



Crossland
Ecology

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Site: Deans Yard, South Road, Baldock,
Hertfordshire

Client: JP&S Services Ltd

Date: May 2025



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Site assessments / surveys (where required) have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

Due to the temporal nature of ecology, the findings of this report should not be relied upon if a significant amount of time has passed, as defined by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines.

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1** This report presents the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken at Deans Yard, South Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire (the Site'). The proposals for the site are to demolish all property on the site with the exception of the corner house (no. 53), to be replaced with a newly constructed a petrol filling station fronting Clothall Road and 9no. residential dwellings with access from South Road (the Proposed Development').
- 1.2** The site comprised a range of commercial buildings and a residential property comprising two flats with an associated garden and hedgerow. The habitats of greatest ecological value within the site are the garden habitats, introduced shrub and the non-native and ornamental hedgerow.
- 1.3** No statutory or non-statutory designated sites or priority habitats will be affected by the proposed development.
- 1.4** Cotoneaster, a Schedule 9 listed species, was recorded within the site. Control measures to prevent the spread of cotoneaster will be included within a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): Biodiversity which is required for the proposed development.
- 1.5** No further surveys are recommended for any of the species discussed within this report, with the exception of roosting bats and nesting birds. Further bat surveys are required to determine whether roosting bats are present within the site.
- 1.6** If works cannot be timed to avoid the nesting bird season, a nesting bird check will need to be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. It is recommended that the proposed scheme retains the non-native and ornamental hedgerow, if possible. A summary of ecological features, likely impacts and outline mitigation and enhancement measures is provided in Table 5.
- 1.7** Proposals should retain, protect and enhance habitats of greater value including the non-native and ornamental hedgerow, where possible. The potential for adverse impacts of the development upon habitats and protected species should be mitigated through the production of a CEMP: Biodiversity. Sensitive lighting schemes should also be implemented on site for construction and operation to ensure light spill is minimised onto retained and newly created habitats.
- 1.8** To ensure compensation for the loss of habitats, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment will be produced to accompany this report and demonstrate how the proposals will result in a net gain in biodiversity.
- 1.9** Through incorporation of the recommendations set out in this report and by following the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate and enhance), it is considered that the proposals have potential to deliver positive residual impacts in line with current wildlife legislation, chapter 15 of the NPPF (MHCLG, 2024); and local planning policies relevant to nature conservation.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Crossland Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by JP&S Services Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Deans Yard, South Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire (the Site'). This report presents the findings and recommendations of the PEA.

2.2 The objectives of this appraisal were to:

- Map the main ecological features within the surveyed area and compile a plant species list for each habitat type;
- Make an initial assessment of the presence or likely absence of species of conservation concern;
- Identify any legal and planning policy constraints relevant to nature conservation which may affect the development proposals;
- Determine any potential further ecological issues;
- Determine the possible need for further surveys and mitigation; and
- Make recommendations for minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible in accordance with Chapter 15: *Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment*, of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2024), and relevant local nature conservation planning policies.

2.3 The details of relevant wildlife legislation in addition to national and local planning policies related to nature conservation and biodiversity are provided in Appendix 2.

3.0 Methods

- 3.1** This report has been prepared with reference to British Standards Institution (BSI) BS 42020:2013 'Biodiversity – code of practice for planning and development' (BSI, 2013) and The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) and Technical Guidance Series 'Ecological Report Writing' (CIEEM, 2017a) and Code of Professional Conduct (CIEEM, 2019a).
- 3.2** The following PEA follows guidance and methods as prescribed by the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Appraisal 2nd edition (2017b) and the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (2019b). Following these methods, a baseline of rare and/or notable ecological features (species and habitats) was established and valued. Predicted significant impacts upon these features have been identified as well as constraints and opportunities. This step-wise assessment process has informed likely mitigation and enhancement measures as well as any further assessment required. This PEA and any additional surveys will fully inform the predicted impacts of the scheme in accordance with the NPPF (MHCLG, 2024), local planning policy and relevant wildlife legislation.

Desk Study

- 3.3** Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, a data search for records of protected and notable species and for data on non-statutory designated sites from the local records centre was not considered proportionate.
- 3.4** A web-based search for statutory designated sites via the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) spatial data resource magic.defra.gov.uk was undertaken on 6th May 2025 for the following statutory designated sites: European (5km from the surveyed area boundary) and National (2km from the site boundary).
- 3.5** An online search was undertaken for waterbodies within 250m utilising MAGIC online spatial data resource (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) on 6th May 2025.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 3.6** A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Survey was carried out on 29th April 2025 by Chris Brown BSc (Hons) ACIEEM during appropriate weather conditions. UKHab survey methods are set out in the UK Habitat Classification User Manual – Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd. 2023). UKHab is a comprehensive habitat classification system designed for the UK and is intended for ecologists to identify and map habitats to provide outputs that are suitable for ecological impact assessment. Habitat mapping was undertaken using the standard classification to indicate habitat types.
- 3.7** The dominant and readily identifiable higher plant species identified in each of the various habitat parcels were recorded and their abundances assessed on the DAFOR scale:
- D - Dominant

- A - Abundant
- F - Frequent
- O - Occasional
- R - Rare

3.8 These scores represent the abundance within the defined area only and do not reflect national or regional abundances. Plant species nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

3.9 All impacts upon ecological features have been considered for the purposes of this survey following industry best practice guidance. Only relevant protected and notable species have been discussed within this report to keep its contents concise and relevant to the works being undertaken and for ease of application.

Protected and Notable Species

3.10 The surveyed area was assessed during the UKHab survey for its suitability for protected and notable species that are likely to occur in the area. Considering the results of the desk study, the location and habitats in the surveyed area, an assessment was carried out for:

- Flora;
- Badger;
- Bats (roosting, foraging and commuting);
- Breeding and non-breeding birds;
- Great crested newts;
- Hazel dormice;
- Rare or notable invertebrates;
- Reptiles; and
- Other notable mammal species.

Badger

3.11 An initial assessment was made to identify areas that might be used by badgers *Meles meles* for foraging, commuting and sett creation.

Bats

3.12 The site was assessed for its suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

3.13 As part of the protected species scoping, a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was completed in accordance with best practice (Collins, 2023). This included an assessment of the exterior of buildings on-site.

3.14 Additionally, suitability of the site for foraging/commuting bats was also assessed considering potential flight lines, wildlife corridors, artificial lighting inputs and potential pathways to impact brought about by the prospective scheme. Good bat

foraging habitat generally includes sheltered areas and habitats with good numbers of insects, such as woodland, scrub, ponds, lakes and species-rich or rough grassland. Good commuting habitat generally comprises linear features such as well-connected hedgerows, woodland edge, watercourses. The site was assigned a level of suitability according to the classification provided by Collins (2023).

Birds

- 3.15** The site was assessed for its potential to support breeding birds and significant wintering and/or migratory bird populations. Suitable habitat generally includes scrub, trees and can also include buildings, open grassland and piles of debris.

Great crested newts

- 3.16** The site was assessed for its potential to support great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*. Aquatic habitats within 250m of the site were identified using online mapping services.
- 3.17** Terrestrial habitats on site were also assessed for their suitability for great crested newts as part of the PEA. Suitable terrestrial habitat generally includes rough grassland and woodland where they can forage and hibernate, with good links to the ponds where they breed.

Hazel dormice

- 3.18** The site was assessed for its potential to support hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*. This species generally uses areas of dense woody vegetation and are more likely to be found where there is a wide diversity of woody species contributing to a three-dimensional habitat structure, a number of food sources, plants suitable for nest-building materials and good habitat connectivity.

Invertebrates

- 3.19** The site was assessed for its potential to support rare or notable invertebrate species; this assessment was made on the basis of the range of the habitats present.

Reptiles

- 3.20** The site was assessed for its suitability for the four more widespread UK reptile species; common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix natrix* and adder *Vipera berus*. Specific habitat requirements vary between species. Common lizard and slow worm prefer rough grassland although they can be found in a variety of habitats ranging from woodland glades to walls and pastures. Grass snakes have similar habitat requirements but have a greater reliance on ponds and wetlands. Adder is more associated with dry grasslands, heathland and woodland edge habitats.

Other Notable Species

- 3.21** The site was assessed for its potential to support Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 species of principal importance which are likely to occur in the local area especially hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and brown hare *Lepus europaeus*.

Assessment of Nature Conservation Value

- 3.22** CIEEM guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom (2018) have been utilised to assess the impacts upon habitats within the ZOI of the site. CIEEM suggests that it is best to use the geographical scale (i.e., International, National, Regional etc.) at which a feature (i.e. a habitat, species or other ecological resource) may or may not be important, as the appropriate measure of value. As such, data from the data search and UKHab survey have been reviewed and the likely occurrence of protected and notable species/species groups assessed. This has allowed predictions of impacts to be made along with recommendations for mitigation, compensation and enhancement. If needed, further targeted survey has been recommended to refine the evaluation and associated recommendations.

Constraints

- 3.23** Desktop data searches are a valuable tool in evaluating a site's potential to hold rare and protected species, it is not however absolute in confirming presence or absence of notable species due to the nature of how the records are collected.
- 3.24** Where any data supplied by the client, or any other sources have been used, it has been assumed that the information is correct. No responsibility can be accepted by Crossland Ecology for inaccuracies in the data supplied by any other party. The conclusions and recommendations in this report are based on the assumption that all relevant information has been supplied by those bodies from whom it was requested.
- 3.25** All the species that occur in a habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent in different seasons. However, given that all the habitats were common and widespread, it was considered that an accurate assessment of the habitat type and condition could be made.
- 3.26** Access into building B3 was not possible at the time of survey. The door to the building was locked, denying the surveyor internal access. Consequently, building B3 was only subject to an external inspection. However, as the building was assessed as having 'low' suitability to support roosting bats, a bat emergence survey will need to be undertaken to determine whether the building supports a bat roost. This limitation is therefore not deemed to have affected the results of the PEA.
- 3.27** Access into the loft void of building B8 was not possible at the time of survey. This was due to the loft hatch being bolted and locked shut. Consequently, building B8

was only subject to an external inspection. However, as the building was assessed as having 'low' suitability to support roosting bats, a bat emergence survey will need to be undertaken to determine whether the building supports a bat roost. This limitation is therefore not deemed to have affected the results of the PEA.

4.0 Baseline Ecological Conditions

Site Description

- 4.1** The site comprised a range of commercial buildings including a former petrol station and shop, several garages and a car dealership. A residential property comprising two flats and an associated garden and private garage was also present within the site. The site is bordered by South Road to the south, by Clothall Road to the north, and by commercial buildings to the east and west. The wider landscape is predominantly rural, with agricultural land to the north, east and south. Letchworth Garden City is located approximately 1.4km to the south-west.

Statutory Designated Sites

European Designated Sites

- 4.2** There are no European designated sites within 5km of the site boundary.

Nationally Designated Sites

- 4.3** The closest designated site was Weston Hills Local Nature Reserve (LNR) c.420m to the south of the Site. Weston Hills LNR contains areas of rare and valuable chalk grassland rich in wild flowers, butterflies and the woodland attracts many bird species.

Habitats

- 4.4** A UKHab map of the site is provided within Appendix 3, whilst plant species recorded per habitat type are provided in Appendix 4.

- 4.5** The UKHab types within the site are listed below, followed by a description of each habitat type:

- u1, 846, 847 Vegetated garden
- u1b Developed land; sealed surface
- u1b5 Buildings
- u1f, 847 Sparsely vegetated urban land
- h2b Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

u1, 846, 847 – Vegetated garden

- 4.6** A vegetated garden associated with the residential flats within the site is present in the north-eastern corner of the site. The sward was approximately 10 – 20cm. The garden was dominated by species associated with residential gardens. Flower beds and introduced shrub (secondary codes 846 and 847, respectively) were present throughout the garden. Species evident during the survey included perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, red valerian *Centranthus ruber*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* aggregate

(agg.), common nettle *Urtica dioica*, variegated bigleaf periwinkle *Vinca major variegata* and horsetail *Equisetum arvense* amongst others.

u1b – Developed land; sealed surface

- 4.7** A large proportion of the site is hardstanding, which comprises access roads, parking, a garage forecourt, a patio and pedestrian paths.

u1b5 – Buildings

- 4.8** A total of 11 buildings were present within the site, including a former petrol station and shop, several garages, a car dealership and a residential property comprising two flats with an associated private garage.

u1f, 847 – Sparsely vegetated urban land

- 4.9** An area of sparsely vegetated urban land is present between buildings B3 and B4. This area may have been planted previously with introduced shrub but it appears to have been left unmanaged for some time. Species present include Leyland cypress *Cupressus x leylandii*, cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, butterfly-bush *Buddleia davidii* and ivy *Helix hedera*.

h2b – Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

- 4.10** Hedgerow H1 was present along the south-eastern boundary of the residential flats. It was a managed hedgerow with garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium*, yew *Taxus baccata* and immature elder *Sambucus nigra*. Common nettle and cleavers *Galium aparine* were observed at the hedgerow base.

Priority habitats

- 4.11** No priority habitats were identified within the site.
- 4.12** No priority habitats were identified on Magic Map within 100m of the site.

Summary

- 4.13** The vegetated garden, sparsely vegetated urban land and hedgerow were of **Site** importance for biodiversity. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Protected and Notable Species

- 4.14** Protected species are animals and plants protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, or listed in Section 40 or 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Protected and notable species with existing records within 2km of the site are detailed below.

Protected and invasive flora

- 4.15** *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, a species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), was identified within the site. No other Schedule 9 species or protected plant species were identified within, or adjacent to, the site.
- 4.16** Given the common and widespread habitats present, it is considered unlikely that protected flora would be present.
- 4.17** The site is therefore considered to be of **Site** importance for flora. The confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Badger

- 4.18** Informal records for the local vicinity have confirmed the presence of badgers within 2km of the site.
- 4.19** No evidence of badgers was observed during the site visit. There are no opportunities for sett creation within the site and the habitats present are sub-optimal for this species given their relative isolation from areas of suitable badger habitat.
- 4.20** The site is currently considered of up to **Negligible** importance for badger. The confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Bats

- 4.21** Informal records for the local vicinity have confirmed the presence of barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus* within 2km of the site.
- 4.22** Two European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences for bats have been granted within 2km of the site. The closest was 380m south of the site (EPSM2009-1599) which was for the destruction of a common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle resting place.

Bats – roosting

- 4.23** A summary of the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the buildings can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Preliminary Roost Assessment of buildings on-site

Building number	Description	Access Points	Potential Roost Locations	Bat Roost Suitability
B1	Single storey shed and lean-to associated with building B2. The building has a timber frame and single-skin timber weatherboard walls. The roof is pitched with a flat section, comprising a mixture of clay peg tiles and bitumen felt. There are clay half round tiles on the ridge. The roof is lined internally with bitumen felt. No loft void present.	- Open-sided on the southern elevation - Gaps in wooden weatherboarding	- Underneath slipped/missing tiles	Low
B2	Two-storey residential building comprising two flats. Brick walls with pebbledash render. Gabled roof with slate peg tiles and two chimneys. The loft void has a timber frame, is lined with bitumen felt and is insulated with loose fill vermiculite.	- Gaps under eaves on the northern and southern elevations - Gaps under lead flashing on the ridge	- Under lead flashing on the ridge and round the chimney bases - Enclosed roof void - Gaps in timber frame joins	Low
B3	Single storey residential garage associated with building B2. Single-skin wooden weatherboard walls and a gabled roof with slate peg tiles. The ridge is clay half round tiles. Unknown whether a loft void is present due to no internal access.	- Slipped/missing tiles - Gaps under eaves - Gaps in weatherboarding - Broken window	- Gaps under slipped/missing tiles - Crevice features between timbers	Low
B4	Single storey garage (to two-storey height) with solid brick walls. Flat metal roof. No loft void present.	- None	- None	Negligible
B5	Single storey car dealership with solid brick and concrete breezeblock walls. Gabled roof with clay pantiles and corrugated metal sections. Clay half round tiles on the ridge. No loft void present.	- Gaps under tiles - Missing mortar under ridge tile on the south-west elevation	- Gaps under tiles - Gaps between tiles and internal roof lining	Low

Building number	Description	Access Points	Potential Roost Locations	Bat Roost Suitability
B6	Single storey former petrol station with attached shop. The building has solid brick walls and a flat roof of a mixture of bitumen felt and metal. No loft void present.	- None	- None	Negligible
B7	Single storey MOT test centre (to two-storey height). Solid brick walls. Gabled roof with clay pantiles and a flat roofed section with bitumen felt. The ridge tiles are clay half round tiles. uPVC weatherboarding on southern elevation. No loft void present.	- None	- None	Negligible
B8	Single storey office with solid brick walls. Gabled roof with clay pantiles and clay half round ridge tiles. uPVC weatherboarding on southern elevation. The building has a loft void which was inaccessible.	- Gaps under eaves - Gaps under uPVC weatherboarding	- Enclosed roof void	Low
B9	Single storey garage with solid brick walls. Flat, corrugated asbestos panel roof. No insulation and no lining present. No loft void present.	- Hole in wooden soffit - Open/damaged garage door - Gap under flashing - Gap behind wooden bargeboard	- None	Negligible
B10	Single storey garage with solid concrete breezeblock walls with pebble dash render. Gabled roof with corrugated asbestos and asbestos ridge tiles. No loft void present.	- None	- None	Negligible
B11	Single storey MOT centre (to two-storey height) with solid brick walls. Gabled roof with corrugated asbestos. No loft void present.	- None	- None	Negligible

4.24 The site is considered to have up to ‘low’ suitability to support roosting bats, as defined by best practice guidance (Collins, 2023).

4.25 Given the roosting resource available, the site is considered to be of **Site** importance for roosting bats. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Bats – foraging

4.26 The garden habitats, introduced shrub and hedgerow provided suitable but sub-optimal habitat for foraging bats. The site's habitats were considered to be of 'low' suitability for foraging and commuting bats (Collins, 2023).

4.27 The site is therefore currently considered to be of **Site** importance for foraging and commuting bats. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Birds

4.28 Numerous informal records of birds were identified within 2km of the site. Those of relevance to the site and its habitats included blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, robin *Erithacus rubecula*, great tit *Parus major*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* and house sparrow *Passer domesticus*.

4.29 The introduced shrub and hedgerow within the site provided nesting, shelter and foraging habitat while the garden habitats also provided suitable foraging for certain species. Some of the buildings provide nesting habitat for a small range of species. Disused bird nests were observed within building B1.

4.30 Overall, the site is likely to support a common assemblage of breeding and non-breeding species. As such, the site was considered to be of up to **Site** importance. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Great crested newts

4.31 One informal record for GCN was returned within 2km of the site, located approximately 1.7km to the north.

4.32 No ponds are present within the site and no ponds were identified on Ordnance Survey mapping within 250m of the site.

4.33 The garden habitats and introduced shrub was considered to be sub-optimal for GCN, given their relative isolation from areas of suitable GCN habitat in the wider landscape. The hedgerow provided opportunities for commuting, foraging and sheltering for GCN.

4.34 Given the lack of waterbodies within 250m of the site, breeding GCN are considered to be absent from the site and the local area. Given the sub-optimal habitats present, the site was considered to be of up to **Negligible** importance. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Hazel dormice

- 4.35** There are no informal records for hazel dormice within 2km of the site.
- 4.36** The majority of the site was considered to be unsuitable for hazel dormice due to the nature of the habitats. The non-native and ornamental hedgerow is unsuitable for this species as it would not provide the continuum of nuts, berries, seeds, catkins or invertebrates required by this species to maintain them throughout their active season. It is considered that hazel dormice are unlikely to be present on-site.
- 4.37** As such, the site was considered to be of up to **Negligible** importance. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Invertebrates

- 4.38** Numerous informal records for invertebrates were identified within 2km of the site including a range of moths and butterflies.
- 4.39** The hedgerow, introduced shrub and garden habitats provided suitable invertebrate habitat for a range of common and widespread invertebrate species.
- 4.40** The site is considered to be of **Site** importance for invertebrates. The confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Reptiles

- 4.41** Informal records for grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, adder *Vipera berus* and common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* were identified within 2km of the site.
- 4.42** The majority of the site was considered to be unsuitable for reptiles due to the urban nature of the habitats. The garden habitats, introduced shrub and hedgerow provide sub-optimal habitat to reptiles as they are small and fragmented. The habitats are unlikely to support a persistent population of reptiles given the surrounding arable land and residential and commercial properties.
- 4.43** The site was considered to be of up to **Negligible** importance for reptiles. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Other notable species

- 4.44** Informal records for hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and brown hare *Lepus europaeus* were identified within 2km of the site.
- 4.45** The garden habitats, introduced shrub and hedgerow were considered to be suitable for foraging and commuting hedgehog, though they are limited in size. The site was heavily urbanised and is likely to be subject to high levels of disturbance. The habitats within the site are unlikely to be utilised by brown hare given that they are relatively limited in size. There is also plenty of more suitable arable land in the wider vicinity which this species is more likely to be utilising. The site was considered to have

potential to be of **Site** importance for hedgehog and **Negligible** importance for brown hare. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Summary

4.46 An summary evaluation of the surveyed area in relation to ecology features is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Evaluation of existing ecological features

Feature	Summary Description	Importance	Confidence
Statutory Designated Sites	Weston Hills	National	High
Habitats	The grassland, hedgerow and tree habitats are considered to be of site importance.	Site	High
Badgers	No sett creation opportunities within the site. Habitats assessed as sub-optimal.	Negligible	High
Bats	A small number of buildings with potential to support roosting bats exist within the site. The hedgerow was of 'low' suitability for foraging and commuting bats.	Site	High
Birds	Overall, the site is likely to support a common assemblage of breeding and non-breeding species.	Site	High
Great crested newts	No ponds present within the site or within 250m. Sub-optimal habitats within the site. Species considered unlikely to be present.	Negligible	High
Hazel dormice	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow considered unsuitable to support this species. Species considered unlikely to be present.	Negligible	High
Invertebrates	The habitats provided suitability for a range of common invertebrate species.	Site	High
Reptiles	The majority of the site was considered to be unsuitable for reptiles.	Negligible	High
Other notable species	Suitable habitat for hedgehog. No suitable habitat for brown hare.	Site	High

5.0 Preliminary Impacts, Mitigation/Enhancement Measures and Residual Effects

Description of Proposals

- 5.1** The proposals for the site are to demolish all property on the site with the exception of the corner house (no. 53), to be replaced with a newly constructed a petrol filling station fronting Clothall Road and 9no. residential dwellings with access from South Road.

Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.2** There are no international statutory designated sites within 5km of the site Weston Hills LNR is present c.420m to the south. Due to the distance and scale of the proposals no significant effects are considered likely. Standard industry pollution prevention methods during construction should be implemented. It is therefore predicted that the development will result in a **neutral** residual effect on any designated sites. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Habitats

- 5.3** The habitats of greatest ecological value within the site include the garden habitats, introduced shrub and the non-native and ornamental hedgerow.
- 5.4** Potential impacts during the construction phase include direct loss of habitat through site clearance and damage to retained habitats (e.g. due to pollution events, or through direct damage or compaction of roots). In addition, retained habitats could be subject to indirect effects through increased light disturbance. During the occupational phase, retained habitats are also at risk of losing their ecological functionality through edge effects due to lighting, therefore adversely affecting their biodiversity value.
- 5.5** *Cotoneaster horizontalis* was present within the site and is currently proposed for removal. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it an offence to plant or otherwise cause *Cotoneaster horizontalis* to grow in the wild. This includes spreading the species or transferring polluted ground material from one area to another. Consequently, the cotoneaster will need to be removed sensitively to ensure that this species is not allowed to spread. Control measures will be outlined within a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): Biodiversity.
- 5.6** The development is considered to meet the mandatory net gain requirements (MHCLG, 2024) and therefore an accompanying Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment should be undertaken and produced using The Statutory Metric.
- 5.7** An appropriate management plan, such as a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), should also be prepared in order to ensure that all retained, created and enhanced habitats (significant enhancements) are managed to deliver enhancements for biodiversity.

- 5.8** Further enhancements proposed to benefit specific fauna (including bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog highways) are detailed within this report.
- 5.9** The above mitigation measures are considered likely to result in a **positive** residual effect for habitats.

Protected and Notable Species

Bats – roosting

- 5.10** All bat species are legally protected under the WCA (1981, as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017, as amended). Taken together, it is an offence to destroy/damage or obstruct access to a bat roost, to kill/injure or disturb individual bats, or to deliberately disturb bats in such a way to be likely to significantly affect their ability to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young or their local distribution.
- 5.11** Five buildings (B1, B2, B3, B5 and B8) were assessed as having ‘low’ suitability to support roosting bats. These buildings, with the exception of B2, are due to be demolished and as such, further surveys are recommended to address the potential presence of roosting bats. In accordance with best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2023), one dusk emergence survey should be carried out between May and August for each of B1, B2, B3, B5 and B8.
- 5.12** The proposed development provides the opportunity to enhance the site for bats through the provision of additional roosting features integrated into the new buildings. There are a wide range of bat boxes available that could be integrated into brickwork or externally mounted upon buildings (see figure 1 for example).

Figure 1: Schwegler 1FD bat box erected on a tree



- 5.13** Boxes should be sited at a minimum 3m height, with a clear uncluttered flight path to the box. Ideally, the boxes would be installed with a variety of orientations, including south-facing.
- 5.14** If any new external lighting is necessary, this should avoid directly lighting the retained and boundary vegetation. A sensitive lighting strategy should be employed throughout

both the construction and occupation phases of the development to reduce indirect impacts on local bat populations. In general, it is recommended that site lighting around key features likely to be used by foraging or commuting bats is avoided. If lighting is necessary, this should avoid directly lighting vegetation likely to be utilised by bats, seeking to maintain lux levels along such features (waterbodies, hedgerows and tree canopies) that are in the region of natural nocturnal light levels (generally 0.25 lux or below, up to a maximum of 1 lux). The following mitigation strategies have been taken from the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (2018) and other referenced sources, and should be used to guide the development of the sensitive lighting scheme, as appropriate:

- In general, light sources will not emit ultra-violet light to avoid attracting insects and thus potentially reducing numbers in adjacent areas, which bats may use for foraging. Metal halide and fluorescent sources will not be used.
- LED luminaires will be used where possible. A warm white spectrum (ideally <2700Kelvin) will be adopted to reduce blue light component. Luminaires will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone, 2012).
- The height of lighting columns will be limited to 8m and the spacing of lighting columns will be increased to reduce spill of light into unwanted areas such as hedgerows and trees (Fure, 2006). Only luminaires with an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control will be used. Luminaires will always be mounted on the horizontal, i.e. no upward tilt.
- Other ways to reduce light spill include the use of directional luminaires, shields, baffles and/or louvres. Flat, cut-off lanterns are best. Additionally, lights will be located away from reflective surfaces where the reflection of light will spill onto potential foraging/commuting corridors. Internal luminaires can be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill. Where windows and glass facades etc. cannot be avoided, low transmission glazing treatments may be a suitable option in achieving reduced illuminance targets.
- Lighting that is required for security or access will use a lamp of no greater than 2000 lumens (150 Watts) and be PIR sensor activated on a short timer (1 minute), to ensure that the lights are only on when required and turned off when not in use (Jones, 2000; Hundt, 2012). A control management system can be used to dim (typically to 25% or less) or turn off groups of lights when not in use.

Bats – foraging

- 5.15** The site's habitats were considered to be of 'low' value for foraging and commuting bats.
- 5.16** The garden habitats and hedgerow will be retained, with no additional lighting. No further bat activity surveys are considered necessary as the suitability of these areas for commuting and foraging bats will be retained.
- 5.17** A small patch of introduced shrub will be removed to facilitate the development. However, post-development, the site will see an increase in garden habitats and modified grassland areas, as well as shrub and tree planting. Consequently, the site

will become more suitable for foraging and commuting bats, as the site will provide a better foraging resource.

- 5.18** Current proposals indicate the provision of enhancement/compensation measures in the form of new trees to be planted. New planting should be of native fruit-producing and nectar-rich tree species as this is more favourable for invertebrates (bats prey). This approach would serve to enhance the site for bats by improving connectivity and offering an additional foraging resource. Further enhancement could be delivered through the planting of flora known to be favoured by their invertebrate prey within the new residential gardens, such as night-flowering and nectar-producing species attractive to moths.
- 5.19** The above mitigation measures are considered likely to result in a **positive** residual effect.

Birds

- 5.20** All breeding birds are protected from deliberate destruction under the WCA 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (exceptions to this are listed in Schedule 2). In addition, a select group of species are further listed under Schedule 1 of the Act and these have additional protection that makes it an offence to disturb these birds at the nest, or to disturb their dependent young. In addition to this statutory protection British birds are also classified according to their conservation status, including their position on the Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC; 2021) and whether they have been identified as Priority Species.
- 5.21** The habitats present within the site are likely to support common and widespread species. Therefore, potential impacts on nesting birds include death, damage to and disturbance of nests, and loss of nesting habitat, during vegetation clearance prior to construction.
- 5.22** Loss of introduced shrub and buildings is anticipated. Work involving clearance of nesting bird habitat should be undertaken outside of the main nesting bird season (March to August inclusive) to avoid destruction of an active nest. If this option is not available, the works should be carried out only following a nesting bird check carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist (within 48 hours prior to works) has confirmed the absence of any active nests. Any active nests located during inspections will be protected with a suitable buffer of retained vegetation around the nest (of appropriate size to the species) and monitored until the nest is no longer active/all chicks have fledged, when the ecologist will provide sign off for clearance to be undertaken.
- 5.23** To enhance the site for nesting birds, artificial nesting opportunities are recommended to be integrated into the new building. Boxes are recommended to be included on buildings to attract species known to occur locally, in particular house sparrow.

Figure 2: Schwegler 1B bird box for installation on trees



Invertebrates

- 5.24** Loss of habitats suitable for common and widespread invertebrates is currently proposed with the loss of introduced shrub anticipated. The garden habitats and hedgerow which have suitability for invertebrates will be retained.
- 5.25** Enhancements should include additional planting elsewhere within the site to include planting of native fruit and seed-bearing trees and shrubs.
- 5.26** These measures could result in a **positive** residual effect for invertebrates.

Other Notable Species

- 5.27** Section 40 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 places a legal duty on Local Authorities to conserve biodiversity. Section 41 (S41) sets out a list of 943 species and habitats of principal importance. These species are known as England Biodiversity Priority (EBP) species and are those identified as requiring action under the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. Amongst these species are hedgehog for which suitable habitat exists within the areas of garden, introduced shrub and hedgerow.
- 5.28** Potential impacts to hedgehog include risk of death/injury during construction/vegetation clearance during the operational phase.
- 5.29** Any fencing installed on-site should be fitted with 15x15cm gaps at the base acting as 'hedgehog highways' to allow their dispersal across the site.
- 5.30** If during construction a hedgehog is found it should be left in situ, and all works should cease within the vicinity of the area with either a professional ecologist or the Hedgehog Preservation Society contacted for further advice. In most cases the hedgehog can be moved by hand to a nearby off-site place of safety. However, dependant on the time of year, i.e. if temperatures are low (below 10°C) and the hedgehog was found within the hedgehog hibernation season (from November to March) then it may be necessary to take the hedgehog to a wildlife sanctuary. Moving

a pregnant hedgehog or hedgehog with young can also result in mortality; so moving hedgehogs should be considered the last resort and informed by a professional ecologist.

- 5.31** Creation of vegetated gardens and new tree/hedgerow planting would benefit hedgehog by providing foraging and refuge opportunities within the site. Sensitive working and clearance methods will deliver a **neutral** residual effect for notable species during construction.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1** The site is generally of low biodiversity value (commercial buildings, a residential garden, introduced shrub and a non-native and ornamental hedge). The habitats of greatest ecological value within the site include the residential garden and non-native and ornamental hedgerow. A BNG assessment should be undertaken to accompany this report and demonstrate that the proposals result in a net gain in biodiversity.
- 6.2** No further surveys are recommended for any of the species discussed within this report, with the exception of roosting bats, as several buildings require further emergence surveys to determine whether roosting bats are present.
- 6.3** If works cannot be timed to avoid the nesting bird season, a nesting bird check will need to be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. It is recommended that the proposed scheme retains the non-native and ornamental hedgerow where possible.
- 6.4** A summary of ecological features, the likely impacts and outline mitigation/enhancement measures is provided in Table 3. A CEMP: Biodiversity is recommended to detail mitigation measures required to minimise potential impacts on any protected sites and species, including the sensitive removal of cotoneaster.
- 6.5** Through incorporation of relevant recommendations, it is considered that the proposals can deliver positive residual impacts in line with current wildlife legislation, chapter 15 of the NPPF (MHCLG, 2024); and local planning policies relevant to nature conservation.

Table 3: Summary of likely impacts, mitigation and enhancement measures and residual effects

Feature	Potential Impacts	Further Surveys and Assessment	Likely Mitigation and Enhancement Measures	Residual Effect
Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites	None considered likely to occur.	N/A	Standard industry pollution prevention.	Neutral
Habitats	Direct loss Impacts to retained habitats of value during construction, including via direct damage, pollution events, light and noise Lighting of retained and created habitats during the operational phase. Spread of <i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>	BNG assessment	Retention, protection and enhancement of habitats of ecological value Sensitive lighting scheme Habitat creation and/or enhancement CEMP: Biodiversity Removal/control of cotoneaster	Positive
Bats	Lighting impacts during/post-construction	Roost emergence surveys of buildings	Sensitive lighting to be detailed within CEMP: Biodiversity Provision of bat boxes/suitable roost features on new buildings New tree planting	Positive
Birds	Injury/death of birds and eggs Destruction/damage of nests	N/A	Retention of non-native and ornamental hedgerow Nesting bird checks pre-construction (if required) Provision of artificial nesting opportunities (bird boxes) on new buildings New tree planting	Positive

Feature	Potential Impacts	Further Surveys and Assessment	Likely Mitigation and Enhancement Measures	Residual Effect
Invertebrates	Habitat loss Light disturbance during and post-construction	N/A	Retention of residential garden and non-native and ornamental hedgerow Wildlife friendly planting incorporating resources for a range of pollinator species. Sensitive lighting scheme	Neutral
Hedgehog	Death/injury Habitat loss	N/A	Standard mitigation measures to avoid harm during construction such as capping pipes and adding planks to excavations Hedgehog highways in fencing	Neutral

7.0 **References**

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Appendix 1: Site Location Plan



Appendix 2: Legislative and Policy Framework

This document has not been prepared by a legal or planning professional and should be read as an interpretation of relevant statutes and planning policy guidance only. The information presented within this document has been reported in good faith and are the genuine opinion of Crossland Ecology on such matters. Crossland Ecology does not accept any liability resulting from outcomes relating to the use of this information or its interpretation within this document.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The *NPPF* (MHCLG, 2024) outlines what the planning system should do to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through the following policy statements:

Paragraph 8

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy

Paragraph 20

Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for:

- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation

Paragraph 29

Non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies

Paragraph 77:

The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes). Working with the support of their communities, and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way. In doing so, they should:

- a) consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;

Paragraph 109

Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve:

- f) Identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains

Paragraph 124

Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

Paragraph 125

Planning policies and decisions should:

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

Paragraph 151

Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land. Where Green Belt land is released for development through plan preparation or review, the 'Golden Rules' in paragraph 156 below should apply.

Paragraph 187

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

Paragraph 188

Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Paragraph 192

To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Paragraph 193

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Paragraph 194

The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites;
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Paragraph 195

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Paragraph 198

Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

North Herts Local Plan 2011 – 2031

The North Herts Local Plan (adopted 8th November 2022) provides a single policy which covers biodiversity.

Policy NE4: Biodiversity and geological sites

Planning permission will only be granted for development proposals that appropriately protect, enhance and manage biodiversity in accordance with the hierarchy and status of designations and features listed in Policy SP12.

All development should deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity and geodiversity, contribute to ecological networks and the water environment, and/or restore degraded or isolated habitats where possible.

Applicants should, having regard to the status of any affected site(s) or feature(s):

- a) Submit an ecological survey that is commensurate to the scale and location of the development and the likely impact on biodiversity, the legal protection or other status of the site;
- b) Demonstrate that adverse effects can be avoided and/or satisfactorily minimised having regard to the hierarchy of protection below:
 - i) Locating on an alternative site with a less harmful impact;
 - ii) Providing adequate mitigation measures; or
 - iii) As a last resort compensated for.

The acceptability of approach(es) to avoidance, mitigation and compensation will be commensurate with the status of the asset(s) likely to be affected by the application; Compensation is unlikely to be an appropriate solution for proposals affecting nationally or internationally designated sites other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

- c) Include appropriate measures to manage construction impacts by demonstrating how existing wildlife habitats supporting protected or priority species will be retained, safeguarded and managed during construction;
- d) Integrate appropriate buffers of complimentary habitat for designated sites and other connective features, wildlife habitats, priority habitats and species into the ecological mitigation and design. The appropriateness of any buffers will be considered having regard to the status of the relevant habitat. 12 metres of complimentary habitat should be provided around wildlife sites (locally designated sites and above), trees and hedgerows. It may be necessary to exceed this distance for fragile habitats such as ancient woodland or to provide appropriate root protection for mature trees; and
- e) Provide a long-term management and monitoring plan including mitigation measures as necessary.

Local Geological Sites are ratified by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) and are afforded the same protection as Local Wildlife Sites.

Wildlife Legislation

The two principal wildlife statutes are the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (The Habitats Regulations 2019), which deals with internationally important sites and species, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, which deals with nationally important sites and species.

Certain habitats and species within discrete sites are protected as SSSI under the WCA 1981. A proportion of these are more strictly protected as proposed or designated SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019). These designations protect features and resources listed as being of international importance from both direct and indirect effects arising from a range of issues including proposed development. In addition, non-statutory designated sites (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites) are protected under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, (1949) Section 21.

Certain species listed on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981, including all bat species, great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* and otter *Lutra lutra* are also protected under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 making them European Protected Species (EPS). Taken together it is illegal to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture any wild animal of EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any EPS in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
 - The ability of that species to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young; or
 - The local distribution of that species.
- Recklessly disturb an EPS or obstruct access to their place of rest;
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of such animals;
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
- Possess or transport any part of an EPS, unless acquired legally; and/or
- Sell, barter or exchange any part of an EPS.

A range of species other than birds, including water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, is protected from disturbance and destruction under the WCA 1981 through inclusion on Schedule 5.

All breeding birds are protected from deliberate destruction under the WCA 1981. Certain species are further protected from disturbance at their nest sites being listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981.

Common reptiles including common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus* are protected under the WCA 1981, they are listed as schedule 5 species, therefore part of Section 9(1) and section 9(5) apply; the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) also strengthens their protection.

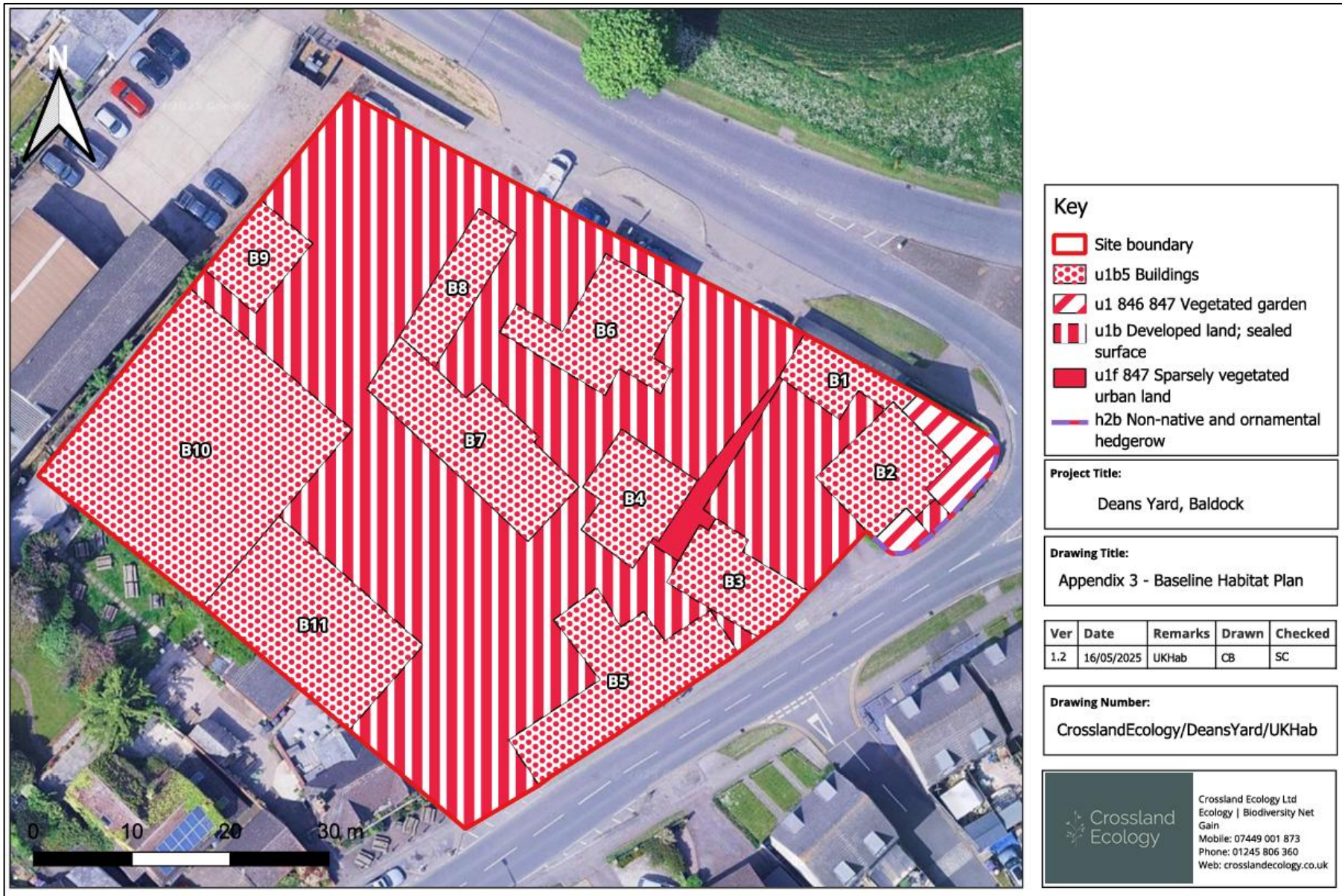
Badger *Meles meles* is protected from sett disturbance and destruction under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Section 40 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 places a legal duty on Local Authorities to conserve biodiversity. Section 41 (S41) sets out a list of 943 species and Habitats of Principal Importance. These species are known as England Biodiversity Priority (EBP) species and are those identified as requiring action under the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Native, species-rich hedgerows that fit certain criteria are protected as being 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997).

Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*, along with other introduced and invasive species are listed under Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981. Japanese knotweed is highly invasive, and its rhizomes cause damage to buildings and other infrastructure. Hence it is also classed as controlled waste under the Environment Protection Act 1990 and has therefore either to be removed or disposed of in a licensed landfill or the rhizomes buried to a depth of at least 5m.

Appendix 3: Baseline Habitats



Appendix 4: UKHab Survey Plant Species

Common name	Latin name	Vegetated garden	Sparsely vegetated urban land (Introduced shrub)	Hedgerow H1
Bristly ox-tongue	<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	O		
Butterfly bush	<i>Buddleja davidii</i>		D	
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>			F
Cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	D		
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	F		F
Cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i>		D	
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	O		
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	A		
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	A		
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>			R
Garden privet	<i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i>			D
Heather	<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	R		
Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	R		
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>		D	F
Leyland cypress	<i>Cupressus x leylandii</i>		D	
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	F		
Red valerian	<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	R		
Spanish bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i>	F		
Variegated bigleaf periwinkle	<i>Vinca major variegata</i>	R		
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>			R

Appendix 5: Site Photographs

Photo 1: Southern elevation of B1



Photo 2: Northern elevation of B1



Photo 3: Eastern elevation of B2



Photo 4: B2 (internal)



Photo 5: Northern elevation of B3



Photo 6: Southern elevation of B3



Photo 7: Northern elevation of B4



Photo 8: South and west elevations of B5



Photo 9: Eastern elevation of B5



Photo 10: B6



Photo 11: Southern elevation of B6



Photo 12: Western elevations of B7 and B8



Photo 13: Northern elevation of B7



Photo 14: North and east elevations of B8



Photo 15: Gap behind uPVC weatherboarding on northern elevation of B8



Photo 16: Locked loft hatch preventing access to the loft void in B8

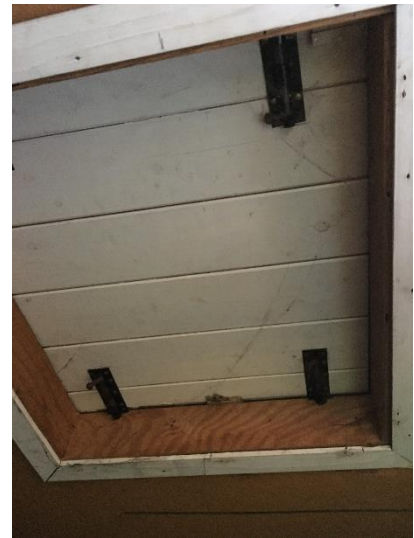


Photo 17: Eastern elevation of B9



Photo 18: Eastern elevation of B10



Photo 19: Northern elevation of B10



Photo 20: Eastern elevation of B11



Photo 21: Northern elevation of B11



Photo 22: Introduced shrub



Photo 23: Hedgerow H1



Photo 24: Vegetated garden

