



SMALL ECOLOGY LIMITED

Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report

Demolition of existing barn and infill development



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Report summary

Scope	Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report,
Project	Demolition of existing barn and infill development
Planning description	Erection of infill self build/custom build dwelling, demolition of barn and associated works
Address	Fears End, Sandon, Buntingford, Hertfordshire SG9 0QZ
Grid reference	532610, 234977
Development area (approx)	2 500m ²
Date of site visit	11/07/25
Date of MAGIC search	02/12/25
Planning authority	North Hertfordshire District Council
Application reference	not yet confirmed
Report author	Chris Smith, CEnv, MIEMA

Non-technical summary

This report is a Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report that assesses Demolition of existing barn and infill development, described in the report as the project. The project location is at Fears End, Sandon, Buntingford, Hertfordshire SG9 0QZ and the grid reference is 532610, 234977. The development area of the project extends to an area of 2 500m².

The report is to assist a planning application to North Hertfordshire District Council, for which the reference is not yet confirmed. The description of the project in the planning application is "*Erection of infill self build/custom build dwelling, demolition of barn and associated works*".

The report was produced to inform the client and their design team about:

- the key ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the project;
- key possible mitigation requirements following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy'; and
- any detailed further surveys that might be required.

Supporting surveys

The following were carried out to establish an ecological baseline at the site:

- a desktop search, including of MAGIC and of the Local Environment Records Centres;
- a walkover of the site and surrounding areas on 11/07/25, including an assessment of the potential for protected species.

Personnel

Chris Smith CEnv, MIEMA, who has a Level 2 (CL18) licence to survey bats from Natural England and a Level 1 licence (CL08) to survey for newts, carried out the field work and report writing.

Designated sites

There are no designated sites within 1km of the site.

There are Local Wildlife Sites within or near to the site. The nearest is Philpotts Wood, 130m to the east.

Summary of scoping assessment

Table 1: Scoping assessment for site features: Habitats

Habitat	Potential S41 priority habitat?	Local significance?	Details	Further consideration?
g4 Other neutral grassland	No	Yes	Grassland created by client in 2020 from wildflower mix (Emorsgate EM3); dominated by variety of grasses, but with good diversity of common forbs; uniform height; no rare or scarce species; significant proportion of White Clover; drift noted from original mix. Not S41 on basis of low forb cover and presence of White Clover.	Yes
u1b Urban, sealed surface	No	No	Existing barn [AH07] proposed for demolition. Not of ecological significance for bats.	No
h2a5 Species rich Native Hedgerows	Yes	Yes	Hedges with trees on frontage of road; continue running north and south of site along road; parallel hedges on opposite side; species-rich; associated ditch; no associated flora	Yes

Table 2 Scoping assessment for site features: Species

Species	Statutory protection?	Evidence of presence?	Potentially present?	Details	Further consideration?
Rare and scarce plants	No	No	No	None noted within grassland or within seed mixes used	No
Great crested newts	Yes	No	No	No ponds nearby within 250m	No
Reptiles	Partial	No	No	Uniformly tall grassland with no basking points; regarded as unsuitable for reptiles	No
Breeding birds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Old nests and potential for nesting birds within the nearby house, garden and hedgerow. Species noted including Yellowhammer singing in the trees adjacent, and also Blackbird, Chaffinch and Dunnock.	Yes
- Barn owls and other Schedule 1 species	Yes	No	No	No signs of barn owls noted; no potential roosting or breeding sites within site.	No
Water vole	Yes	No	No	Ditch present along south side regarded as too shallow and ephemeral to support species; no potential for water voles.	No

Species	Statutory protection?	Evidence of presence?	Potentially present?	Details	Further consideration?
Hazel dormouse	Yes	No	No	Majority of site unsuitable habitats; hedgerows recently coppiced; significant distance to suitable habitat such as Philpott's Wood; no nearby records.	No
Bats					
- Roosts within site	Yes	No	No	See details of buildings. Roosts present within bungalow and in nearby barns. Not within building to be demolished.	No
- Foraging/commuting	Yes	No	Yes	Rural locality with good hedgerows; near very large woods to east; highly likely to be used by foraging commuting bats on south side	Yes
Badger	Yes	No	No	No obvious signs of badgers within the hedge or site. The surrounding landscapes is highly suitable for badgers with large woodlands and a good hedgerow network. .	No

Likely significant effects

The project's main impacts are seen as being the following pathways:

- Direct loss of hedgerows and trees from opening of the new entrance and any widening of visibility splays; or during construction works or from;
- Direct effects on breeding birds within hedgerows if carried out during the breeding season;
- Increased light levels in nearby hedges and effects on nocturnal species, in particular bats;
- Loss of grassland habitat created in 2020;
- Accidental discharges to the ditch along road frontage affecting water quality downstream.

Additional surveys and assessments

Additional recommended surveys are set out in the following table and if species are present mitigation may be required to prevent impacts upon them.

Table 3: Further surveys required

Feature	Additional surveys	Target areas
Breeding birds	If clearance work carried out during breeding season, carry out breeding bird surveys to establish if birds are present	Hedgerow; trees

"Biodiversity Net Gain" does not apply to the development as the application is for a self-build.

Application of the mitigation hierarchy

Suggestions are made as to a strategy for the Application of the mitigation hierarchy, which is a sequence of four key actions being 'avoid', 'minimize', 'restore' and 'offset', is set out in best practice by Ekstrom et al (2015) ¹

¹.Ekstrom, J., Bennun L and Robin Mitchell, R. (Lead authors) (2015) A cross-sector guide for implementing the Mitigation Hierarchy. Prepared by The Biodiversity Consultancy for CSBI

Table 4: Mitigation hierarchy

Avoid	Minimise	Restore/offset
Retaining the existing hedgerows on site and associated trees; Maintaining a buffer for the hedgerow and the development during construction. Avoiding accidental discharge into the existing ditch; Avoiding additional lighting by incorporating a lighting design to prevent light pollution. The site should be subject to a lighting plan as per Zone E2 of ILP Guidance.	Reducing as far as feasible any hedgerow loss from creation of the new access point and visibility splays; Retaining as much existing grassland as possible within the landscaping scheme; Implementing mitigation measures as set out in recommendations for the Construction stage below.	Planting additional native hedgerows along the site boundary; Enhancing management of any retained grassland and where not feasible restoring arable to grassland elsewhere within the blue line. A suggested location is AH20, an area of arable land between Fears End and Philpotts Wood.

The works should be subject to a Construction Environment Management Plan, to include details of working methods; access routes; Construction Exclusion Zones as required; location of any storage for materials; location of compounds and control of any substances hazardous to the environment; and works after dark or use artificial lighting; and post construction restoration measures.

Outline species specific measures are as follows.

Table 5: Outline species specific measures

Species	Mitigation measures required	Required measures
Breeding birds	Yes: if during breeding season	Site clearance works should ideally be completed outside the bird nesting season (1 March to 31 August) or only be completed following checks by an appropriately experienced ecologist. Retention of hedgerow network; shrub and tree planting within development
Bats		
Foraging/ commuting	Yes	Lighting plan. Retention of hedgerow network

Proposed enhancements

The following suggestions are made with respect to enhancing the site :

- To the east or south around the site boundary, a new native hedge could be planted.
- The hedgerow on the site frontage could be coppiced and gapped up to create a denser growth more attractive to wildlife; additional tree planting could take place within hedgerows.

- Bat and bird boxes could be included within the new building or on adjacent trees.

Requirements for licencing

There are no identified requirements for licencing.

1. Background

This report is a Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report that assesses Demolition of existing barn and infill development, described in the report as the project.

Description of project

The report supports a planning application to North Hertfordshire District Council, for which the reference is not yet confirmed. The description of the project in the planning application is "*Erection of infill self build/custom build dwelling, demolition of barn and associated works*". The barn for demolition is to the west and has existing Class Q approval for conversion to residential.

The site is located at Fears End, Sandon, Buntingford, Hertfordshire SG9 0QZ at 532610, 234977. The development extends to an area of 2 500m².

Objectives of report

The report was produced to inform the client and their design team about

- the key ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the project;
- key possible mitigation requirements following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy'; and
- any detailed further surveys that might be required.

Description of supporting surveys

The following actions were carried out :

- a desktop search, including of MAGIC and of the Local Environment Records Centres;
- a walkover of the site and surrounding areas on 11/07/25, including an assessment of the potential for protected species.

2. Methods for desktop and field survey

Relevant protocols

The following protocols, as given in this document's appendices, were applied :

- Protocol for Preliminary Ecological Assessment ;
- Protocol for Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of buildings and structures, and
- Protocol for great crested newts.

Field visit

A field visit to the site was carried out on 11/07/25 between 09:00 and 11:30.

Weather conditions during the visit were as follows : “Cloud 0/8, Beaufort Scale 0; temperature 24°C rising rapidly; no rain in previous days; significant drought. ”.

During the field visit, checks were made of habitats on site and the grounds surrounding these.

Desktop

A desktop search was carried out using the following sources:

1. Open access sources, such as planning records.
2. A search of the Local Environment Records Centres, for which selected records are included at Appendix 5 : Desktop for designated sites.
3. A search of the DEFRA Multi-Agency Information Centre (MAGIC) on 02/12/25.

Personnel

Chris Smith CEnv, MIEMA, who has a Level 2 (CL18) licence to survey bats from Natural England (Ref 2015-13304-CLS-CLS) and a Level 1 licence (CL08) to survey for newts (Ref 2015-18961-CLS-CLS), carried out the field work and report writing.

3. Results

3.1 Site location and features

The project's location and key features are shown in Figure 1 : Site location and key features.

The proposed development area of the project extends to an area of 2 500m².

3.2 Protected sites

There are no statutorily designated sites within 1km.

There are Local Wildlife Sites near to the site. The nearest is Philpotts Wood, 130m to the east. These sites are summarised in [Appendix 5: Desktop search for designated sites](#).

The relationship of the development to these sites is shown in Figure 4 : Results of MAGIC search – priority habitats (© MAGIC 2025).

3.3 Habitats present

Features are target noted [Tx] in Figure 1 : Site location and key features. Photographs are presented in section 8. Photographs.

[g3c Other Neutral grassland](#)

The main area of the site [AH4] is "Other neutral grassland". This grassland was planted by the client using Emorsgate EM4² mix on arable land in May 2020.

There is some variation of composition within the sward. The sward is dominated by grasses with a mixture of Soft Brome *Bromus hordeaceus*, False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, Meadow Foxtail *Alopecurus pratense*, Crested Dogstail *Cynosorus cristatus*, and Timothy *Phleum pratense*.

Other grasses are also locally common, including Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, Meadow Barley *Hordeum secalineum* and Tall Fescue *Festuca arundinacea*.

Ladies' Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* are frequent. There is also present Smooth tare *Vicia tetrasperma*, Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Common Vetch *Vicia sativa*, Meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, Hedge bedstraw *Galium mollugo*, Tufted vetch *Vicia cracca*, Yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and scattered Ox-eye Daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*. There is very locally a patch of Ragged Robin *Silene flos-cuculi*.

This seems to be potentially cut for hay and it is about 50 centimetres tall and reasonably tussocky. It is bounded on the north side by the hedge of the neighbours farm. The grassland is a relatively uniform height. Whilst there are widespread forbs, these are at a

²<https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/complete-mixtures/meadow-mixtures-for-specific-soils/meadow-mixture-for-clay-soils/>

limited % cover (<20%). The sward contains significant amounts of White Clover *Trifolium arvense*.

The species do not appear to wholly correspond to the composition of EM4 and it is presumed there has been drift and colonisation. The client notes that diversity has tended to decline since initial establishment and that grasses have become more dominant.

The grassland area extends to about 2500m². Based on its size and recent origin the grassland is considered of "local significance".

The grassland is not mapped as S41 Priority Habitat on MAGIC. The grassland is a relevant consideration for planning.

h2a5 Species-rich Native Hedgerows

The site frontage consists of an outgrown hedgerow [LH1] with a variety of native species including Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, and Field Maple *Acer campestre* with some Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, and Oak *Quercus robur*. The hedge is open and gappy at the base, although some regeneration. Several Ash trees are multi-stemmed have been historically coppiced, but the hedge is otherwise unmanaged and untrimmed. Ivy *Hedera helix* is occasional. The adjacent arable field has no headland and is cultivated close to the hedge.

Trees are all small in diameter and there are no significant standard trees noted. There are no field entrances along the length to the field.

The roadside has a ditch [WC4], which drains to the River Rib³, but is presumed to be normally dry during the summer. There is no associated marginal vegetation and the vegetation along the roadside consists of Nettle *Urtica dioica* and other tall ruderals as well as coarse grasses such as Couch *Elymus repens*, Cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata* and False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, but also locally False Wood-brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*.

The hedgerow would benefit from coppicing or laying and gapping up in order to improve structure.

The hedgerow has 5 species and is species-rich and would qualify as S41 Priority Habitat. The hedgerow is a relevant consideration for planning.

u1b Urban, sealed surface

The existing cart lodge barn [AH07] is proposed for demolition. This is not of ecological significance for bats as noted below.

³See EA details of River Rib for catchment status

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody/GB106038040140>

3.4 Screening assessment for protected species

Rare and scarce plants

The desktop notes several rare and scarce plants within 2km, mainly associated with woodland habitats.

Whilst the nearby woodlands may have rare and scarce plants present, the grassland originates from a recently planted wildflower seed mix. Rare and scarce species are felt to be unlikely due to this origin. There was no evidence of rare or scarce plants found during the survey.

Rare and scarce plants are concluded as unlikely to be present based on the habitats. Rare and scarce plants are not a relevant consideration for planning.

Great crested newts

There was one EPSL within 2km, although there were no records of great crested newts on MAGIC. There were 9 records returned by the desktop within 2km including breeding records.

There are however no nearby ponds within 250m. The ditch is shallow and flowing during rain and is not regarded as suitable habitat.

Table 3.1: Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)

Case reference of granted application	Species group to which licence relates	Species on the licence	Site county of licence	Licence Start Date
EPSM2013-6044	Amphibian	Great Crested Newt	Hertfordshire	09/09/2013

The species feature is concluded as unlikely to be present based on the lack of nearby ponds. The habitats on site mostly consist of shortly mown lawn and hardstanding; and much of the site is of low suitability as terrestrial habitat.

Great crested newts and the habitat they use are protected under legislation. This species is a S41 Priority Species. This species feature is not a relevant consideration for planning.

Reptiles

Although no specific survey was carried out, there was no incidental evidence of reptiles found during the survey.

There were three records returned within 2km by the desktop, including a single record of common lizard from Blagrove Common HMWT Nature Reserve (HERC 2024).

Table 3.2: Reptile species within 2km from desktop

Common name	Latin name
Common Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>
Grass Snake	<i>Natrix helvetica</i>
Slow-worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>

The grassland is generally tall and uniform in height and without well-developed scrubby edges and other basking spots. The structure and management are viewed as unsuitable to support significant populations of reptiles.

The species feature is concluded as unlikely to be present based on the lack of suitable habitat.

All species of reptile are protected under legislation. Some species are S41 Priority Species. This species feature is not a relevant consideration for planning.

Breeding birds

There was evidence of breeding birds found during the survey, which included old nests within the building. There were common birds observed during the survey, which included singing Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* on hedges opposite to the site with Blackbird *Turdus merula*, Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* and Dunnock *Prunella vulgaris* present within the buildings and surrounding hedgerows. A Red Kite *Milvus milvus* flew over during the 2023 initial survey.

The desktop notes multiple records of Red Kite *Milvus milvus* and other Schedule 1 species (HERC 2024).

There was no evidence of Barn Owl *Tyto alba* noted within the barn [AH07] or suitable breeding places for Barn Owl *Tyto alba* or other Schedule 1 species nearby. Common breeding birds are present on or near to the site.

Nesting birds are protected under legislation. Species such as Yellowhammer are a S41 Priority Species. Breeding birds are a relevant consideration for planning.

Water vole

There was no incidental evidence of water voles found during the survey. The ditch along the front of the site appears too shaded; frequently dries out; and hence lacks in suitable habitat to support water voles.

There were no records returned within the desktop (HERC 2024).

The habitats present on the site are not suitable for water voles and they are concluded as unlikely to be present.

Water voles and their burrows and nests are protected under legislation. Water voles are a S41 Priority Species. However this species feature is not a relevant consideration for planning.

Hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*

In England, Hazel Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* are generally associated with ancient coppiced woodlands [see Goodwin et al. 2018 for a recent review].

Whilst there are hedgerows along the road frontage, the hedgerow network runs largely alongside arable fields and roads; and is very leggy and gappy. The site is at some distance from the large and potentially suitable Philpott's Wood.

There were no records returned within the desktop (HERC 2024).

The species feature is concluded as unlikely to be present based on the lack of suitable habitat.

This species feature is not protected under legislation. This species is a S41 Priority Species. This species feature is not a relevant consideration for planning.

Bats

Site context

The site itself is in a well wooded landscape that is predominantly arable. The site has hedgerows to the front along the road with multiple small trees. There are connections via hedgerows to Philpott's Wood to the east.

Roosting bats

There were two ESPL for bat roosts within 2km as given in the following table, both of which were for breeding sites.

Table 3.3: Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)

Case reference of granted application	Species group to which licence relates	Species on the licence	Site county of licence	Licence Start Date
EPSM2010-2257	Bat	C-PIP;BLE;NATT	Hertfordshire	16/09/2010
2019-43358-EPS-MIT	Bat	BARB BLE C-PIP NATT	Hertfordshire	07/11/2019

The HERC desktop notes roosts or potential roosts for the following species within 2km

Table 3.4: Bat roosts within 2km

Common Name	Scientific Name
Natterer's Bat	Myotis nattereri

Common Name	Scientific Name
Barbastelle	<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>
Brown Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>

Emergence surveys of nearby buildings

Nearby buildings have been subject to emergence surveys associated with proposed development.

In 2024, there was a Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* maternity roost, emerging from the southern gable end of Barn#2 [AH13A] and potentially other locations on eastern elevations. Numbers of emerging bats peaked at upto ~96 Common pipistrelle on 30/07/2024.

In 2025 emergence surveys of the nearby bungalow [AH02A] found a maximum of eleven Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* emerging from the apex of the front gable on 15/7/25. The bungalow roost appears to be a satellite roost of the main breeding colony present in the gable end of Barn #2.

Bat roosts within site

Building proposed for demolition is an open fronted cart lodge [AH07], which is used for storage [see Appendix 6 Detailed descriptions of buildings]. The building is of “negligible” potential for roosting bats as defined by BCT Guidance.

Trees along the hedgerow are small and have no potential for roosting bats.

Foraging/commuting

The site is within a rural locality with a good network of hedgerows and nearby very large woods to east.

In 2024 and 2025, Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* emerging from the apex of the southern gable of Barn #2 used the woodland edge to the south after foraging before strongly commuting towards Philpots Wood.

Other species noted as commuting or foraging during surveys have included Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, Natterer’s *Myotis nattereri*, Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and potential Leisler’s *Nyctalus leisleri*. Brief passes of Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastella* were also noted.

The site is highly likely to be used by other species of foraging/commuting bats, especially along the poplars and tall trees on the south side.

Conclusions

Bat roosts are present in the nearby Bungalow and Barn 2, but there are no suitable roosts within the development area.

Based on the habitats present and the limited lighting of the site, the site is concluded as likely to support significant activity by commuting and foraging bats.

Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and Barbastelle *Barbastellus barbastella* are S41 Priority Species. Commuting and foraging bats are a relevant consideration for planning.

Badger

Although no specific survey was carried out, there was no evidence of badgers found during the survey.

There were 36 records returned within the desktop (HERC 2024).

The location appears highly suitable for badgers. There were no obvious signs of badgers within the site. The surrounding landscape is highly suitable for badgers with large woodlands and a good hedgerow network. Setts within 50m are viewed as unlikely.

Badgers and their setts are protected under legislation. Badgers are not a S41 Priority Species. Badgers and badger setts are not a relevant consideration for planning.

Otter

There was no incidental evidence of this species found during the survey.

There were no records returned within the desktop (HERC 2024).

Whilst there is a ditch on the southern boundary of the site, the site is felt to be too high in the watershed for any potential for otters and to have very limited associated wetland habitat.

Otters and their resting places are protected under legislation; and are a S41 Priority Species. This species feature is not a relevant consideration for planning.

Invasive species

There were no invasive species identified during the initial visit.

4. Assessment of effects

4.1 Description of project

Details of the project are given in Section 7.4 Details of project proposal, including a proposed layout.

The project description is as follows: "*Erection of infill self build/custom build dwelling, demolition of barn and associated works*".

4.2 Pathways with potential significant impacts

The potential pathways are summarised in the following table. Additional explanations are given within the supporting tables.

Table 4.1: Potentially significant impact pathways

Assessment	Relevant?	Explanation
Impacts from increase in lighting	Yes	Lighting may increase light levels on nearby hedges and affect nocturnal species, in particular bats. See also "Impacts from increase in lighting levels".
Indirect impacts from wastewater discharges and drainage	No	Not within a catchment identified as vulnerable to nutrient enrichment from foul water discharge by recent advice from Natural England ⁴ .
Indirect impacts from surface drainage on water quality and flow patterns	No	Surface drainage may affect water quality and flow patterns downstream. Within catchment of River Rib, identified as vulnerable to pollution effects.
Impacts on designated sites	No	Not relevant. See also "Impacts on designated sites".
Direct impacts on species	Yes	See also "Impacts on habitats and species".
Direct impacts on habitats	Yes	See also "Impacts on habitats and species".

⁴ See <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/apply/2>
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Impacts from increase in lighting levels

The site is within a rural area. The site has external lighting associated with the buildings, including several PIR flood lights, but generally has low levels of external lighting.

As per ILP(2020)⁵ the site appears to correspond to Zone E2 "Rural: Low district brightness". A baseline for external lighting would be required to confirm this technically.

Table 4.2: Lighting zones as per ILP Guidance Note 01/20

Zone	Surrounding Lighting	Environment Examples	Sky Quality Measurements
E0	Protected Dark	Astronomical Observable dark skies, UNESCO starlight reserves, IDA dark sky places	(SQM 20.5+)
E1	Natural Dark	Intrinsically dark National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty etc	(SQM 20 to 20.5)
E2	Rural Low district brightness	Sparsely inhabited rural areas, village or relatively dark outer suburban locations	(SQM ~15 to 20)
E3	Suburban Medium district brightness	Well inhabited rural and urban settlements, small town centres of suburban locations	
E4	Urban High district brightness	Town/city centres with high levels of night-time activity	

Impacts on designated sites

"Impact Risk Zones"⁶ are a spatial tool used by Natural England to screen planning applications for potential impacts on designated sites such as SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites. The tool can be accessed freely via the MAGIC website.

The site is within an impact zone. There are no applicable risks of concern.

Impacts on habitats and species

The direct impacts on habitats and features are summarised in Table 4.3: Habitat features: preliminary assessment of direct impacts and Table 4.4: Species features: preliminary assessment of impacts.

Summary of main impacts

The project's main impacts are seen as being the following pathways:

⁵ ILP(2020) Guidance Note 01/20: Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light.

⁶See https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/SSSI%20IRZ%20User%20Guidance%20MAGIC.pdf
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E-mail: chris.smith@smallecology.uk || website: smallecology.uk

- Direct loss of hedgerows and trees from opening of the new entrance and any widening of visibility splays; or during construction works or from;
- Direct effects on breeding birds within hedgerows if carried out during the breeding season;
- Increased light levels in nearby hedges and effects on nocturnal species, in particular bats;
- Loss of grassland habitat;
- Accidental discharges to the ditch along road frontage affecting water quality downstream.

Table 4.3: Habitat features: preliminary assessment of direct impacts

Habitat	Potential S41 priority habitat?	Local significance?	Likely significant effect/Additional explanation	Further consideration ?
g4 Other neutral grassland	No	Yes	Yes: Recent grassland created by client in 2020. Area not protected from cultivation. Not S41 habitat, but significant in local context. Mixture likely to become increasingly dominated by grasses without tailored management. Small area (<0.25ha). Significant in local context.	Yes
u1b Urban, sealed surface	No	No	No: Existing barn [AH02] proposed for demolition. Not of ecological significance for bats.	No
h2a5 Species rich Native Hedgerows	Yes	Yes	Yes: Hedges with trees on frontage of road; minor breach to create site entrance and potential need for visibility splays.	Yes

Table 4.4: Species features: preliminary assessment of impacts

Species	S41 priority species?	Statutory protection?	Likely significant effect from development ?	Further consideration?
Great crested newts	Yes	Yes	No: [See above].	No
Breeding birds	Some	Yes	Yes: if construction during nesting season then potential loss of nests and disturbance.	Yes
Bats	Some	Yes		
- Roosts within site			No: No direct impacts on roosts.	Yes
- Foraging/commuting			Yes: loss of foraging and commuting features; increased lighting levels.	Yes

Impacts on Great crested newts

Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment⁷ is a method for screening projects for their effects on great crested newts.

⁷See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509011/gcn-work-schedule.doc

Based on a distance of >250m and development footprint of less than 5 hectares, a Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment for newts gives a result of “Green”, indicating an offence is highly unlikely if newts were present beyond these distances.

There is no potential for effects on great crested newts.

[Impacts on Bats](#)

The development will not directly affect the nearby Common Pipistrelle roost either in the bungalow or Building 1, due to the distances .

5. Recommendations

5.1 Recommendations for further surveys

Recommendations for further surveys are set out in the following table:

Table 5.1: Further surveys required

Feature	Additional surveys	Target areas
Breeding birds	If any clearance work carried out during breeding season, carry out breeding bird surveys to establish if birds are present	Hedgerow; building; trees

5.2 Requirements for additional assessments

Biodiversity Net Gain

The development is self-build and exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain.

5.3 Application of mitigation hierarchy

As defined by the CSBI (2013⁸), the mitigation hierarchy is: *'the sequence of actions to anticipate and avoid impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services; and where avoidance is not possible, minimize; and, when impacts occur, rehabilitate or restore; and where significant residual impacts remain, offset.'*

The NPPF refers to a three stage "mitigation" hierarchy, consisting of avoidance, mitigation and finally compensation.

Best practice is set out in Ekstrom et al (2015)⁹ as a sequence of four key actions being 'avoid', 'minimize', 'restore' and 'offset', which differs slightly from the NPPF wording but is more clearly worded and is what will be referred to here.

The following is a broad overview of the approach within this project.

Avoidance

The project design should avoid impacts on sensitive areas by:

- Retaining the existing hedgerows on site and associated trees;
- Maintaining a buffer between the hedgerow and the development during construction;
- Avoiding accidental discharge into the existing ditch;

⁸CSBI (2013a). Framework for Guidance on Operationalizing the Biodiversity Mitigation Hierarchy. December 2013.

⁹.Ekstrom, J., Bennun L and Robin Mitchell, R. (Lead authors) (2015) A cross-sector guide for implementing the Mitigation Hierarchy. Prepared by The Biodiversity Consultancy for CSBI

- Avoiding additional lighting by incorporating a lighting design to prevent light pollution. The site should be subject to a lighting plan as per Zone E2 of ILP Guidance.

Table 5.2: Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations – General Observers

Observers						
Environment al Zone	Sky Glow ULR [Max %]⁽¹⁾	Light Intrusion (into Windows) E_v [lux]⁽²⁾		Luminaire Intensity I [candelas]⁽³⁾		Building Luminance Pre-curfew⁽⁴⁾
		Pre- curfew	Post- curfew	Pre- curfew	Post- curfew	Average, L [cd/m²]
E0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E1	0	2	0 (1*)	2,500	0	0
E2	2.5	5	1	7,500	500	5
E3	5.0	10	2	10,000	1,000	10
E4	15	25	5	25,000	2,500	25

Minimise

The project design should minimise impacts by :

- Reducing as far as feasible any hedgerow loss from creation of the new access point and visibility splays;
- Retaining as much existing grassland as possible within the landscaping scheme;
- Implementing mitigation measures as set out in recommendations for the Construction stage below.

Restore/offset

The project design should offset hedgerow and grassland losses by:

- Planting additional native hedgerows along the site boundary;
- Enhancing management of any retained grassland and where not feasible restoring arable to grassland elsewhere within the blue line. A suggested location is AH20, an area of arable land between Fears End and Philpotts Wood as shown in Section 7.1 Site location and features.

5.4 Recommendations for species specific mitigation

Outline species-specific measures during construction are given in the following table.

Table 5.3: Species specific measures

Species	Mitigation measures required	Required measures
Breeding birds	Yes: if during breeding season	Site clearance works should ideally be completed outside the bird nesting season (1 March to 31 August) or only be completed following checks by an appropriately experienced ecologist. Retention of hedgerow network; shrub and tree planting within development.
Bats		
Foraging/commuting	Yes	Lighting plan. Retention of hedgerow network.

There were no invasive Schedule 9 species identified.

5.5 Recommendations for enhancement

The following suggestions are made with respect to enhancing the site :

- To the east or south around the site boundary, a new native hedge could be planted.
- The hedgerow on the site frontage could be coppiced and gapped up to create a denser growth more attractive to wildlife; additional tree planting could take place within hedgerows.
- Bat and bird boxes could be included within the new building or on adjacent trees.

5.6 Requirements for licencing

Based on the approach set out within this report, no requirement for statutory licencing is identifiable.

6. References

- Collins, J et al (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London
- Natural England (2018) Presence only records for great crested newts determined through Natural England class licence surveys. Available online.
- Natural England (2020) Great Crested Newt eDNA and Habitat Suitability Index Survey results for Ponds surveyed for District Level Licensing 2017,2018,2019

7. Figures

7.1 Site location and features

Figure 1 : Site location and key features



Target notes for site

TN#	Description	
AH03A	Bungalow with bat roost	
AH13A	Barn with bat roost	
WC04	Roadside ditch. Seasonally wet	
LH01	Roadside hedge. Outgrown species-rich	
AH07	Barn proposed for demolition	
AH20	Potential arable area for habitat recreation	

7.2 Results of records centre search

Figure 2 : Results of desktop search

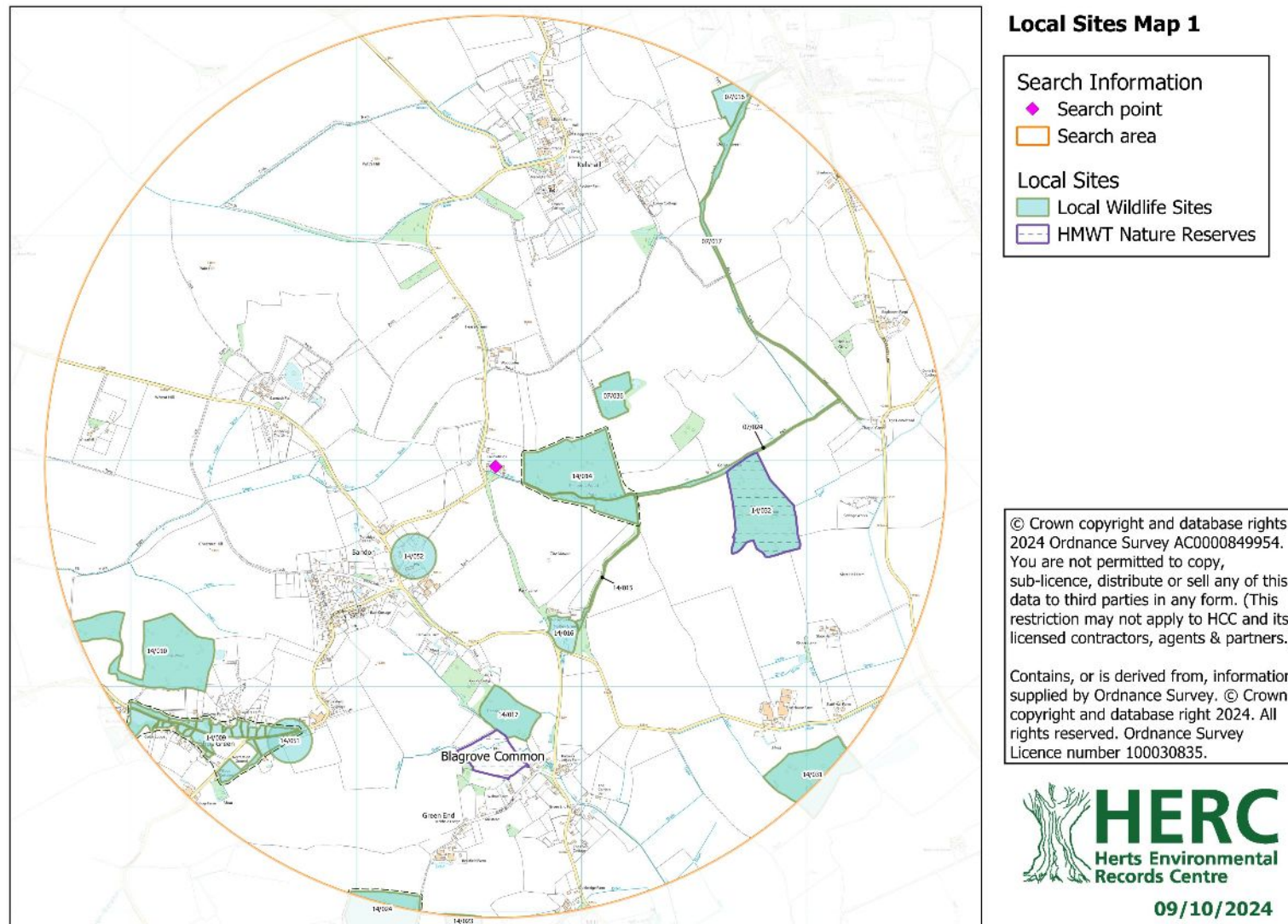
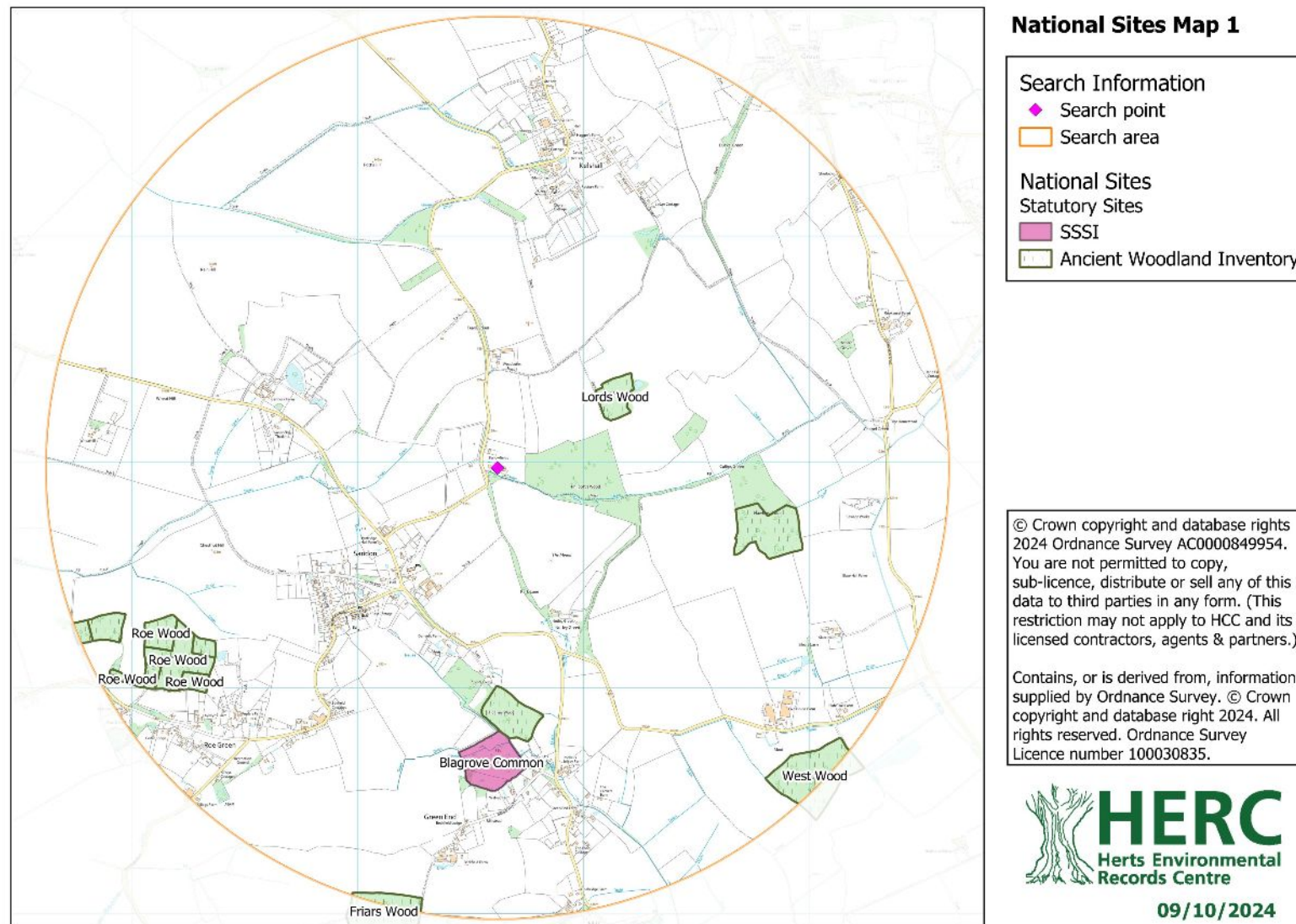
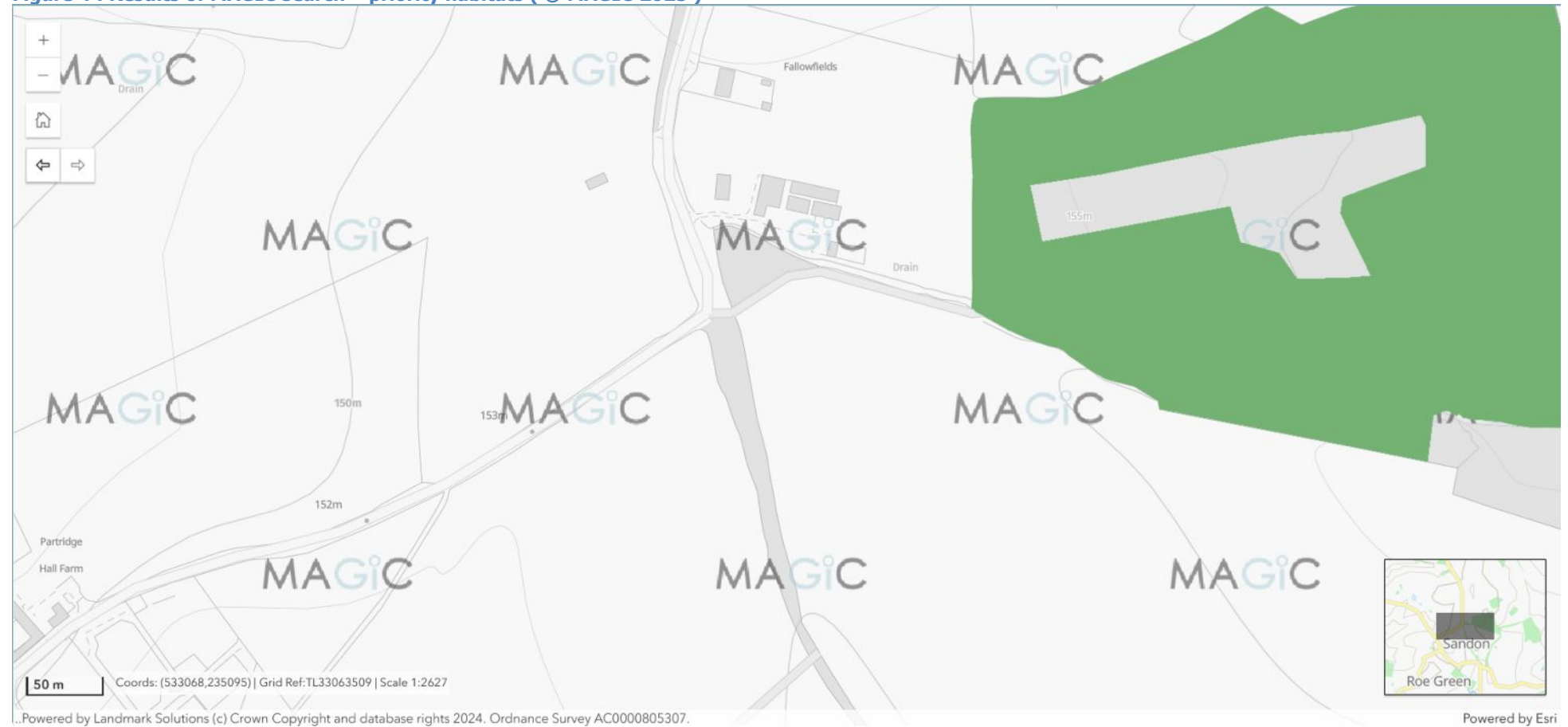


Figure 3 : Results of desktop search – designated site



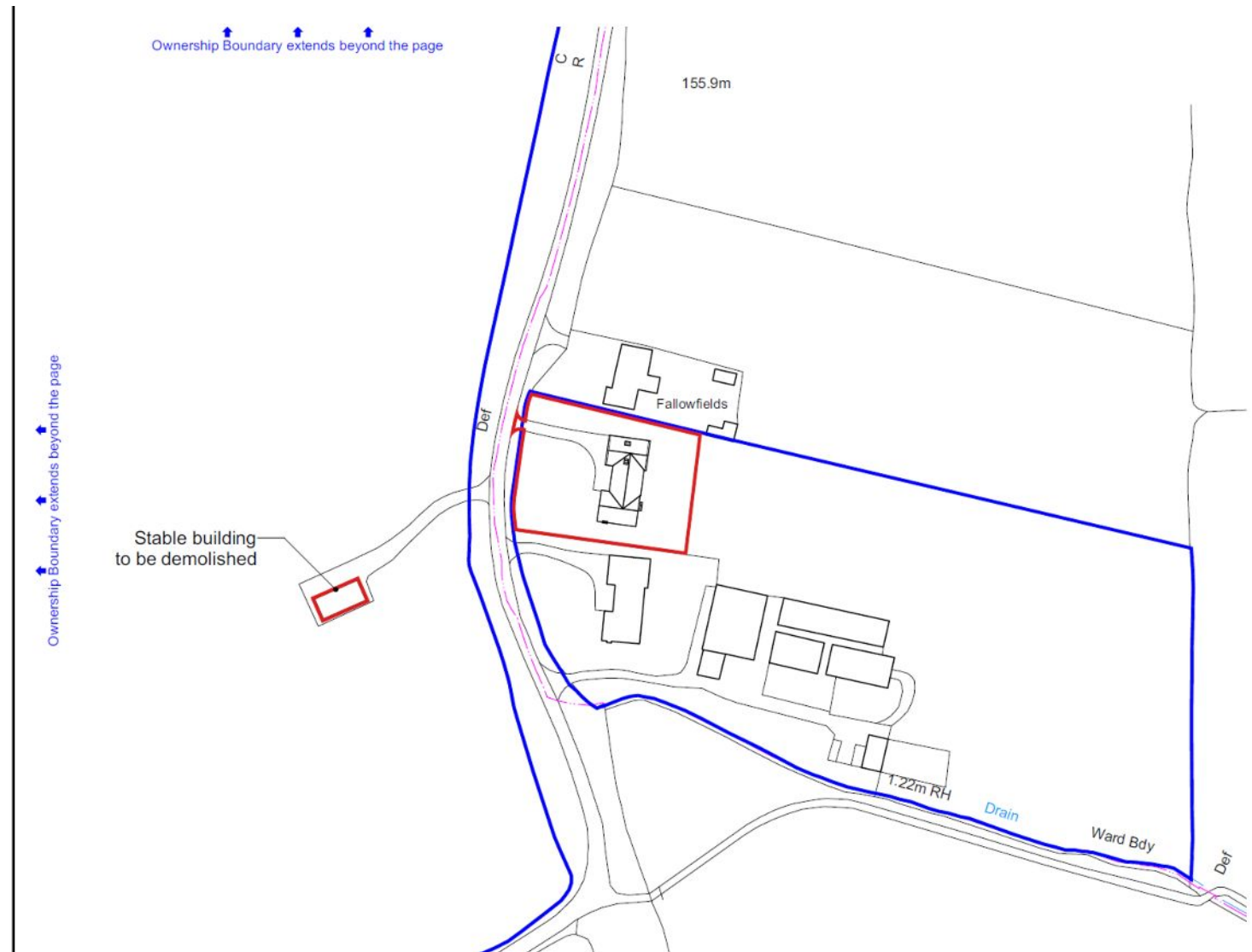
7.3 Results of MAGIC search

Figure 4 : Results of MAGIC search – priority habitats (© MAGIC 2025)



7.4 Details of project proposal

Figure 5 : Project proposal



8. Photographs

8.1 Existing barn



Figure 6: Building 1 [AH07] - view from east



Figure 7: Building 1 - open north side



Figure 8: Building 1 - southern wall

8.2 Grassland and hedgerow



Figure 9: View of grassland AH04 and hedge LH01 from roadside



Figure 10: Example of sward within grassland showing low % of forbs



Figure 11: Southern edge of project looking along existing drive

Appendix 1 : Plant list for site

Not available.

Appendix 2 : Protocol for Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Relevant guidelines

CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester¹⁰

JNCC (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit¹¹

Weather conditions/timing constraints

Can be undertaken under any weather conditions; no timing constraints; no optimum timing.

Process Overview

The survey will comprise both a desk study and walkover survey.

The appropriate “area of search” (AOS) for the study will be based on the nature of the proposals and will be determined on a case-by-case basis following an assessment of the “zone of influence” (ZOI) of the project.

Desk Study

A desk study will be carried out of the AOS to collate available information about the site and surrounding area from following sources:

- Accessible aerial photos and maps to identify the habitats and species potentially present, and context of the site within wider landscape;
- Public databases within MAGIC to identify any relevant nature conservation sites and their designated features;
- Where agreed, a search by the Local Environmental Records Centre of the AOS for any relevant records of species, habitats or locally designated sites (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites);
- Any other easily available records.

The sources searched will be recorded within any report.

Field survey

As far as safely or physically accessible, the footprint of the proposed development and accessible surrounding areas will be walked over.

The habitats present will be described and where appropriate classified according to the guidance within JNCC (2010). Field notes will be taken on plant species present and the extent and structure of habitats.

Where appropriate, target notes will be used as per JNCC(2010) to map any features of additional ecological interest.

¹⁰<https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Guidelines-for-Preliminary-Ecological-Appraisal-Jan2018-1.pdf>

¹¹<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-2468>

Photographs will be taken of general site and where possible any features of especial ecological interest.

Any incidental sightings of priority or protected species, or field signs of such species will be recorded.

Any incidental records of non-native invasive plant species will be recorded.

Assessment

Identification of features

Based on the results of the desktop and field surveys, a list will be compiled of those ecological features relevant for consideration within planning to include:

- designated sites;
- protected or priority species;
- priority habitats;
- ecological features of local significance.

Potential for protected or priority species

An assessment will be made of the potential for presence of protected or priority species.

Where protected species are confirmed as present, their presence, known species and any other additional information on type of usage will be noted.

Otherwise the potential for species within the AOS will be evaluated and recorded.

Buildings, trees and other structures will be subject to appraisal via relevant other protocols.

Further consideration

An assessment will be made as to whether a feature requires further consideration, based on the desktop information, field results and potential of the site to support such a feature

Equipment used

Binoculars.

Licence requirements

None, unless additional considerations due to presence of protected species or protected sites

Appendix 3 : Protocol for Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of buildings and structures

Relevant guidelines

English Nature (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Weather conditions/timing constraints

Can be undertaken under any weather conditions; no timing constraints; no optimum timing. Periods of heavy rain prior may reduce visibility of signs of roosting bats.

Field survey

A systematic search will be made of any buildings for signs of roosting bats by trained personnel, based on external and internal inspection where safety allows.

A visual assessment will be undertaken during daylight hours as far as the building or structure is accessible to identify any Potential Roost Features (PRFs) present.

Ladders will be used to access any PRFs under 3.5m to allow a detailed inspection.

Where appropriate binoculars, a torch and/or endoscope will also be used to assist the search for evidence of bats.

Field notes will be made of the context of the site, including the suitability of the surrounding habitat for foraging and commuting.

Assessment

If no confirmed bat roosts are found, based on the field survey results, the buildings or other structures will be assessed and assigned to the suitability classes of Collins (2016) as: "negligible", "low", "medium", "high" and "unclear".

An assessment will be made also of the potential for use as hibernation.

Where bats or roosts are present, the presence of the roost, known species and any other additional information on type of usage will be noted.

Equipment used

Binoculars; torch; ladders; endoscope.

Licensing requirements

Requires Natural England licence where there is potential for disturbance of bats.

Appendix 4 : Protocol for great crested newts

Relevant guidelines and references

Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom (2010) *ARG Advice Note 5 Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index May 2010*

<https://www.arguk.org/get-involved/projects-surveys/great-crested-newt-habitat-suitability-index>

Natural England (2015) *Great crested newts: surveys and mitigation for development projects : Standing advice for local planning authorities who need to assess the impacts of development on great crested newts*. Last updated 24 December 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/great-crested-newts-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects>

Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000). *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)*. Herpetological Journal 10(4), 143-155.

Natural England (2018) Presence only records for great crested newts determined through Natural England class licence surveys. Available online.

Natural England (2020) Great Crested Newt eDNA and Habitat Suitability Index Survey results for Ponds surveyed for District Level Licensing 2017,2018,2019

Weather conditions/timing constraints

Can be undertaken under any weather conditions;

HSI : no timing constraints; no optimum timing.

eDNA : Natural England will only accept eDNA survey results from samples collected between 15 April and 30 June each year.

Desktop

Except for very large developments, the surveyor will identify all obvious ponds within 250m-500m of the site using maps and aerials, mark and number them on a map and record their distances to the site.

A search will be made of Natural England (2018) and Natural England (2020).

HSI survey

A daytime visit will be undertaken to ponds where there is access permission and an assessment made for each field criterion.

Any ponds found during the field survey will be added to the map and similarly assessed.

Where the surveyor has noted that a pond has been removed, this will be noted as such.

Where possible, the surveyor will take a photograph of the pond.

eDNA sampling

A daytime visit will be made during the period when the newts are likely to be present.

Samples will be sent for analysis to a suitably-equipped laboratory able to undertake the laboratory work in strict adherence to the methods in the technical report.

Assessment

Using the results, the ecologist will calculate the HSI and present these as per the following table.

Based on the field survey results, the ponds will be assessed and assigned to the suitability classes of Collins (2016) as : "poor", "below average", "average", and "excellent". Where access was not possible ponds will be categorised as unclear.

Table 4.1: Example HSI score for pond

SI1	Location	Zone A	1
SI2	Pond Area	50-100m ²	0.1
SI3	Pond Drying	Sometimes drying	0.5
SI4	Water Quality	Poor	0.33
SI5	Shade	96-100%	0.2
SI6	Fowl	Absent, except moorhen	1
SI7	Fish	Absent	1
SI8	Ponds	7	0.85
SI9	Terrestrial Habitat	Moderate	0.67
SI10	Macrophytes	<1%	0.3
Calculated HSI score			0.47 - Poor

For the eDNA results, the report will include :

- a declaration that the methods in the technical report were followed
- confirmation of which waterbodies were tested and on what dates;
- copies of the results from the laboratory.

Equipment used

Binoculars.

Licences

Any eDNA samples must be collected by a licenced surveyors to comply with Natural England guidelines.

Appendix 5 : Desktop for designated sites

Summary of scoping assessment

Table 5.1: Scoping assessment for site features: Non-statutory sites within 2km

File Code	Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Description	Distance (m)	Further consideration ?
14/014	Philpott's Wood	TL329349	11.67	Mixed plantation on former Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)/Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)/Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) woodland. Wildlife Site criteria: Semi-natural woodland with some semi-natural canopy, a varied structure and ancient physical features; incorporates small woods shown on Bryant (1822) (including the wooded parish boundary); a single small wood is shown on the 1st Ed OS; <1 ha; woodland indicators.	130	No
14/052	Sandon Churchyard	TL322345	0	Old churchyard with rough, occasionally mown, unimproved neutral/slightly calcareous grassland with a good mix of herbs and grass species, including Red Fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>), Lady's Bedstraw (<i>Galium verum</i>), Common Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), Greater Knapweed (<i>Centaurea scabiosa</i>), Wild Basil (<i>Clinopodium vulgare</i>), Oxeye Daisy (<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>), Meadow Vetchling (<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>) and Burnet-saxifrage (<i>Pimpinella saxifraga</i>). Church and environs important for protected species. Wildlife Site criteria: Grassland indicators; species.	440	No
07/036	Lord's Wood (N.E. of Sandon)	TL331352	2.25	Ancient semi-natural broadleaf woodland with a high canopy of Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) and Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) standards plus Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>). Shrub layer consists of Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), Elm (<i>Ulmus</i> spp.), Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) and young Field Maple. Some coppicing of Field Maple and Hazel. Ground flora typically Dog's Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>) and Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>). Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site.	520	No
07/024	Collins Green Lane	TL334348	1.19	Green lane with old hedgerow (linear woodland) supporting woodland indicators, such as Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>), Giant Fescue (<i>Festuca gigantea</i>) and Wood Meadow-grass (<i>Poa nemoralis</i>), and a good diversity of woody species, including Wayfaring-tree (<i>Viburnum lantana</i>). Important for mammals and birds. Wildlife Site criteria: Green lane with features and structure indicative of ancient origins; woodland indicators.	620	No

File Code	Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Description	Distance (m)	Further consideration ?
14/015	Notley Lane	TL330343	0.46	Old green lane with a muddy track and ancient species-rich hedges and ditches including Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>), Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), Dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>), Spindle (<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>) and Wayfaring Tree (<i>Viburnum lantana</i>). Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>), Dog's Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>) and Primrose (<i>Primula vulgaris</i>) have been recorded in the ground flora. Wooded green lane shown as a wooded strip Bryant (1822).	640	No
14/016	Notley Green Common	TL329342	1.58	An area of damp unimproved tussocky grassland crossed by a ditch in the south-west. The grassland assemblage includes much Tufted Hair-grass (<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>) with Common Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>), Meadow Vetchling (<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>) and Marsh Thistle (<i>Cirsium palustre</i>). The western side adjacent to the road is dense Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>) scrub with some Grey Willow (<i>Salix cinerea</i>) and old Crack Willows (<i>Salix fragilis</i>). The eastern part of site is dense thorn scrub grading into Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) woodland with Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) and Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>). Wildlife Site criteria: Grassland indicators.	710	No
14/017	Tichney Wood	TL326338	3.74	Ancient coppiced semi-natural woodland with limited standards. The woodland is mainly Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)/Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) coppice and Oak/Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)/Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)/Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) coppice with a fairly good ground flora; including abundant Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>) and Dog's Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>) plus species such as Wood Anemone (<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>) and Primrose (<i>Primula vulgaris</i>). Early Purple Orchid (<i>Orchis mascula</i>) has also been recorded. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site; woodland indicators.	970	No
14/032	Hawkins Wood	TL337347	9.62	Ancient semi-natural Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)/Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)/Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) woodland with old coppiced Hazel and a low frequency of standards, but Ash and elm (<i>Ulmus</i> spp.) becoming prominent to the south. Thorn scrub is also present. The ground flora is not diverse but supports some woodland indicator species, mainly Dog's Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>) and Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>). Additional species recorded include Wood Sedge (<i>Carex sylvatica</i>), Giant Fescue (<i>Festuca gigantea</i>), Wood Meadow-grass (<i>Poa nemoralis</i>), and the orchids Common Twayblade (<i>Neottia ovata</i>) and Common Spotted-orchid (<i>Dactylorhiza fuchsii</i>). Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site; woodland indicators.	1020	No
07/017	Ducks' Green & Kelshall Lane	TL337356	2.73	Old green lane, wet in places with marshy vegetation, tall herbs, grasses and bordered by substantial hedges and tree fringes which support a good mix of woody species, including several large Elms (<i>Ulmus</i> sp.), and typical hedgerow flora. Wildlife Site criteria: Green lane with features and structure indicative of an ancient origin.	1280	No

File Code	Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Description	Distance (m)	Further consideration ?
14/051	The Chapel, Roe Green	TL317337	0	Building and environs important for protected species. Wildlife Site criteria: Species.	1420	No
14/009	Roe Green Common	TL314336	6.23	Large village green with areas of unimproved neutral grassland on damp Boulder Clay supporting a species-rich community. Plants recorded include Cowslip (<i>Primula veris</i>), Adder's-tongue (<i>Ophioglossum vulgatum</i>), Welled Thistle (<i>Carduus crispus</i>), Lady's Bedstraw (<i>Galium verum</i>), Lady's-smock (<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>), False Fox-sedge (<i>Carex otrubae</i>) and Creeping-Jenny (<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>). There is a series of small ponds plus mixed species hedges and patches of scrub are present along parts of the boundary. Wildlife Site criteria: Grassland indicators.	1450	No
14/010	Roe Wood	TL311341	11.44	Ancient semi-natural woodland with derelict Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)/Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) coppice plus some old Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) stools in the centre of the wood. Large areas replanted with Norway Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>) and Hybrid Black Poplar (<i>Populus x canadensis</i>). There is some Ash/Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)/Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) coppice in the south-east corner. A pond adds to the habitat diversity. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site with restorable elements of its previous semi-natural character including some semi-natural canopy and ancient features; woodland indicators.	1470	No
14/031	West Wood (W. of Buckland)	TL340336	7.6	Ancient semi-natural woodland composed of Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>)/Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)/Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) and Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>)/Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) coppice-with-standards. The ground flora is moderately diverse and supports a number of woodland indicators including Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>), Dog's Mercury (<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>), Early Dog-violet (<i>Viola reichenbachiana</i>) and Primrose (<i>Primula vulgaris</i>). Habitat diversity is increased by the presence of a pond, stream and ditches. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site; woodland indicators.	1820	No
07/016	Ducks' Green West Meadow	TL336366	2.23	Old meadows supporting unimproved neutral grassland with a good mix of herb and grass species, including much Common Knapweed (<i>Centaurea nigra</i>) and Yellow Rattle (<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>), an uncommon species in the County. The southern meadow contains a pond. Wildlife Site criteria: Grassland indicators.	1830	No

File Code	Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Description	Distance (m)	Further consideration ?
14/024	Friars Wood	TL320328	24.58	Ancient semi-natural woodland composed principally of Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) and Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>) with Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) coppice. There is a small area in the east of Ash/Hornbeam (<i>Carpinus betulus</i>) coppice and some Grey Willow (<i>Salix cinerea</i>) scrub to the north. The ground flora is species-rich and is typical of a wet Boulder Clay wood. Species recorded include Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>), Wood Anemone (<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>), Remote Sedge (<i>Carex remota</i>), Wood Millet (<i>Milium effusum</i>), Primrose (<i>Primula vulgaris</i>) and Common Dog-violet (<i>Viola riviniana</i>). Several plants of limited distribution within the County have been noted including Common Twayblade (<i>Neottia ovata</i>), Herb Paris (<i>Paris quadrifolia</i>) and Wood Small-reed (<i>Calamagrostis epigejos</i>). An old ditch, moats and ponds and a derelict green lane bisecting the wood add habitat diversity. A good diversity of birds has been recorded. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland Inventory site; woodland indicators.	1930	No
14/023	Sandon Moor	TL324329	2.34	One of the few surviving Boulder Clay acidic marshes in the county with a rich flora characterised by Blunt-flowered Rush (<i>Juncus subnodulosus</i>), Great Horsetail (<i>Equisetum telmateia</i>) and Marsh Valerian (<i>Valeriana dioica</i>). Long established ditches bisecting the site support Common Watercress (<i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i>), Brooklime (<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>) and sedges (<i>Carex</i> spp.). Much of the southern half of the moor is covered by wet and dry scrub consisting of Goat and Grey Willow (<i>Salix caprea</i> and <i>S. cinerea</i>) plus old coppiced Alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>), Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>) with scattered trees of Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) and Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>). Dog's Mercury occurs in the drier areas. Wildlife Site criteria: Grassland indicators.	1990	No

Table 5.2: Ancient Woodland Inventory Sites

Site Name (where known)	Grid Reference	Category	Area (ha)	Distance (m)
	TL326338	ASNW	3.69	970
	TL308342	ASNW	1.63	1770
	TL338346	ASNW	5.42	1070
	TL307342	PAWS	0.67	1940
Friars Wood	TL321327	ASNW	24.81	1930

Lords Wood	TL331352	ASNW	2.25	520
Roe Wood	TL309340	ASNW	0.44	1830
Roe Wood	TL312341	ASNW	4.39	1510
Roe Wood	TL312340	PAWS	0.92	1570
Roe Wood	TL310340	PAWS	0.63	1730
Roe Wood	TL313341	PAWS	0.74	1470
Roe Wood	TL311342	PAWS	1.77	1570
West Wood	TL340336	ASNW	7.60	1820

Table 5.3: Scoping assessment for site features: Statutorily designated sites

Designated site	Statutory protection?	Details	Potential linkage ?	Further consideration
Blagrove Common SSSI	Yes	Marsh grassland with <i>Juncus subnodulosus</i> - <i>Cirsium palustre</i> and locally uncommon species . Approx 11350 m to south https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=s1000847	No	No

Appendix 6 : Detailed descriptions of buildings

Name or # for building	Building 1
Site:	Fears End Farm, Sandon, Buntingford SG9 0QZ
Date:	25/07/23 (updated 11/07/25)
Surveyor:	CS
Description of age and use	Open fronted cart lodge; used for storage
Pictures	
EXTERNAL FEATURES	
Wall construction and materials	Fibre board external with wooden planked walls with internal wooden frame Substantial gaps at top and bottom for ventilation. Low blockwork base.
Roof construction and materials	Fibre single pitched box roof with no lining
Windows, door and other openings	Open fronted on northern side
Chimneys and other roof features	None
INTERNAL FEATURES	
Cracks and crevices	Slight gap between internal and external boarding; no obvious signs when inspected
Roof and ridge	No lining; small timbers
Cobwebbing	
Evidence of presence	None
Overall potential for bats?	No obvious potential for bats
Constraints	Access was possible throughout

