



Project: 25_PEA_BNG_04_65
Site: Land to the East of 2 Scarp Close, Ashwell Street, Ashwell, N. Herts,
SG7 5FP
Client: Paul Morris and James Hindes



[Supplementary Document - Survey Methodology PRA.](#)

[Supplementary Document - Potential Roosting Features.](#)

Project Number:	25_PEA_BNG_04_65
Report Type:	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEAR)
Site Address:	Land to the East of 2 Scarp Close, Ashwell Street, Ashwell, N. Herts, SG7 5FP

Role:	Name:	Date:
Instructing Party	Aidan Crawshaw	N/A
Customer	Paul Morris and James Hindes	N/A
Surveyor	Max Shaw	12/05/25
Consultant	Gwennan Butler	09/05/25
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Revision History		
Date:	Version number:	Summary of changes:
27/05/25	1.0	First Review (Internal)
27/05/25	1.0	First Issue

Summary:	
Report Number	25_PEA_BNG_04_65
Site Surveyed	Land at Scarp Close, Ashwell Street Ashwell, Baldock SG7 5QU National Grid Reference: TL 2695 3943
Purpose & Brief	Preliminary ecological appraisal commissioned by Aidan Crawshaw
Development Proposals	The proposed development comprises the construction of a two-storey detached residential dwelling, inclusive of associated hardstanding and soft landscaping works. The existing vegetation within the plot is to be cleared to facilitate site preparation and construction activities.
Methods	Desk Study UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey of the site. Assessment of likely significant effects as far as can be reasonably and proportionally known
Confirmed Ecological Constraints	None
Potential Ecological Constraints	Nesting birds Mammals
Recommendations For Further Survey Works	Production of wildlife sensitive lighting scheme
Opportunities For Ecological Enhancements	Bird boxes Native species planting

With the assumption that the existing conditions on-site remain unchanged. The results of this report are likely to remain valid for 12-months inline with the guidance published by CIEEM and the Bat Conservation Trust.

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Appendix 1: Site Location and Assessment Boundary

Appendix 2: Desktop Study

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Acknowledgements:

Data referred to within this report was sourced from Natural England Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (DEFRA MAGIC) database and through direct consultation with Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC) and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC).

Client Documents:

This report has been completed on the assumption that the plans provided by the client at the time of issue of this report remain the same. A list of the documents provided by the client can be found in the table below.

Table: Documents provided by the client as of April 2025

Plans provided by the client as of 15/04/25
178 SKD 01 SITE PLAN AS PROPOSED.pdf
178 SKD 02 BLOCK PLAN AS PROPOSED.pdf
178 SKD 03 SITE SECTIONS AS PROPOSED.pdf
178 SKD 10 ELEVATIONS AS PROPOSED.pdf
178 SVY 01 SITE PLAN AS EXISTING.pdf
178-DAS-ASHWELL PLOT III.pdf

1 Introduction

- 1.1 ROAVR Group were commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) at Land to the East of 2 Scarp Close, Ashwell Street, Ashwell, N. Herts, SG7 5FP.
- 1.2 The survey was comprised of a desktop study, which was undertaken in May 2025 and a site survey, which was carried out by Max Shaw on the 12th May 2025.
- 1.3 The methodology and results are outlined within the report. Where applicable, recommendations for suitable mitigation and ecological enhancements are provided.
- 1.4 The report is to be submitted to support a planning application. Full details of the proposals can be found on the planning portal.
- 1.5 The information and recommendations within this report have been prepared and provided in accordance with CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct (CIEEM, 2022).

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.6 The survey site covers an area of approximately 1,188.32 sqm and is centred on grid reference 'TL 2695 3943'.
- 1.7 The site is situated in an open parcel of land in the North Hertfordshire District Council control area. The site is located on the south side of Ashwell and is accessed via the rear of 2 Scarp Close..
- 1.8 The survey site comprises a rectangular parcel of unmanaged neutral grassland approximately 0.05 hectares in extent, located adjacent to No. 2 Scarp Close, Ashwell Street, Ashwell, Baldock (Photo refs: HAB1). The grassland is characterised by a variable sward structure, with areas of dense vegetation reaching breast height. The dominant vegetation includes common species indicative of disturbed or unmanaged neutral grassland, such as perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), soft brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), white campion (*Silene latifolia*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and occasional stands of poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) and cheeseweed mallow (*Malva neglecta*). The condition of the grassland is assessed as moderate, and it lacks evidence of recent land management.

The site lies within a semi-rural context with strong ecological connectivity to adjoining agricultural fields and the wider countryside. No built structures are present within the red line boundary. Although Buildings 1 and 2 are located adjacent to the site, they fall outside the red line boundary and were not assessed in detail as part of this appraisal. Aerial imagery confirms the site's proximity to open farmland, and a field margin approximately 50m to the east of the site contains two potential badger sett entrances, although no evidence such as latrines or hair was identified on site at the time of survey.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 1.9 The proposed development comprises the construction of a two-storey detached residential dwelling, inclusive of associated hardstanding and soft landscaping works. The existing vegetation within the plot is to be cleared to facilitate site preparation and construction activities.

SCOPE OF WORKS

- 1.10 The aims of this assessment were to:
- identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the proposed development;
 - identify suitable mitigation measures (if required);
 - determine whether further surveys are necessary;
 - identify opportunities for ecological enhancement;

2 Methodology

DESKTOP STUDY

- 2.1 Site-specific information in relation to land designations, protected species and protected habitats within a 2km search area was sourced from DEFRA MAGIC.
- 2.2 In order to ensure that ecological data searches were up to date, species data was screened and all data records pre-2012 was omitted from the results.
- 2.3 Results of the desktop study should be considered to be indicative only.

UKHAB SURVEY

- 2.4 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, comprised of a site walkover and mapping was undertaken by Max Shaw on 12/05/25. The PEA was undertaken in line with CIEEM's 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017). Max Shaw has been completing preliminary ecological appraisals for over three years and regularly undertakes surveys of this scale. They have received professional training in all aspects covered in this report.
- 2.5 The survey was conducted from the ground. Habitats and features of importance were mapped using a GPS enabled handset.
- 2.6 A Site Habitat Map was produced in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification Manual (Butcher et al., 2020). (Appendix 3).

PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT (PRA)

- 2.7 A Preliminary Roost Assessment, comprised of a preliminary ground level roost assessment was undertaken during the site survey on 12/05/25. The PRA was undertaken in line with the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023).
- 2.8 The survey included an active search for evidence of bats (such as droppings, feeding remains, urine splatters, oil staining, bat fur and/or scratch marks) and potential roosting features (PRFs). PRFs of trees are listed in Table 2.10.1. PRFs of built structures are listed in Table 2.8.1. The lists are not exhaustive but show examples of the most commonly used roosting features of built structures and trees.

Table 2.8.1: Potential roosting features (PRFs) in built structures listed in Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023).

Potential roosting features (PRFs) in built structures	
External	Internal
- Access/egress through windowsills, window panes and walls; - Behind peeling paintwork or lifted rendering; - Behind hanging tiles; - Weatherboarding; - Eaves; - Soffit boxes; - Fascias; - Lead flashing; - Gaps under felt (even including those of flats roofs); - Under tiles/slates; - Existing bat boxes; - Gaps in brickwork or stonework which provide access/egress to cavity or rubble-filled walls	- Behind wooden panelling; - In lintels above doors and windows; - Behind window shutters and curtains; - Behind pictures, posters, furniture, peeling paintwork, peeling wallpaper, lifted plaster and boarded windows; - Inside cupboards and in chimneys accessible from fireplaces; - Within attic roof voids; - The top of gable end or dividing walls; - The top of chimney breasts; - Ridge and hip beams and other roof beams; - Mortise and tenon joints; - All beams; - The junction of roof timbers, especially where ridge and hip beams meet; - Behind purlins; - Between tiles and the roof lining; - Under flat felt roofs

GROUND LEVEL TREE ASSESSMENT (GLTA)

2.9 A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, comprised of a preliminary ground level roost assessment was undertaken by Max Shaw during the site survey on 12/05/25. The GLTA was undertaken in line with the Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023).

2.10 The survey included an active search for evidence of bats (such as droppings, feeding remains, urine splatters, oil staining, bat fur and/or scratch marks) and potential roosting features (PRFs). PRFs of trees are listed in Table 2.10.1. The lists are not exhaustive but show examples of the most commonly used roosting features of trees.

Table 2.10.1: Potential roosting features (PRFs) in trees listed in Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023) Table 6.6.

Table 2.10.1. PRF types that can be exploited by bats and how they form (adapted from Bat Roosts in Trees, BTHK, 2018) reproduced from Table 6.6. (Collins, 2023.)		
PRFs formed by disease and decay	PRFs formed by damage	PRFs formed by association
• Woodpecker holes • Squirrel holes • Knot holes • Pruning cuts • Tear outs • Wounds • Cankers • Compression forks • Butt rots	• Lightning strikes • Hazard beams • Subsidence • Cracks • Shearing cracks • Transverse snaps • Welds • Lifting bark • Desiccation • Fissures • Frost cracks	• Fluting • Ivy

Table 2.10.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.reproduced from Table 6.6. (Collins, 2023.)

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

2.11 A Site PRF Map was produced to show the location of built structures, trees and potential roosting features (PRFs). Habitats and features of importance were mapped using a GPS enabled handset.

SUITABILITY ASSESSMENT

2.12 The likelihood of occurrence of protected ecological features and species was ranked in accordance with the criteria listed in Tables 2.12.1 and 2.12.2. Likelihood of occurrence was assessed using data collected during the desk study and after evaluation of the habitats on-site (during the site survey) as to their likelihood to provide suitability for protected species (i.e. presence of breeding, nesting, roosting, foraging, commuting and/or refuge habitat for example).

Table 2.12.1: Criteria used to assess the likelihood of occurrence for protected ecological features and species on-site (excl. bats).

Likelihood of occurrence	Criteria
Present	Confirmed as present during the site survey or by confirmed historical records.
High	Species are known to be present within close proximity to the site (records present). Habitats on-site are of high quality for the species and/or likely to support a large population. The site is well connected to good quality habitat within the local area.
Moderate	Species are known to be present within the local area (records present). Habitats on-site are of moderate quality for the species and/or likely to support a moderate population. The site and connected habitats provide all of the ecological requirements of the species. Suitability of habitats on-site may be limited due to disconnectivity to the wider landscape, poor to moderate habitat available within the wider locality, and/or due to the presence of only a small area of suitable habitat.
Low	Few or no records of the species within the local area. Habitats on-site are of poor quality for the species and/or likely to support just a few individuals. The suitability of habitats may be limited due to disturbance, isolation and/or poor quality habitat available within the wider locality. However, species presence cannot be discounted due to the national distribution of the species or the nature of on-site and surrounding habitats (if all required ecological requirements for the species are present).
Negligible	While presence cannot be absolutely discounted, the site includes very limited or poor quality habitat for a particular species. Connected habitats do not fulfil the ecological requirements of the species. There are no local records and/or the site is outside the known national range of the species.

Table 2.12.2: Criteria used to assess the likelihood of occurrence (site's suitability) for bats, from Bat Conservation Trust's 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Best Practice Guidelines' (Collins, 2023) (Table 4.1.)

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting bats	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e a complete absence of crevices / suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available for foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats but isolated (i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat). Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats for foraging such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only - with respect to roost type only).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used for bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitats. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION

- 2.13 An evaluation of the potential ecological constraints to the proposed development and appropriate mitigation strategies was made following CIEEM's 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018).

LIMITATIONS

- 2.14 Only one site visit was undertaken, therefore, a full evaluation of species present throughout the year could not be made. Therefore, there were seasonal constraints to species identification. However, the data collected during the site survey was sufficient to make an appropriate assessment of the site.
- 2.15 The site maps shown in Appendix 3 were produced from an Ordnance Survey Tile purchased from our mapping supplier. A site walkover with a GPS enabled handset was used to inform the location and extent of existing habitats shown on the appended mapping and is as accurate as possible but some error must be allowed for without a full topographical survey.

3 Policy and Legislative Context

- 3.1 This section includes the legislative context of those protected species or other notable species that are recorded on-site or have the potential to be present on-site. Details on specific legislation for other protected or notable species that have not been identified as being present, or having the potential to be present, are not included below.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.2 The introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied in the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system, only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so and is a material consideration for local planning authorities in determining applications.
- 3.3 Planning Practise Guidance is relevant covering the Natural Environment alongside the NPPF. Therefore features of ecological value should be considered in the context of conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 3.4 The Government's objectives for planning are to promote sustainable development, to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology and to contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.5 This report has been commissioned in order to comply with the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 chapter 11 'Natural Environment' and the policies 'NE1: Strategic green infrastructure' and 'NE4: Biodiversity and geological sites.'

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/north-herts-local-plan-2011-2031>

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION

- 3.6 Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1982)
- 3.7 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1983)
- 3.8 Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)
- 3.9 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949)
- 3.10 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)
- 3.11 Protection of Badgers Act (1992)
- 3.12 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017)
- 3.13 The Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1975)
- 3.14 The Hedgerows Regulations (1997)
- 3.15 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994)
- 3.16 Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)
- 3.17 Wild Mammals (Protection) Act (1996)

4 Desktop Study

SITE DESIGNATIONS

4.1 There is one designated site within the 2km search area.

Table 4.1.1: Designate sites recorded within a 2km radius of the survey site.

Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Approx. Closest Distance from Site (km)
Ashwell Springs SSSI	TL 270 397	0.23	0.3km
SSSI Impact Risk Zone	N/A	N/A	0km

*Data from DEFRA MAGIC

Table 4.1.2: Local wildlife sites recorded within a 2km radius of the survey site.

Site Name	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Approx. Closest Distance from Site (km)
Ashwell Quarry	TL 253 395	2.9	1.6km
Ashwell Quarry Springs	TL 252 396	0.16	1.7km
Partridge Hall Field	TL 262 391	1.98	0.7km
Ducklake Farm, Ashwell	TL 268 399	0.00	0.4km
Ruddery Pit	TL 284 400	3.37	N/A - Not noted

*Data from HERC and CPERC

LOCAL HABITAT

4.2 There were more than 10 priority habitats that were formerly mapped within the 2km search area.

Table 4.2.1: Priority habitats formerly mapped within a 2km radius of the survey site.

Habitat	Approx. Closest Distance from Site (km)
Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)	0.4km N
Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards (England)	0.5km NW
Priority Habitat Inventory - Traditional Orchards (England)	0.6km NE
Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)	0.7km SW

*Data from DEFRA MAGIC

- 4.3 There were no standing water bodies situated within a 500m radius of the survey site. The River Rhee runs approximately 384m north of the site.

HISTORICAL SPECIES RECORDS

- 4.4 Protected species records relating to the site and 2km search area were obtained from the HERC and CPERC. as part of the desktop study. The data search contains confidential information that is not suitable for public release. Therefore, the data has not been included in the report.
- 4.5 A full list of identified species recorded within the 2km search area can be requested from HERC and CPERC.
- 4.6 The absence of identified records does not discount the presence of a species. An absence of identified records is primarily a result of a lack of survey or the non-submission of records. Furthermore, historical records of species do not confirm their current presence within an area.
- 4.7 Four records of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and one record of otter (*Lutra lutra*) were recorded within 2km of the site. No records of other aquatic species including white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) were found.
- 4.8 The search found 117 records of bats within 2km of the site, including common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*), whiskered bat/Brandt's bat (*Myotis mystacinus/brandtii*), Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) and Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*). A search of DEFRA MAGIC showed no previous protected species licences for bats within 2km of the site.
- 4.9 The data search found 43 records of badger (*Meles meles*) and 14 records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within 2km of the site. No records of hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) were found within 2km of the site. A search of DEFRA MAGIC showed no previous protected species licences for hazel dormice within 2km of the site.
- 4.10 There was seven records of grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) and two records of adder (*Vipera berus*) within a 2km radius of the site.
- 4.11 Four records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and three records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) were found within 2km of the site. A search of DEFRA MAGIC showed no previous protected species licences for great crested newts within 2km of the site.

5 Site Survey

- 5.1 The site survey was undertaken on 12/05/25. The weather conditions were considered to be appropriate to survey (Table 5.1.1).

Table 5.1.1: Weather conditions at the time of survey.

Date of site survey: 12/05/25	
Weather Conditions:	Weather conditions during the site survey were recorded as partly cloudy with a temperature of approximately 23°C. No precipitation occurred during the survey period.

*Data from BBC Weather.

UK HABITAT SURVEY

5.2 Site and building description:

The survey site comprises a rectangular parcel of unmanaged neutral grassland approximately 0.05 hectares in extent, located adjacent to No. 2 Scarp Close, Ashwell Street, Ashwell, Baldock (Photo refs: HAB1). The grassland is characterised by a variable sward structure, with areas of dense vegetation reaching breast height. The dominant vegetation includes common species indicative of disturbed or unmanaged neutral grassland, such as perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), soft brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), white campion (*Silene latifolia*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), and occasional stands of poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) and cheeseweed mallow (*Malva neglecta*). The condition of the grassland is assessed as moderate, and it lacks evidence of recent land management.

The site lies within a semi-rural context with strong ecological connectivity to adjoining agricultural fields and the wider countryside. No built structures are present within the red line boundary. Although Buildings 1 and 2 are located adjacent to the site, they fall outside the red line boundary and were not assessed in detail as part of this appraisal. Aerial imagery confirms the site's proximity to open farmland, and a field margin approximately 50m to the east of the site contains two potential badger sett entrances, although no evidence such as latrines or hair was identified on site at the time of survey.

5.3 A description of habitat present along with target notes is shown in Table 5.3.1. The location of habitats is shown in the Site Habitat Map, Appendix 3.

Table 5.3.1: Description of habitats present on-site (please also see the Site Habitat Map, Appendix 3).

Habitats and Target Notes	Description	Supporting Photo
Habitat 1: g3c - other neutral grassland	This habitat comprises an area of unmanaged neutral grassland located within the red line boundary of the development site. The grassland is indicative of prolonged neglect, displaying a heterogeneous sward structure with vegetation heights varying significantly across the area, in some places reaching chest height. The dominant species present include common grasses such as perennial ryegrass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), soft brome (<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>), and poverty brome (<i>Bromus sterilis</i>), which are typical of nutrient-enriched, ruderal conditions. Forbs are interspersed throughout, with widespread occurrences of species such as creeping thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>), white campion (<i>Silene latifolia</i>), cheeseweed mallow (<i>Malva neglecta</i>), garlic mustard (<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>), and scattered stands of the toxic biennial herb poison hemlock (<i>Conium maculatum</i>), suggesting some disturbance and a mid-successional phase. The field layer lacks evidence of substantial management, with no recent mowing or grazing observed. The absence of scrub or woody vegetation and the diversity of ruderal species reflect a moderately species-rich grassland community in transition, though not falling within priority habitat criteria. The habitat is flanked on at least one side by agricultural land, enhancing connectivity to the	 Photo 1

wider rural matrix, albeit with limited internal structural diversity. Based on aerial imagery and ground-level observations, the grassland appears fragmented from other semi-natural habitats, reducing its intrinsic ecological value. However, it may support a low diversity of invertebrates and small mammals. The overall condition is assessed as moderate, showing satisfactory ecological function and a fair native species presence, though limited by its dominance of generalist taxa and lack of habitat complexity.



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

Target Notes	One target note was recorded during the ecological survey, relating to a potential mammal feature observed outside the site boundary. The observation concerns possible badger activity in proximity to the development site and is relevant for assessing potential offsite ecological receptors in accordance with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. TN1 Two ground-level holes were observed approximately 50 metres east of the application site boundary, situated beyond the red line area in a field margin adjoining agricultural land. The holes measured approximately 25–30 cm in diameter and displayed clear rounded edges, consistent with entrance tunnels created by European badger (<i>Meles meles</i>). However, no definitive field signs typical of active badger sett use—such as latrines, freshly excavated spoil, bedding material, hair caught on nearby fencing, or footprints—were identified during the survey. The absence of corroborating evidence suggests the feature may represent either an outlier sett, a disused sett, or potentially a fox earth. No direct impact upon the potential sett is anticipated as it lies outside the development footprint; however, given the species' territorial behaviour and legal protection, precautionary measures are recommended should any significant groundworks be proposed within close proximity.	 Photo 6  Photo 7
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6 Evaluation and Assessment

- 6.1 Results from the desktop study and site survey were evaluated to assess the likelihood of occurrence for protected ecological features and species potential (as per Table 2.12.1). An evaluation of the potential impacts due to the proposed development and recommendations for appropriate mitigation measures are provided in Table 6.1.1.

Protected Species Likelihood:

Protected feature or species | Likelihood of occurrence or suitability | Comments and justifications | Impacts due to the proposed development | Required mitigation measures

Roosting bats | Negligible | No buildings, trees, or structures with potential roost features (PRFs) are present within the red-line boundary. Building B1 outside the red line is sealed and offers no roosting potential. | None anticipated | No mitigation required.

Foraging and commuting bats | Low | The site comprises unmanaged grassland with limited foraging value. Connectivity to the wider landscape is moderate. | Minor loss of low-quality foraging habitat | Retain vegetated boundaries where feasible and consider dusk/dawn-sensitive lighting schemes during construction and post-development.

Badgers (*Meles meles*) | Low | Two potential sett entrances observed 50m east of the site (Photo ref: TN1), though no field signs such as latrines or paths were found. | Unlikely to be directly impacted; no setts within footprint | Pre-commencement check if development occurs more than 12 months post-survey. Toolbox talk and precautionary working methods within 30m of any sett if located during construction.

Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) | Moderate | Unmanaged grassland may offer foraging and shelter opportunities. Species is widespread in Hertfordshire. | Risk of injury or displacement during site clearance | Conduct clearance works using a two-stage cut and supervised removal of dense vegetation. Include permeability measures (hedgehog highways) in fence design.

Amphibians | Low | No standing water on-site or adjacent. Surrounding arable landscape unlikely to support significant breeding habitat. | Unlikely to be impacted | No mitigation required unless evidence of breeding ponds within 250m is discovered.

Reptiles | Low | Sward structure and unmanaged grassland may offer suboptimal habitat for common reptile species. Site is isolated from high-quality habitats. | Low risk of injury or displacement during clearance | Toolbox talk and precautionary clearance under RAMS. Site to be kept unsuitable prior to works where likely.

Birds | Moderate | Dense ruderal vegetation may support nesting birds during the breeding season. | Potential disturbance or destruction of active nests during vegetation clearance | All clearance to be undertaken outside nesting bird season (March–August) or following a check by a competent ecologist.

Invertebrates | Low | Vegetation structure supports a limited assemblage of common invertebrates. No specialised features noted. | Minor habitat loss | Habitat diversification within soft landscaping to enhance post-development invertebrate value.

Invasive non-native species | None observed | No INNS identified during the site visit. | None | No mitigation necessary.

Terrestrial mammals (excluding protected species) | Moderate | Habitat may support small mammals such as field vole (*Microtus agrestis*) or wood mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*). | Vegetation removal may displace individuals | Progressive site clearance using a two-stage cut under ecological supervision.

Common and widespread mammals | Moderate | Brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) and other adaptable species may use the area opportunistically. | Minor displacement | Sensitive site clearing techniques and good site hygiene during construction.

Potential Impacts & Mitigation Recommendations:

The proposed development at Scarp Close, Ashwell Street, Ashwell, Baldock, involves the clearance of unmanaged grassland to facilitate the construction of a two-storey residential dwelling with associated landscaping. The site comprises a small area of neutral grassland largely dominated by coarse, ruderal vegetation and surrounded by residential and agricultural land. Ecological interest is limited but present, with potential for common terrestrial mammals, nesting birds, and possible off-site badger activity. No evidence of notable protected species or priority habitats was recorded on site. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and in line with relevant wildlife legislation, including but not limited to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Key considerations:

- Vegetation clearance should be timed to avoid the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). If unavoidable, a pre-commencement nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist must be undertaken within 24 hours of works.
- Grassland clearance should follow a two-stage cut (initial strim to 15 cm, followed by a close cut after 48 hours) to allow mobile species such as hedgehogs and small mammals to safely disperse.
- Should works commence more than 12 months from the date of survey, a pre-commencement ecological walkover should be undertaken to ensure conditions have not changed.
- Vegetation clearance and groundworks within 30 m of the off-site potential badger sett entrances (Photo ref: TN1) should follow a precautionary approach. A re-check of their status should be undertaken prior to commencement. If identified as active, works must avoid disturbance thresholds or be subject to a Natural England licence.
- Boundary vegetation and habitat features offering low-level foraging opportunities for bats and invertebrates should be retained where

feasible, and any new external lighting should follow Bat Conservation Trust (2018) guidelines to prevent light spill onto retained green infrastructure.

- Ecological enhancements suitable for this site include the incorporation of native nectar-rich planting, installation of bat and bird boxes on retained trees or built structures, and inclusion of hedgehog highways within new fencing to maintain terrestrial connectivity.

- No further species-specific surveys are currently required, but this recommendation is subject to change should future planning iterations generate increased risk of ecological impact.

Table 6.1.1: Likelihood of occurrence of protected ecological features and species on-site, potential impacts due to the proposed development and recommendations for appropriate mitigation measures.

Protected feature / species	Likelihood of occurrence / suitability	Comments / Justification	Impact due to Proposed Development	Required Mitigation Measures
Protected sites	Negligible	The site is not situated within, or adjacent to, any known protected sites. The site is not considered to be well connected to any known protected sites.	None	None required.
Protected habitats	Negligible	There were no protected habitats on, or adjacent to, the site. Habitats on-site were not considered to be unique or of high quality within the wider locality.	None	None required.
Protected plant species	Low	There are no known records of protected plant species within 2km of the site. No protected plant species were observed during the site survey. Habitats on-site are not considered to be unique or of high quality to support protected plant species. However, their presence cannot be entirely discounted.	The site does not appear to support protected plant species, thus, the proposed development is unlikely to impact upon protected plant species.	None required.
Invasive plant species	Low.	No invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the	Invasive plant species have the potential to impact	If invasive plant species are found, it is recommended to

Protected feature / species	Likelihood of occurrence / suitability	Comments / Justification	Impact due to Proposed Development	Required Mitigation Measures
		Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were found during the survey. As there were seasonal constraints to plant identification, it is possible that invasive plant species are present and have yet to be identified.	protected species and habitats	consider appropriate methods of removal.

7 Biodiversity Enhancements

- 7.1 The development should be used as an opportunity for biodiversity net gain, by creating new opportunities for wildlife.

BIRDS

- 7.2 It is recommended to place two new bird boxes on-site.
- 7.3 A traditional nest box should be placed 3 metres above ground level in an area of low disturbance. The box should be sheltered away from prevalent weather conditions, commonly associated within the UK, such as strong sunlight, prevailing winds and rain.
- 7.4 It is recommended that open-nest boxes be placed in areas of low/tolerable human disturbance, which will deter predators.

INVERTEBRATES

- 7.5 It is recommended to install invertebrate boxes on-site. The boxes should be suitable for solitary bees.
- 7.6 Nectar-rich wildflowers should be planted within close proximity to the bee bricks/invertebrates boxes to create new opportunities for pollinators.
- 7.7 Fruit trees make ideal habitat for many invertebrate species. Thus, it is recommended to plant new garden ornamental fruit trees on-site. For example, Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*), Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) and Common Pear (*Pyrus communis*).

TERRESTRIAL MAMMALS

- 7.8 It is recommended to plant native species-rich hedgerows on-site, which will enhance connectivity and provide refuge for small mammals. Suitable species would include Common Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Common Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) and Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*) for example.

TREES

- 7.9 New tree planting would be a welcomed addition to development. New tree planting should be considered carefully, with consideration to species, location and future management. New trees should be robust and of high quality. Where possible, native species should be used. However, considerations should be given to climate change and potential pathogens.

8 Conclusions

- 8.1 The site at Scarp Close, Ashwell Street Ashwell, Baldock SG7 5QU is to be redeveloped with the construction of a two-storey detached residential dwelling, inclusive of associated hardstanding and soft landscaping works. The existing vegetation within the plot is to be cleared to facilitate site preparation and construction activities.
- 8.2 The development will result in a loss of neutral grassland.

ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

- 8.3 Development proposals must have regard for protected species identified as potentially occurring on, or near to, the site (e.g., amphibians, birds, terrestrial mammals, and reptiles). Mitigation measures to protect these species have been produced within this report to ensure that the proposed works comply with relevant UK legislation.
- 8.4 Further mitigation measures have been outlined within the report to ensure that protected species are not impacted by the development.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

- 8.5 A tool box talk should be given to all relevant personnel by a suitable qualified ecologist before any works commence on-site to outline ecological constraints and the required mitigation measures.
- 8.6 The existing amenity grassland should be retained at a short sward prior to any demolition/construction works commencing on-site in order to ensure that the habitat does not become more favourable to amphibians and/or reptiles.
- 8.7 Construction works should be limited to daylight hours (excl. dawn and dusk) in order to prevent disturbance to nighttime foraging activity.
- 8.8 Vegetation removal must be undertaken using hand tools. Cut vegetative materials should be checked and removed from site immediately.
- 8.9 Any trenches or other excavations left open overnight should be well covered to deter Badgers from entering. If this is not possible, any trenches or other excavations left open overnight should either be provided with an escape ramp (comprised of a sloped side or wooden plank reaching up to ground level or slightly above), to allow any wildlife that falls in to escape.
- 8.10 During hibernation season (October to March), piles of leaf litter and logs should be retained to ensure hibernating hedgehogs are not harmed. If removal is unavoidable, the piles must be carefully checked before

burning.

- 8.11 Post-construction, the use of artificial lighting should be limited where possible. Motion sensors on outside lighting will prevent prolonged disturbance. It is recommended that outside lighting be set on short-timers (1 minute) and that the sensitivity is set to large moving objects only.
- 8.12 Any newly built boundary features should incorporate 'wildlife gaps' (comprising a 13x13cm gap at the base of the feature), to allow wildlife to pass through.

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

- 8.13 The project is to be used as an opportunity for biodiversity net gain by creating new opportunities for wildlife. New habitat creation is to be implemented on-site and should be included within the final project design.

Site Baseline

- 8.14 The on-site baseline biodiversity is calculated at **0.98 habitat units** consisting of neutral grassland.

Site As Proposed

- 8.15 Post-development, without intervention, the proposed plans will result in **0.17 habitat units** or a net loss of **-82.97%**. This is attributed to the loss of neutral grassland which is replaced by urban environments (gravel driveway, buildings and gardens).

Recommended Actions

- 8.16 Due to the site being within a residential curtilage, the proposed grass area surrounding the property must be classed as vegetated garden, providing limited ecological value. Therefore, to reach the mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain, it is recommended that the client pursue off-site habitat creation on land that has been baselined by a qualified Ecologist with potential for enhancement, such as a non-residential open field.

The **0.98 neutral grassland units** must be offset by a higher distinctiveness habitat (such as traditional orchard or lowland mixed deciduous woodland) to satisfy the trading rules. To put this into context, the client would have to plant **0.166 ha** of **traditional orchard** or **0.771 ha** of **lowland mixed deciduous woodland**, both maintained to a moderate condition; to provide an overall net gain of **17.11%** or **17.07%**, respectively.

If this is not feasible, then it is recommended the client pursue habitat banks that offer services in the form of habitat creation for biodiversity offsetting purposes.

Alternatively, statutory credits may be purchased from the government as a last resort if no other options are available. These are to the tune of **1.95 A1 tier** credits.

SUMMARY

- 8.17 Subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures and offsite habitat creation, the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant ecological impact.

9 References and Bibliography

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10 Limitations

- 10.1 ROAVR Group has prepared this Report for the sole use of the above named Client/Agent in accordance with our terms of business, under which our services were performed. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this Report or any other services provided by us.
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Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Antony Aslam
Ecologist

A Aslam



Prepared by: Antony Aslam MSci QCIEEM
Checked by: Max Shaw BSc QCIEEM

Appendix 1: Site Location and Assessment Boundary

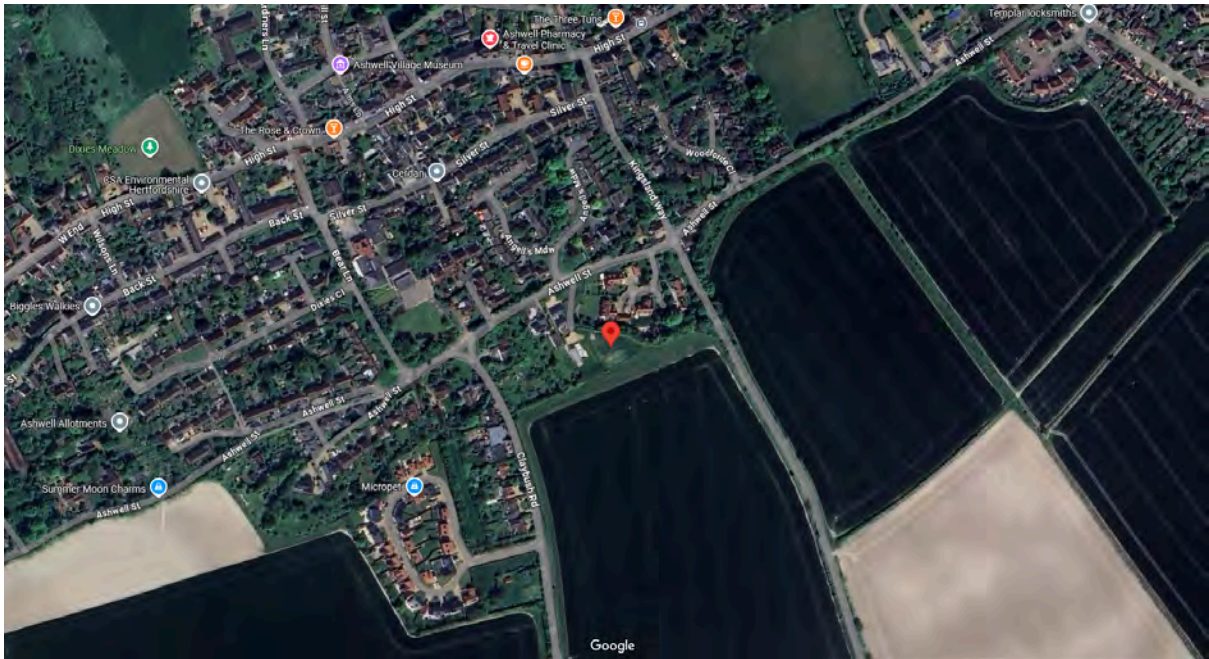


Figure A1.1: Extract from Google Maps showing the site location. (Google, 2025)

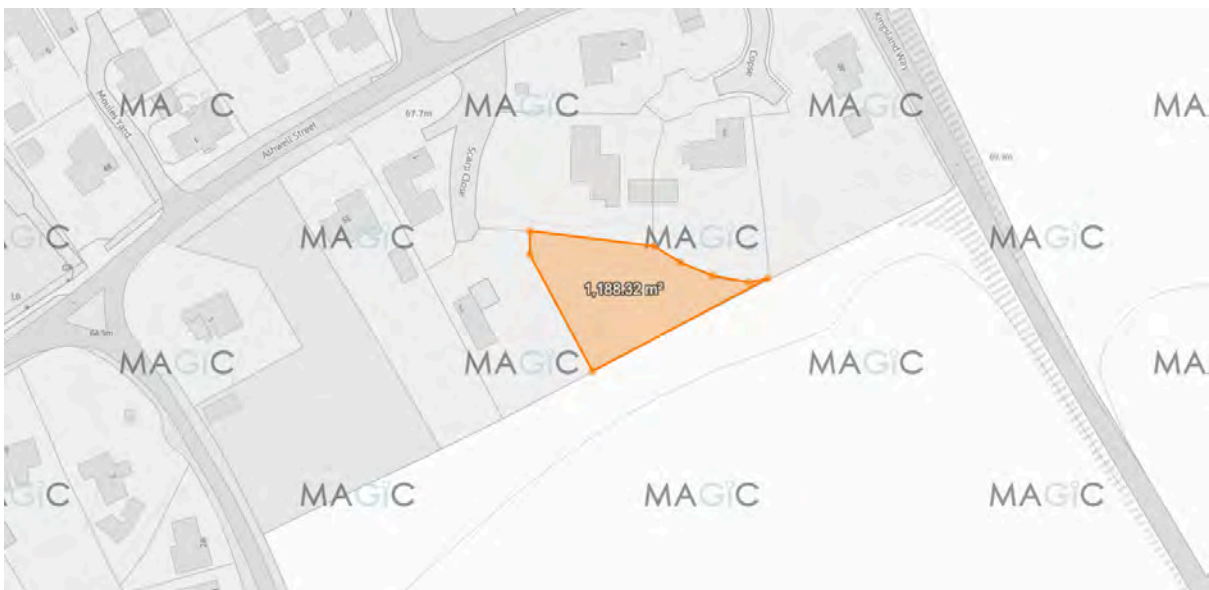


Figure A1.2: Extract from DEFRA MAGIC showing the assessment boundary. (MAGIC, 2025)

Appendix 2: Desktop Study

*Data from DEFRA.

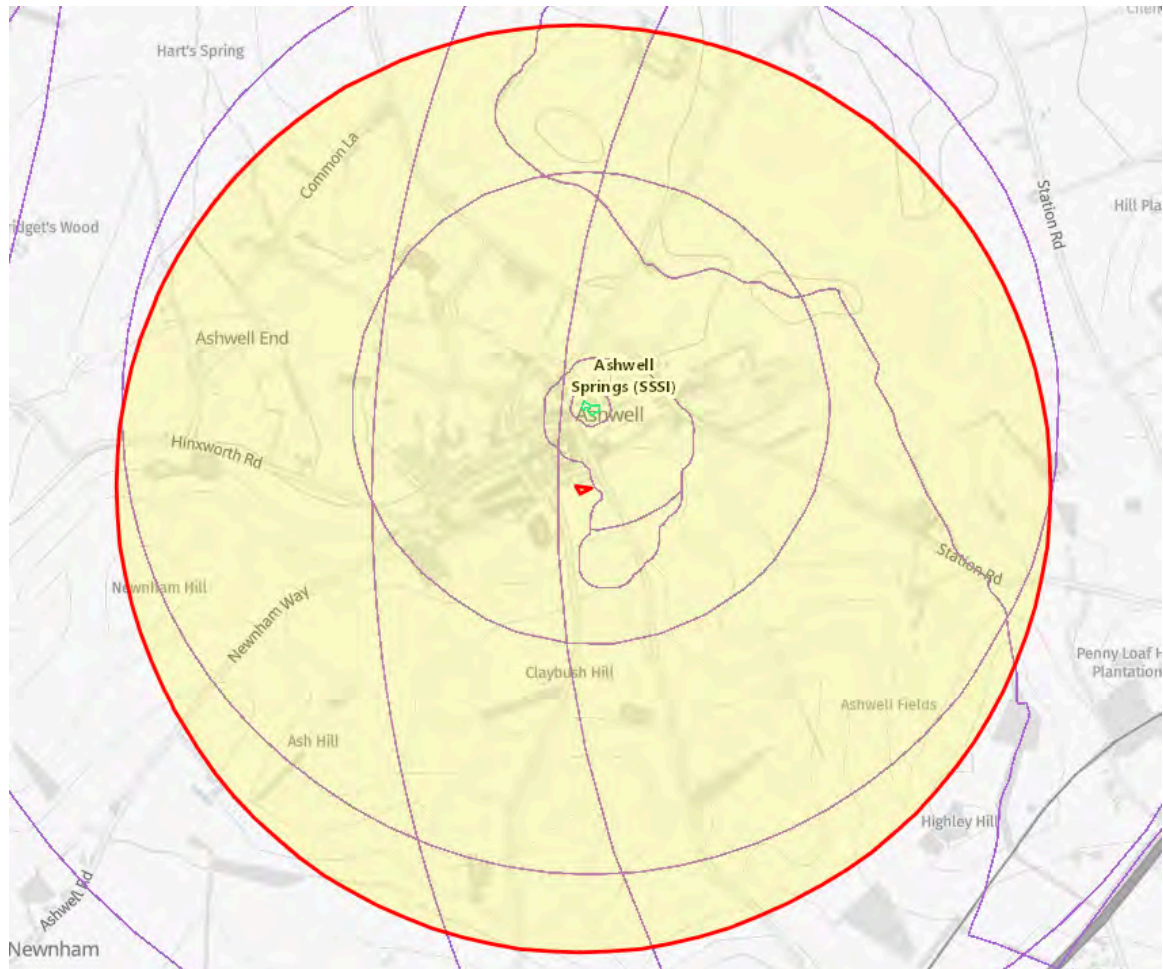


Figure A2.1: Location of designated sites situated within a 2km search radius of the site.

*Data from DEFRA.

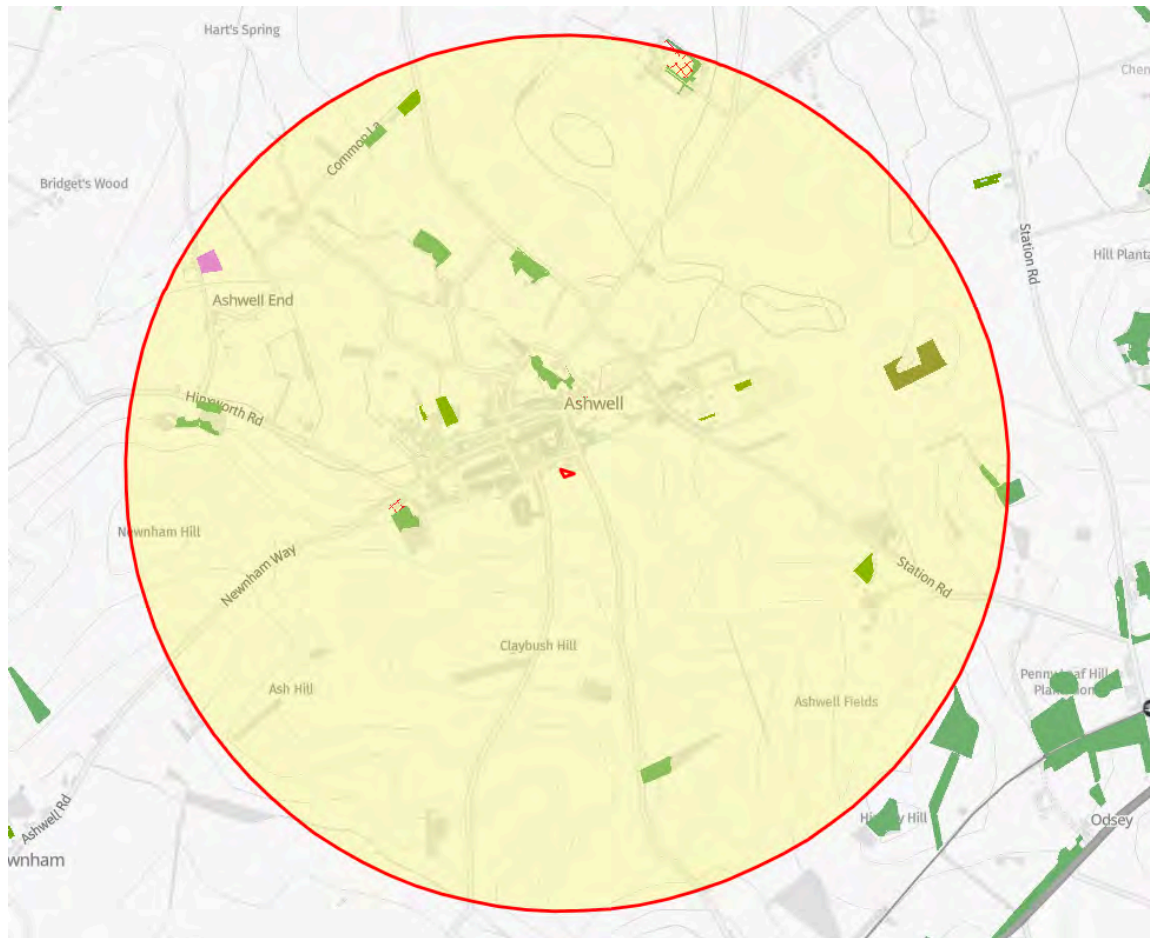
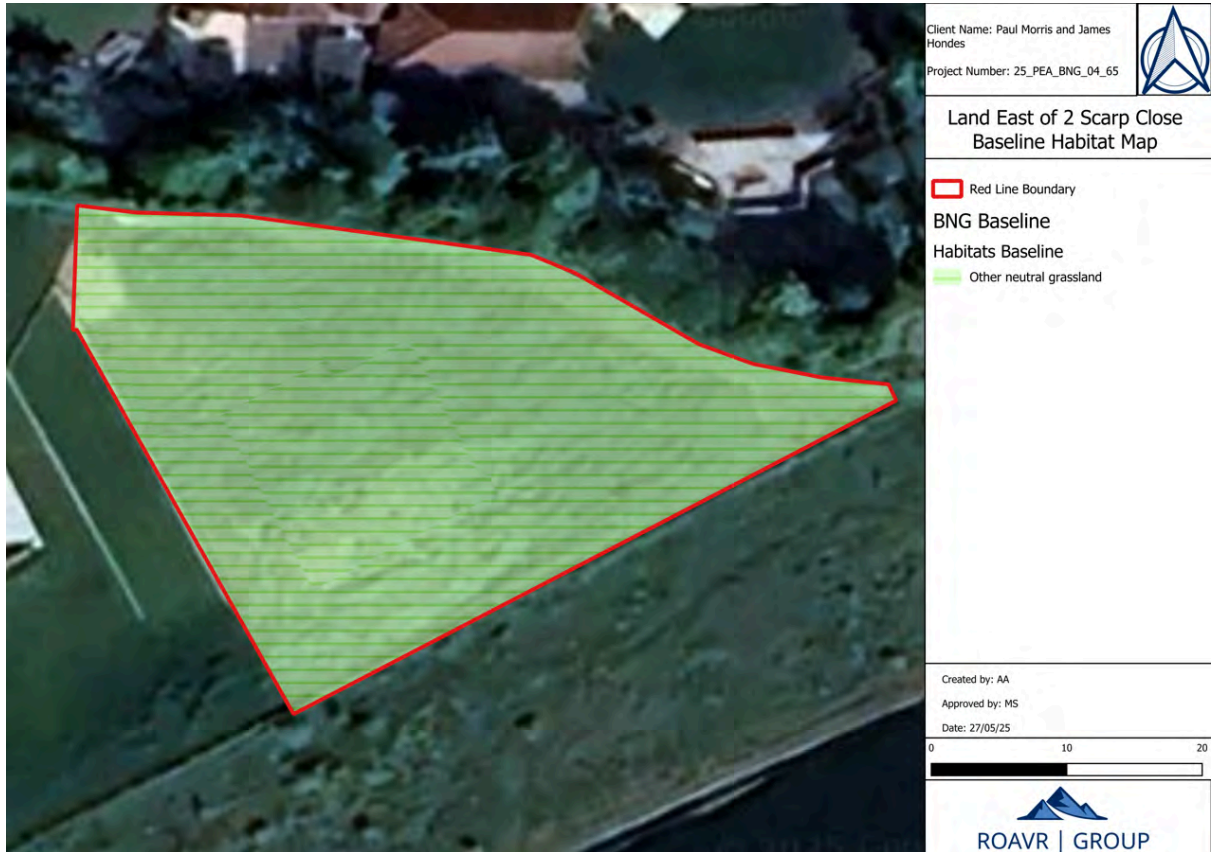
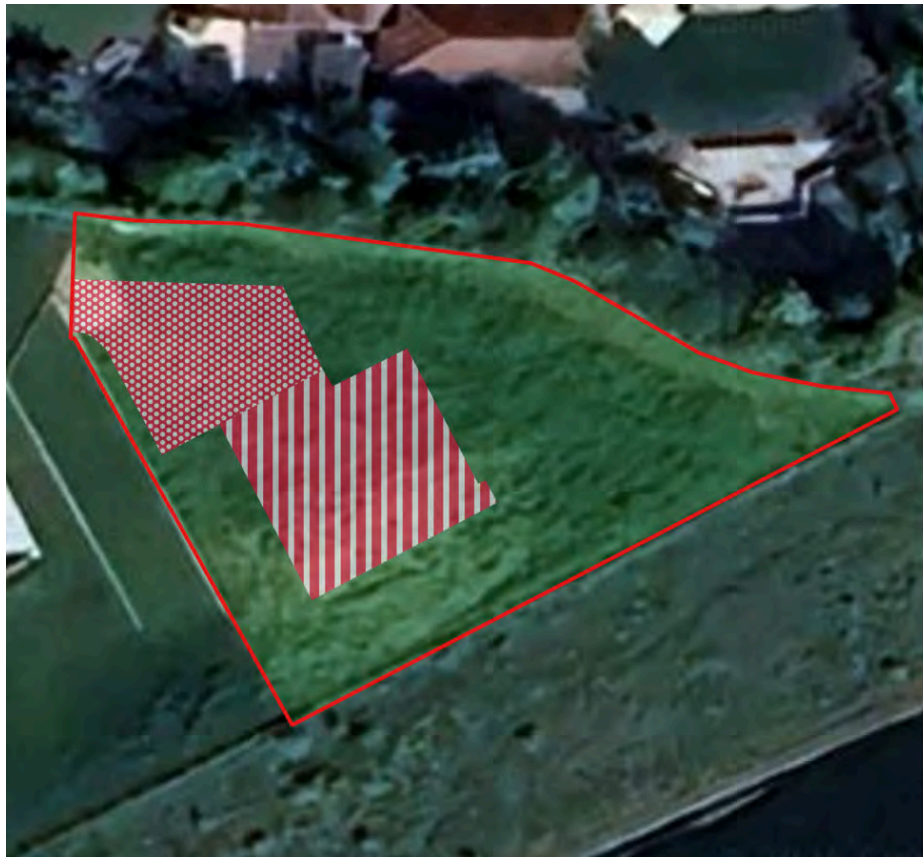


Figure A2.2: Priority habitats formerly mapped within a 2km search radius of the site.

Appendix 3: Site Maps

A3.1 The Site Habitat Map was produced in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification Manual (Butcher et al., 2020).





Client Name: Paul Morris and James
Hindes
Project Number: 25_PEA_BNG_04_65



Land East of 2 Scarp Close Proposed Habitat Map

 Red Line Boundary

BNG Proposed Habitats Proposed

 Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

 Developed land; sealed surface

 Vegetated garden

Created by: AA

Approved by: MS

Date: 27/05/25

