acid grassland, habitats not found on site. Any impacts as a result of loss/changes to the grassland on site are considered to be negligible.
- 4.3 The NERC Priority Habitats include all hedgerows with at least 80% cover of at least one woody UK native species (JNCC, 2017). The east boundary hedgerow had at least 80% cover of native species and as such qualify as NERC Priority Habitat. This hedgerow will be retained in full with the existing field entrance used to access the new development. Given the hedgerow retention a hedgerow assessment to determine if the hedgerow is classified as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 will not be required.
- 4.4 The remainder of the field outside of the development area could be considered for habitat creation or enhancement to increase its ecological value. Where new trees or shrubs are to be planted, native tree and shrub species should be used as these are most beneficial to invertebrates, and many also produce seeds, nuts and berries that are food for native mammals and birds. Planting of non-native plant species should be limited to those that are not invasive and should prioritise those that provide a good source of nectar for invertebrates.
- 4.5 The proposals include creation of new vegetated gardens which will provide typical garden habitat with some limited value to wildlife, and new garden hedgerow will increase the overall value of linear habitats for small mammals and birds etc.

Fauna

Bats

- 4.6 There are no buildings on site and no roosting features were associated with hedgerow trees; roosting bats are deemed to be absent from the site. The site provides potential bat foraging habitat associated with field boundary hedgerow which will be retained although the grassland within the field has very little value.
- 4.7 No significant impact to bats is expected due to habitat loss within the field but lighting of retained hedgerow and trees should be avoided. Provided a suitable lighting strategy is implemented to minimise light spill from new dwelling, impacts to bats will be generally avoided and a bat activity survey will not be required.
- 4.8 The site is unlikely to be important to bats but lighting should be considered and the retained boundary hedgerow and trees should remain unlit. In general, measures should include the use

of lighting only where absolutely necessary utilising highly directional warm white LED lighting, an example being down spots at 2.5 m high using warm white (2700 K) 8W LED lamps, 550 lumens, 35 degree beam angle. These could be individually activated by PIR sensors on a 1 minute cut off to further reduce their impacts. These will assist in lighting only the areas where lighting is required and minimising light spill either directly or through reflected light.

- 4.9 New gardens are expected to provide foraging opportunities for common species of bats similar in value to existing grassland habitat.
- 4.10 The new development provides an opportunity to significantly enhance the site for roosting bats by incorporating roosts into the new buildings. There are many ways that a building could be enhanced for crevice-dwelling bat species (virtually all UK bat species) without inconveniencing prospective occupants or requiring any significant design considerations. Bat tubes, panels, shelters or boxes can be installed in suitable locations around the site usually at the apices of gable ends. A variety of aspects can increase the likelihood of colonisation. Any new roosting features must not be subject to lighting.

Dormice

- 4.11 Dormice are expected to be absent from the site hedgerow which will be retained; however, lighting of the hedgerow should be avoided to prevent disturbance of Dormice in the unlikely event of presence. Provided the hedge is not subject to lighting, the hedgerow will continue to provide suitable habitat for this species.

Badgers and other mammals

- 4.12 Badgers will be generally absent with potential currently limited to passing individuals. Hedgehogs and other common mammals may also pass through the site. No impact to mammals is predicted provided works are carried out following precautionary methods.
- 4.13 In order to prevent trapping mammals that may cross the site, it is recommended that during the construction phase of the project any trenches and other excavations are back-filled before nightfall or a ramp left to allow animals to easily exit, and any open pipes larger than 150 mm should be capped off overnight. It is advised that any new garden fences or walls should allow access for Hedgehogs and other mammal species on and off site.

Birds

- 4.14 Hedgerow and trees provide opportunities for nesting and foraging and the grassland provides some limited foraging opportunities.
- 4.15 Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments). Hedgerows and trees will be retained; however, pruning of hedgerow and trees where necessary should take place outside the nesting season of March to August unless a pre-works nesting survey carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist concludes absence.
- 4.16 The new buildings are likely to provide a good opportunity to enhance the site for birds and the following options could be explored for inclusion on the sides of the buildings:

- Nest boxes for Swifts could be incorporated into the eaves. These not only provide nesting sites for Swifts but can also be used by other species such as House Sparrows and Starlings.
 - House Martin nests could be provided under the eaves or on the north to east sides of the building.
 - Individual boxes, such as the Schwegler Bird Home 1MR, could also be installed at a height of at least 2 m.
 - Groups of multiple small bird boxes could also be installed at a height of least 2 m to provide nesting sites for birds such as House Sparrows
- 4.17 The proposed development will include hedgerow creation which will enhance the site for nesting and foraging birds. It is recommended that any further planting on site or within the wider fields should concentrate on species that are native to the area and ideally produce a range of seeds and berries at varying times of the year. Nectar rich plants could also be used to encourage invertebrates on to the site, which in turn provide food for birds as well as other species such as bats.

Invertebrates

- 4.18 The habitats on site are poor but will support a limited variety of common invertebrate species focussed around boundary hedge and trees; however, potential for more notable species is negligible. Enhancement for invertebrates should be considered by incorporating insect features on site such as bee bricks which can be built into the new dwelling.

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