



**Brindle
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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Redwings Lodge, Baldock – A1 Southbound,
Hinxworth

Report Reference: BG25.250

REV1 – February 2026



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1 Summary

- 1.1.1 Brindle & Green Ltd were commissioned by Redwings Lodge Limited to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal incorporating a UK Habitat (UKHab) Classification Survey and Protected Species Assessment at the Redwings Lodge, A1 – Southbound, Hinxworth in the historic market town of Baldock, North Hertfordshire. This report summarises the potential ecological constraints to the full planning application for partial site clearance, in the north and west of the site to facilitate the development of hotel extension providing an additional 58 new units, with associated car parking and landscaping. The survey was carried out on the 16th May 2025.
- 1.1.2 The red line boundary/site area is approximately 1.02ha in extent and comprises mostly of hardstanding and two buildings (B1 and B2), surrounded by areas of species-poor modified grassland. An area of short, intensively managed, modified grassland with increased species diversity, is also present at the northeast of the site surrounded by tall forbs along the northern peripheries of the site. A stand of wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), as listed on schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, was recorded within areas of introduced shrub adjacent to building B2. The site was evaluated to support 'Site' value on a local scale.
- 1.1.3 The habitats described within this report have the potential to support protected and/or notable species. As such, this report outlines important measures to protect species during site clearance, and recommendations to improve the biodiversity status of the site post development.
- 1.1.4 A full description of the recommendations can be found within Chapter 7. Table 1 is a summary of the ecological issues recommended for further consideration as a result of our initial investigations.

Table 1: Ecological recommendations

Ecological Consideration	Recommendations (e.g. further survey, mitigation)	Timing
Habitats	A Biodiversity Net Gain Report (August 2025) and completed Statutory Metric (August 2025) have already been compiled, and outlines the units required to achieve the mandatory 10% net gain. These should be read alongside this report and submitted as part of any planning application.	Prior to submission

Ecological Consideration	Recommendations (e.g. further survey, mitigation)	Timing
	Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to safeguard adjacent and nearby habitats, such as the nearby ditch 20m south of the red line boundary, as detailed in Chapter 7	Secured as a condition of planning.
Breeding Birds	Works should be sympathetic to this group of species, with vegetation clearance undertaken following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) outlined in Chapter 7	During Site Clearance (Optimal timing between October – February outside of breeding bird season)
Roosting Bats	Building B2 assessed to hold 'Low' suitability for roosting bats. A minimum of one nocturnal survey is recommended to determine presence/likely absence of roosting bats, detailed in Chapter 7	One nocturnal survey between May – August.
Foraging and Commuting Bats	Works should be sympathetic to this group of species through sensitive lighting, detailed in Chapter 7	During and post construction
Reptiles	Reasonable Avoidance Measures are recommended during construction phase and too be included within the CEMP, as detailed in Chapter 7	Year Round, during development
Mammal Species of Principal Importance	Reasonable Avoidance Measures are recommended during site clearance and construction	During development
Otter	CEMP to safeguard suitable nearby habitats from dust and pollution, such as the nearby ditch 20m south of the red line boundary, as detailed in Chapter 7	Secured as a condition of planning.

Ecological Consideration	Recommendations (e.g. further survey, mitigation)	Timing
Water vole	CEMP to safeguard suitable nearby habitats from dust and pollution, such as the nearby ditch 20m south of the red line boundary, as detailed in Chapter 7	Secured as a condition of planning.
Invasive Species	Wall cotoneaster should be controlled / removed and disposed of appropriately by a specialist and suitably qualified contractor	During site clearance and development.

2 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this assessment was to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site incorporating a UKHab Survey and Protected Species Assessment to establish the likelihood of the site supporting protected species. The survey provides detail on the need for any additional, more detailed protected species surveys, likely mitigation, and any opportunities for enhancement.
- 2.1.2 The site is the subject of the full planning application for partial site clearance to facilitate the development of hotel extension providing an additional 51 new units, with associated car parking and landscaping. Design plans are provided within Appendix 6 of this report.
- 2.1.3 The legislation relevant to protected species within the United Kingdom is summarised within Appendix 4.
- 2.1.4 Results and recommendations contained within this report have been prepared by an experienced ecologist and are therefore the view of Brindle & Green Limited. The survey is based on information provided by our client, the development proposals, results of the desk study and our survey of the site. This report pertains to this information only.

3 Methodology

3.1 Desk Study

- 3.1.1 Table 2 lists organisations and/or resources used as part of the desk study process. Data regarding any known statutory or non statutory sites, in addition to any records for protected species, were requested from the following sources:

Table 2: Ecological Data Resources

Consultant	Requested data	Search radius	Date requested
Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC)	- Protected and Notable Species Records - Local, National and International Site Designations	2.0km	08/08/2025
Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)	- National and International site Designations - Granted European protected species Development (EPS) Licenses - Priority Habitat Inventory	2.0km	14/08/2025

3.2 Surveyors

- 3.2.1 The survey was carried out by Joe Allsop MSc BSc (Hons), a current Qualifying Member of CIEEM, Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence (2023-11512-CL08-GCN), Consultant Ecologist
- 3.2.2 The survey was overseen by Lucinda Sweet PhD, MCIEEM Natural England Bat Licence (Class Level 2, 2019-9122-CLS-CLS), Great Crested Newt Licence (Class Level 1, 2016-22852-CLS-CLS), Director.

3.3 Survey Conditions

- 3.3.1 The survey was undertaken at 11:00am on the 16th May 2025. The outside temperature was recorded as 15°C, with dry conditions, and 1/8 cloud cover.

3.4 UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.4.1 A UK Habitat Classification survey was undertaken where habitats were categorised and mapped (Appendix 1) following the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.01 (UK Hab Ltd., 2023) to establish the presence and distribution of habitat types within the site and potential ecological constraints to development.

3.4.2 The UKHab System is comprised of a five-level Primary Habitat Hierarchy, with each successive level providing increasingly detailed descriptions of habitat parcels present onsite. The system encompasses all habitat types found in the UK, irrespective of scale or geographic range, including UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats and Habitats Directive Annex I habitats.

- Level 1 includes the description of each major ecosystem present; Terrestrial, Freshwater, and Marine.
- Level 2 includes nine ecosystem types; Grassland, Woodland and Forest, Heathland and Shrub, Wetland, Cropland, Urban, Sparsely Vegetated Land, Rivers and Lakes, and Marine Inlets and Transitional Waters.
- Level 3 describes the 20 broad habitat types of the nine ecosystems outlined in Level 2. Examples include Acid Grassland, Calcareous Grassland, Neutral Grassland, Modified Grassland, Broadleaved and Mixed Woodland, Hedgerows, and Dense Scrub.
- Level 4 expands the 20 broad habitat types of Level 3 into 85 detailed habitat types, including Lowland Meadows, Other Neutral Grassland, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, and Other woodland; Mixed. This level also allows the separation of 46 UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority habitats from other habitats of lower ecological significance.
- Level 5 provides a further detailed expansion to Level 4 habitat types. 119 habitats are described within this level including 72 habitats as listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive.

3.4.3 Primary habitat types are accompanied by a list of Secondary Codes, which are further categorised into 'Essential' and 'Additional' codes. Each recorded habitat parcel is assigned a single Primary Habitat Code from Levels 2-4 and includes all Essential Secondary Code features relating to the habitat parcel. Additional Secondary Codes are also applied where relevant. No more than six Secondary Codes are recommended per parcel (UKHabs Ltd. 2023) and a list of Secondary Code definitions relevant to the site have been provided within Appendix 1. Where additional details were required, Target Notes have also been provided (Appendix 2). A plant species list (Appendix 2) summarising all plants identified on site was produced during the survey and all scientific nomenclature was produced according to Stace (2010).

- 3.4.4 This survey was extended to note the potential for habitats on site to support protected and/or notable species and for evidence of any such species. The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support protected species in relation to the habitat type found at the site. Any incidental sightings or field signs were noted at the time of survey. Where evidence of, or the confirmed presence of a protected species was identified further species-specific surveys may be recommended to ensure that the presence or otherwise of a legally protected species is fully considered prior to the determination of any planning approval to guide an EPS development licence.
- 3.4.5 Hedgerows on site were assessed following the Hedgerow Survey Handbook (DEFRA 2007) and defined as species-rich if the structural species making up a surveyed 30m section of hedgerow included at least five native woody species. Results were compiled and assessed against qualifying criteria within the Hedgerow Regulations (1997) and also the UK Biodiversity Action Plan / NERC Act 2006.
- 3.4.6 Legislation, guidance and methodology for species relevant to this site are presented in full within Appendices 4 and 5 of this report.

3.5 Site Evaluation

- 3.5.1 Following the ecological appraisal, the site was classified into one of six groups (Table 3), to indicate whether the site is considered to hold ecological value on a local, national or international scale. This evaluation is intended as a guide and only targeted survey work can establish the significance of protected species populations on site.

Table 3: Definitions of each of the six evaluation brackets, indicating the importance of each habitat type and an example of their possible habitat status. (Table constructed following The CIEEM EcIA Guidelines, Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal (2024) pages 16-17)

Evaluation Value	Example of habitat or species
International	An internationally designated site or candidate site, including habitat or species included within Special Protection Areas (SPA) / Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar Sites, listed under Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive.
National	Sites designated at UK level, e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), supporting species considered nationally threatened or rare. A regularly occurring regionally or county significant population/number of any nationally important species A feature identified as of critical importance within Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006).

Evaluation Value	Example of habitat or species
Regional	Key Habitat type included within SA P. A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a regionally important species.
County	Designated sites, such as Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) or viable habitat / species populations of value at a county level (LBAP).
District	District level designated sites, such as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) or habitats / species populations of value at a district (Which have features qualifying for LWS status). Sites/features that are scarce within the district or which appreciably enrich the district habitat resource.
Local / Site	Habitats or species populations of value in a local (i.e. within ~ 5km of the site) context. Habitats of poor to moderate biological diversity e.g. established conifer plantations, species poor hedgerows and un-intensively managed grassland which supports species which are common to the local area and whose loss can be easily mitigated.

3.6 Limitations

- 3.6.1 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The protected and notable species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of these species occurring on site, based upon the suitability of the habitats, known distribution of the species in the local area and any direct evidence on site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group.

3.7 Report Lifespan

- 3.7.1 Given the transient nature of the subject, we would consider the survey results contained to be accurate for up to 18 months, at the discretion as assessed by a suitably qualified ecologist.

4.2 Zone of Influence

- 4.2.1 The zone of influence describes the geographic extent of potential impacts of a proposed development. The small scale of the proposed development reduces the likelihood of impact to the surrounding area, however suitable connective vegetation could influence the presence of protected species within the application boundary. The zone of influence was considered to be 250 metres from the application boundary for amphibians and reptiles, 30 metres for terrestrial mammals such as [REDACTED] water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) and otter (*Lutra lutra*), and within the area of impact for breeding birds and bats.

5 Results

5.1 Desk Study

Designated Sites

- 5.1.1 The site was subjected to a search for designated sites within a 2.0km radius of the site using data supplied by the Local Records Centre (Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC)) and the online desk-based resource MAGIC.
- 5.1.2 The data supplied by HERC was received on the 08/08/2025 and is summarised within Table 4. The search revealed one statutory and no non-statutory sites within a 2.0km radius of the site.
- 5.1.3 A search of the online resource Magic Maps found no additional sites with Statutory designations within the 2km radius search.

Table 4: Summary of Designated Sites within a 2km radius of the application site

Site Name	Grid Ref.	Status	Reason for Designation	Distance from site
Statutory Sites				
Stotfold Mill Meadows LNR	TL224364	Local Nature Reserve	Designated for its wildflower meadows with wetland of interconnected ponds and a small woodland.	1.5km S

Protected Species Assessment

- 5.1.4 Data supplied by HERC also included records of protected species. Full datasets are presented within Appendix 8 of this report. A summary of the closest or most relevant records can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of relevant protected and priority species records

Species	Grid Ref.	Date	Description
Birds			
Barn owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>)	Confidential	06/01/2019	Six records of barn owl within 2.0km, of which the nearest record exists 1.0km east of the site.
Swift (<i>Apus apus</i>)	TL22413883	15/06/2013	Four records of swifts, with the nearest 1.3km north of the site.
House martin (<i>Delichon urbicum</i>)	TL243376	23/06/2014	One record of house martin, 1.8km southeast of the site.
Mammals			
Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>)	TL2343038035	07/05/2017	One record of hedgehog 0.85m, southeast of the site.
Noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)	TL2336	21/07/2016	Two records of noctule approximately 1.4km, south of the site.
Common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>)	TL2336	17/07/2017	Eleven records within 2.0km, with the nearest, 1.4km south of the site.
Soprano pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>)	TL2336	12/07/2017	Two records of Soprano pipistrelle within 2.0km of the site, with the nearest 1.4km south.
Serotine (<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>)	TL2336	12/07/2017	One serotine record approximately 1.4km south of the site
Myotis spp.	TL2437	11/04/2010	One record of a Myotis bat species, situated 1.4km south east of the site.
Herpetofauna			
Grass snake (<i>Natrix helvetica</i>)	TL237385	09/06/2019	Two records of grass snake 1.0km, east of the site.
Invasive Species			
Muntjac (<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>)	TL244376	01/03/2015	One record of muntjac 1.8km, south east of the site

5.1.5 Magic Maps also revealed no granted EPS licences within 2.0km of the site.

Priority Habitats

5.1.6 Data supplied by MAGIC includes a UKBAP priority habitat inventory. MAGIC returned no priority habitat on or adjacent to the application site. However, a Traditional orchard Priority habitat was noted 10m north of the red line boundary.

5.2 Habitats

5.2.1 The habitat types recorded on site are summarised below, and the frequency and distribution of habitat types is displayed within a UKHab Survey Map (Appendix 1 and 2).

5.2.2 Table 6 provides a list of habitat types present on site along with their inclusion (or otherwise) as a National and / or Local Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) (Previously referred to as Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)) (It should be noted that additional information is included within the text where a classification under UKHab survey methodology does not mirror habitat types considered to be conservation priorities).

Table 6: UKHab Habitat Types found on site and inclusion within UK BAP/HPI habitats

Habitat Type	N HPI	L HPI	N/A
Modified grassland (g4 – 16, 32, 108)			✓
Other broadleaved woodland (w1g - 30)			✓
Introducer Shrub (u – 524, 847)			✓
Developed land; sealed surface (u 1b - 804)			✓
Buildings (u 1b 5)			✓

Modified Grassland (g4 – 16, 32, 108)

Modified Grassland (A)

5.2.3 The eastern section of the site was also dominated by modified grassland, which accounts for approximately 0.37ha of the redline boundary (Figure 4). The grassland averaging 7 species per square metre, was considered to have moderate ecological value. The grassland also has a consistent sward height of <5cm, is regularly mown, and intensively managed for amenity purposes. Overall, no one species was considered dominant, with an abundance in perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) and common daisy (*Bellis perennis*). Frequent fescue (*Festuca* spp.), common mouseear (*Cerastium fontanum*), dovesfoot cranesbill (*Geranium molle*), cocksfoot

(*Dactylis glomerata*), and white clover (*Trifolium repens*), with occasional black medic (*Medicago lupulina*), annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*), and germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*). Rare species included field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), curled dock (*Rumex crispus*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), with red campion (*Silene dioica*) and white campion (*Silene latifolia*) along the grassland margins.

5.2.4 The secondary code secondary code of '108 – Frequently mown' was applied to this habitat type.

5.2.5 A further secondary code '32 – Scattered trees' was also applied to this habitat parcel. Scattered trees are discussed separately within section 5.2.15.

5.2.6 An area around the northeast and southern peripheries of this grassland was unmanaged and dominated by tall ruderal species comprising of species dominated by nettle (*Urtica dioica*), with frequent scattered bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), occasional dogrose (*Rosa canina*), ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), with rare hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), greater burdock (*Arctium lappa*) and cleaver (*Galium aparine*).

5.2.7 Therefore, the secondary code '16 – Tall forbs' was applied to this habitat parcel.



Figure 2: Area of Modified grassland (A) positioned within the northeast of the site



Figure 3: Area of Tall forbs surrounding the peripheries of the site.

Modified Grassland (B)

- 5.2.8 The western section of the site was dominated in species-poor modified grassland, which accounts for approximately 0.37ha of the redline boundary (Figure 4). The grassland is regularly mown and intensively managed for amenity purposes. The majority of this grassland was scorched the survey visit (due to prolonged lack of rainfall) with a consistent sward height of <5cm throughout. Overall species were dominated by perennial rye grass, with abundant common daisy. Frequent species included lesser plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), annual meadow grass, and occasional false brome (*Brachypodium sylvaticum*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), dovesfoot cranesbill, and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). Rare species included dandelion, bulbous buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*), black medic, creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), wall barley (*Hordeum murinum*), with greater burdock and common nettle along the margins.
- 5.2.9 The secondary code '32 – Scattered trees' was applied to this habitat parcel. Scattered trees are discussed separately within section 5.2.15. A further secondary code of '108 – Frequently mown' was also applied to this habitat type.

5.2.10 A small strip tall ruderal species was present along the northwestern boundary. Species comprised of dominant nettle and rare hemlock. Therefore, the secondary code '16 – Tall forbs' was applied to this habitat parcel.



Figure 4: Area of Modified grassland (B) positioned within the south west of the site

Other Broadleaved Woodland (w1g – 30)

5.2.11 A small pocket of woodland, pertaining to a larger area of woodland offsite, was present in the southeastern boundary corner of the site. The area, totalling 0.061ha, was considered to be in poor condition with little understorey with no sub-canopy and shrub layer.

5.2.12 Canopy species recorded included elder (*Sambucus nigra*), leylandii (*Cupressus x leylandii*), scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), plum (*Prunus domestica*), and boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*). Although there was not a dense shrub layer, understory species were recorded and included rare occurrences of laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*). Ground flora species recorded only included an abundance of nettle and bare ground.

5.2.13 The secondary code '30 – Semi-natural woodland' was applied to this habitat parcel.



Figure 5: Small pocket of woodland within the southeastern corner of the site.

Hedgerows

5.2.14 Four lines of trees were recorded across the site, bordering the red line boundary with one non-native and ornamental hedgerow (a hedgerow with >20% cover of UK non-native woody species) positioned within the centre of the site. Descriptions, including UKHab classifications, of the hedgerows can be seen in Table 7 below. The locations of the hedgerows can be viewed in the UKHab Habitat Plan in Appendix 1.

Table 7: Description of hedgerows on site

Hedge Number	Type	Dimensions (Approx.) H x W x L	Description	Likely to Qualify *
H1 (33)	Line of trees (w - 33)	7m x 3m x 67m	A line of trees present throughout the eastern and southeastern corner of the site. Dominated by hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), occasional	No

Hedge Number	Type	Dimensions (Approx) H x W x L	Description	Likely to Qualify *
			plum (<i>Prunus domestica</i>), and rare norway maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>).	
H2 (33)	Line of trees (w - 33)	7m x 3m x 68m	A line of trees situated within the centre of the site separating two grassland parcels. Dominated by hawthorn, frequent plum and occasional elm (<i>Ulmus</i> spp.).	No
H3	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (h2b)	2m x 0.75m x 10m	Well maintained, short non-native and ornamental hedgerow with the centre of the site. Species consisted of an ornamental cherry/prunus (<i>Prunus</i> spp.)	No
H4 (33)	Line of trees (w - 33)	7m x 2m x 28m	A line of trees along the southern boundary of the site. Trees were abundant in lilac (<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>), frequent in hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>) and plum (<i>Prunus domestica</i>), occasional elm, dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>), hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), and rare elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>).	No
H5 (33)	Line of trees (w - 33)	8m x 2m x 11m	A line of trees dominant in leylandii with a small, rare occurrence of holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>), at the southwest of the site.	No

*Likely to qualify as important under Hedgerow Regulations (1997)



Figure 8: A native line of trees (H1-33) located behind the tall forbs on the northeastern boundary of the site.



Figure 7: Line of trees (H2-33) located throughout the centre of the site.



Figure 8: Non-native ornamental hedgerow (H3) at the centre of the site.



Figure 9: A native line of trees (H4 - 33) located throughout the centre of the site.



Figure 10: A line of leylandii trees (H5 - 33) located throughout the centre of the site.

Scattered Trees

- 5.2.15 Scattered trees ranging from young – semi-mature were recorded across the site. Species included elder (*Sambucus nigra*), cherry, horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), plum, ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and holly.



Figure 11: Scattered Trees located within areas of tall forbs at the northwestern corner of the site

Buildings (u1b5)

5.2.16 Two two-storey buildings (B1 and B2) were present within the western parcel of the site. The buildings were in good condition in current active use as a restaurant (B1) and hotel (B2). Full building descriptions can be found within section 5.3.

Developed Land – Sealed Surface (u1b)

5.2.17 An area of developed land; sealed surface was present pertaining to the car park and access road onto the site from the A1. These areas comprised of concrete with no vegetation present.

Introduced shrub (u – 524, 847)

5.2.18 Three small areas (0.0113ha) of introduced shrub was present within the centre of the site adjacent to building B2. Two of these parcels included leylandii, elder, garden privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), and wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), with a small parcel along the northern half of the building consisting of ornamental varieties of barberry (*Berberis spp.*), whitebeam (*Sorbus sp.*), dogwood (*Cornus spp.*), and plum (*Prunus domestica*)

5.2.19 The secondary codes '524 – Invasive non-native species' and '847 – introduced shrub' was applied to this habitat parcel



Figure 12: Introduced shrub southerly adjacent to B2, at the centre of the site.

Invasive Weeds Assessment

5.2.20 An assessment of the site was made to establish the presence of invasive weeds included on schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

5.2.21 A stand of wall cotoneaster was recorded within areas of introduced shrub adjacent to building B2, associated with ornamental planting.

5.3 Fauna

Breeding Birds

5.3.1 The assessment was undertaken within the breeding bird season. Four species of bird were recorded as heard on site during the survey including robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*), and blackbird (*Turdus merula*).

- 5.3.2 Woodland, scattered trees, tree lines and hedgerows, provide suitable nesting habitat for generic passerine birds, including birds of conservation concern such as dunno ck (*Prunella modularis*).
- 5.3.3 Buildings B1 and B2 were considered unsuitable for breeding birds given the good condition of the building, current active use as a restaurant and hotel, and the lack of suitable access points (such as open sides, ledges, or flat roofs) for bird species upon these buildings.
- 5.3.4 Based on a review of the habitat types on site and the list of bird species recorded within the data search, the site is considered to support a limited assemblage of bird species, pertaining to generic common species which also includes some species considered to be of high conservation concern that are either legally protected or UK BAP species.

Bats

- 5.3.5 The data search returned 17 records of bats, with roost and/or foraging and commuting behaviour not distinguished. The closest records were located 1.4km south of the site pertaining to common pipistrelle, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, and serotine.

Roosting Bats

- 5.3.6 Broadleaved woodland, scattered trees, and tree lines were present throughout the site and supported a broadleaved woodland boundary along the western and southern boundary of the site. Visible trees were assessed and categorised based upon Bat Conservation Trust guidance (see Appendix 5), with the woodland, tree lines, and scattered trees within the site boundary assessed to have negligible suitability to support roosting bats. Despite the trees being mature in nature, they did not support suitable cracks, fissures or holes to support roosting bats.
- 5.3.7 Buildings B1 and B2 were assessed to support 'Low' suitability to support roosting bats. The extent of the suitability pertained to loose, slipped, cracked and/or missing roof tiles and lead flashing providing crevices for bats to use on an individual and intermittent basis. The main structural features of the building, and their suitability for supporting roosting bats are summarised below (Table 8), and associated figures can be found with Table 13 in Appendix 9. A potential roosting features (PRF) plan has also been included in Appendix 9.

Table 8: Summary of bat roost suitability and evidence found within each of the buildings/ structures on site (Supporting Figures within Appendix 9)

	Moderate	Low	Negligible	None
Building Number	Description	Bat Evidence / potential Roosting Features (PRFs)	Roost Suitability	
B1	External: Two storey red-brick, actively used restaurant, with thin rendered finish along the ground floor. The building supported a double ridged, clay tile roof, and gable end facing east and west. External windows and doors were constructed within uPVC frames which were flush at the time of survey.	External: -One roof tile was noted missing on the southern elevation with the southeastern corner of the building (Appendix 9; Photograph 1).	Low	
	Internal: The roof space of Building B1 was unable to be accessed at the time of the survey.	Internal: No accessed permitted		
B2	External: Building B2 is a current active hotel, consisting of a two storey red-brick building with a cream rendered finished. The building supported wooden framed windows which were flush at the time of the survey.	External: -One broken ridge tile was noted, at the southern section of the building orientated east. Two small area of lifted lead flashing was noted along the northern aspect of the building. Two lifted ridge tiles were noted at the northwest of the building along the western aspect	Low	
	Internal: The interior of the building is currently used as an active hotel at both the ground and first floors. The roof space of the first floor was accessed by a series of loft hatches, accessed with a ladder. The roof space was largely uncluttered and clean throughout, occasional hanging wires and loft insulation. The loft void	Internal: No potential roosting features, evidence of roosting, and/or access points were identified within the loft void of building B2.		

Building Number	Description	Bat Evidence / potential Roosting Features (PRFs)	Roost Suitability
	was lined with timber framing, plaster board and loft insulation.		

Foraging and Commuting Bats

- 5.3.8 The site supported hardstanding, buildings, and regular car park lighting which was considered sub-optimal for foraging and commuting bats. Eastern areas of the red line boundary however pertained to scattered trees, tree lines, tall forbs, and a small woodland, which were considered suitable to support this group of species. Linear features such as the hedgerows, tree lines, and woodland provide connective habitat offsite presenting possible commuting pathways to the wider environment to the north and east, which is predominantly rural. Overall, the site is considered to provide 'Low' suitability habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

- 5.3.9 Records relating to certain protected [REDACTED] are sensitive in nature, and due to the risk of public interference are kept confidential. The data search returned one record [REDACTED]

However, the site supported some habitat features such as small woodland which were considered conducive to [REDACTED]. The extent of the site, and the location within a rural dominated landscape suggest that this transient species could forage or commute within the surrounding environment but are not likely dependent on habitats within the redline boundary.

Great Crested Newts

- 5.3.10 The data search returned no records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) within 2.0km of the site. The site supported tall forbs, a small woodland and scattered trees which were considered to provide some suitability for the terrestrial phase of this species. However, no potentially suitable waterbodies were present on site or within 250m of the red line boundary, as shown on magic maps. Given the distance from any potentially suitable waterbody in addition to the limited terrestrial habitat onsite, it is considered highly unlikely that that Great Crested Newt (GCN) would be present within the site boundary. As a result, this species currently does

not present a constraint to this planning application and is no longer considered within the scope of the scope of this report.

Reptiles

- 5.3.11 The data search returned three records of reptiles within 2.0km of the site, all pertaining to a grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), with the nearest positioned approximately 1.0km to the east of the site.
- 5.3.12 The habitats on site were considered sub-optimal to support a resident population of reptiles due to a lack of structural variation within the short intensively managed grassland, hardstanding and buildings across the survey area. However, the tall ruderals (Tall forbs) along the northeast of the site may provide limited habitat for foraging and commuting individuals on an episodic basis, during periods that the grassland is not disturbed by members of the public.

Mammal Species of Principal Importance

- 5.3.13 The NERC Act 2006, Section 41 highlights 17 species of principal importance within England.

Western European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

- 5.3.14 The habitats on site were considered conducive to supporting Western European hedgehog. Habitats including the tree lines, tall forbs, small woodland, and scattered trees provide suitable foraging, refuge and commuting habitats for this species, and may also be suitable for hibernating hedgehogs.

Otter

- 5.3.15 The data search returned no records of otter within 2.0km of the site. A small ditch was noted within the 30m zone of influence of the red line boundary, approximately 20m, offsite to the south. The ditch, known as 'Cat Ditch' was unable to be accessed during the initial site visit, due to health and safety concerns and access permissions. However, the ditch could be considered to provide potentially suitable habitat for this species, and the adjacent habitats including tree lines surrounding the stream provides a suitable potential habitat for holts and couches. Furthermore, these adjacent habitats are not within the red line boundary and lead away from the site to the southeast, with existing adjacent habitat onsite pertaining to the hardstanding car park. Therefore, it is considered possible that otter could be present within this ditch and the surrounding habitat offsite, however otter are unlikely to be present within the red line boundary itself due to lack of suitable onsite habitat.

Water Vole

- 5.3.16 The data search returned no current records of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) within 2.0km of the site. However, one historic record dated from 1993 was noted 1.8km northwest of the site boundary. The ditch, 20m south of the site, known as 'Cat Ditch' was unable to be accessed during the initial site visit, due to health and safety concerns and access permissions. However, the ditch could be considered to provide potentially suitable habitat for this species. Suitable habitat for these species was not present within the south of the red line boundary, which is 20m from this ditch and pertained only of a hard standing car park.
- 5.3.17 Therefore, it is considered possible that water vole could be present within this ditch and the surrounding habitat offsite within the wider landscape, however water vole are unlikely to be present within the red line boundary itself due to lack of suitable onsite habitat.

6 Evaluation

6.1 Development Proposals

- 6.1.1 The site is the subject of the full planning application for the partial site clearance to facilitate the development of hotel extension providing an additional 58 new units, with associated car parking and landscaping. Design plans are provided within Appendix 6 of this report.

6.2 Desk Study Impacts

- 6.2.1 Direct impacts on nearby designated sites as a result of the proposed development are considered unlikely. The site supports habitats of low value, namely hardstanding, buildings, modified grassland, tall forbs, scattered trees and ornamental hedgerow. One designated site, Stotfold Mill Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR) was present 1.5km south from the site. However, due to the scope and small scale of the initial proposals set out for the site (Appendix 6), it is considered that the extent of the development proposals is contained within the site boundary. Therefore, any direct and/or indirect impacts to nearby designated sites are considered highly unlikely.
- 6.2.2 The site lies within an Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Southill Lake and Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), however, the proposed development is not an infrastructure project and therefore does not meet the criteria for the IRZ. As such no further action is required.

6.3 Habitats

- 6.3.1 The habitats on site have been evaluated as having 'Site' value in relation to the immediate surroundings and a regional context.
- 6.3.2 The site was dominated by hardstanding, building and modified grassland. Small areas of tall forbs were noted around the peripheries of the northern and eastern boundary, with a series of scattered trees and tree lines. The two areas modified grassland, and tall forbs are to be partially removed by the proposals, to facilitate the car park extension and, as outlined within Appendix 6.
- 6.3.3 In England, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory from February 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act. Therefore, the site must undergo a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment, further details of which are provided in Chapter 7.

6.3.4 Although not present onsite, a ditch, known as 'Cat ditch', was 20m south of the red line boundary. Direct impacts to this offsite ditch, as a result of the development are not anticipated, however indirect impacts to this offsite habitat could occur through dust and pollution during the construction phase. As a result, Chapter 7 also provides recommendations relating to the need for appropriate protection measures for nearby offsite habitats.

6.4 Invasive Weeds

6.4.1 Schedule 9 species, wall cotoneaster were observed throughout site, as part of the ornamental planting. The spread of these species into the 'wild' (deemed to be outside the site boundary) should be prevented and controlled. Chapter 7 provides recommendations pertaining to the removal and control of wall cotoneaster from the site.

6.5 Breeding Birds

6.5.1 All wild birds, their eggs and nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird whilst nesting, or take, damage or destroy the nest of any such bird while in use or being built. In addition, species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or their dependant young are afforded additional protection from disturbance whilst they are at their nests.

6.5.2 The vegetation on site was considered to provide suitable nesting and foraging habitat for common bird species. The woodland and scattered trees onsite, suitable for nesting birds, are to be retained as a result of the proposals, with only the partial removal of modified grassland, tree line, and tall forbs. These habitats on site are of low value and locally frequent, as such the impact of the loss of these habitats is short term and can be offset through post construction landscaping.

6.5.3 However, in the absence of mitigation direct or indirect impacts on individual birds, their young, eggs and habitats could occur during site clearance. Chapter 7 provides recommendations relating to the need for precautionary working methods to safeguard this species group during vegetation clearance.

6.6 Bats

6.6.1 All bats in the United Kingdom and their habitats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is an offence to damage or destroy any bat roost, intentionally or

recklessly obstruct a bat roost, deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat or intentionally kill, injure or take any bat.

Roosting Bats

- 6.6.2 Scattered trees on site were not considered suitable to support roosting bats. This woodland, scattered trees and the majority of tree lines are also to be retained proposed as part of the scheme.
- 6.6.3 However, building B1 and B2 were identified as having 'Low' suitability to support roosting bats due to the presence of PRFs within the building's external roof features. The proposed plans show the full retention of building B1 and as a result, impacts to roosting bats upon this building are considered negligible, under the current proposals (Appendix 6). However, building B2, as a current active hotel, is subject to a further building extension with alteration to the existing building and roof structure. If the development was to continue as planned, it may lead to the destruction of a roosting site of a protected species, and increased disturbance, injury or harm to individual bats and/or their young.
- 6.6.4 The recommendations section of this report sets out important guidance on further survey measures for this species group and measures to support its conservation status through ecological enhancement.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

- 6.6.5 The linear features provided by woodland edge, scattered trees and tree lines could act as commuting lines for bat species, however the hardstanding buildings and existing car parking lighting reduces the likelihood for foraging and commuting bats within the site. As such, the site was considered to provide 'Low' suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Therefore, no further surveys for foraging and commuting bats are considered necessary, however a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented to ensure that further external lighting does not cause light spill onto adjacent habitats, as outlined within Chapter 7.

6.7

- 6.7.1 Under the Protection of [REDACTED] Act 1992, in England and Wales it is an offence to wilfully kill, injure, disturb or [REDACTED] or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct access to any part [REDACTED].

6.7.2 There was no [REDACTED] within zone of influence, however the rural location of the site suggest that [REDACTED] be present in the wider environment and could forage and commute through the red line boundary on an intermittent basis.

6.7.3 Chapter 7 sets out important guidance on measures to avoid impacts on this species and measures to support its conservation status.

6.8 Reptiles

6.8.1 Reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) making it illegal to intentionally kill or injure reptiles.

6.8.2 No evidence of reptiles was recorded during the survey. Suitable habitat for reptiles is limited to the tall forbs around the peripheries of the site which are to be removed under the proposed development. The modified grassland that comprises the majority of the site, due to its well-managed nature, is suboptimal for supporting resident reptile populations. Any impact on reptile as a result of the proposed development will therefore likely be limited to occurrences of individual reptile utilising the site incidentally during the construction phase.

6.8.3 Chapter 7 provides important guidance on measures to avoid impacts to this species and measures to support its conservation status.

6.9 Mammal Species of Principal Importance

6.9.1 The NERC Act 2006, Section 41 highlights 17 species of principal importance within England. This includes several species of bat, however these have been addressed in section 6.6.

Western European Hedgehog

6.9.2 The habitats on site were considered conducive to supporting Western European hedgehog. Habitats including the tree lines, small woodland, tall forbs and scattered trees, provide suitable foraging, refuge and commuting habitats for this species. Chapter 7 provides recommendations aimed at safeguarding this species during construction, and measures to facilitate their use of the site post-development.

6.10 Otter

6.10.1 Otters are fully protected under Schedules 5 & 6 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

6.10.2 Suitable habitat pertaining to an offsite ditch was present, 20m south of the red line boundary site, with connection to suitable habitats within the wider landscape leading away from the site boundary. It is considered unlikely that the proposals would result in direct impacts to otter and/or habitat suitable for this species. However, indirect impacts such as dust and pollution into the watercourse may occur during construction works.

6.10.3 Chapter 7 sets out recommendations for precautionary protection measures to ensure that potential otter habitat is protected against indirect impacts such as dust and pollution of the watercourse.

6.11 Water Vole

6.11.1 Water vole are fully protected under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

6.11.2 Suitable habitat pertaining to an offsite ditch was present, 20m south of the red line boundary site, with connection to suitable habitats within the wider landscape leading away from the site boundary.

6.11.3 It is considered unlikely that the proposals would result in direct impacts to water vole and/or habitat suitable for this species. However, indirect impacts such as dust and pollution into the watercourse may occur during construction works.

6.11.4 Chapter 7 sets out recommendations for precautionary protection measures to ensure that water vole habitat is protected against indirect impacts such as dust and pollution of within the watercourse.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1.1 The site should be the subject to further reasonable avoidance measures which should be detailed and implemented during the construction phase of the proposed development.
- 7.1.2 This survey can be used to guide the Master Plan layout to ensure that mitigation is employed to retain and enhance local biodiversity where possible. Efforts should be made to support National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans, achieve a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain Post development and seek opportunities to incorporate ecological enhancements within the proposed development as detailed within the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2025), which seeks biodiversity enhancements through the planning process, and the Environment Act 2021.

7.2 Habitats

Habitats	Timing
Recommendations	
The site should be subjected to a Biodiversity impact Assessment to ascertain habitat value and number of post development units to achieve a minimum mandatory 10% net gain.	During design stage
A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for biodiversity should be implemented and secured by condition of consent, to safeguard offsite habitats such as the ditch 20m south of the red line boundary.	During construction
Enhancement Prescriptions	
Soft landscaping proposals should seek to include areas of open space to be enhanced with native planting for the benefit of biodiversity, guided by a biodiversity impact assessment to achieve a minimum 10% net gain.	During design stage

7.3 Breeding Birds

Breeding Birds	Timing
Recommendations	
Trees, tree lines, and hedgerows on site provide suitable habitat for breeding birds. Given their protection, development must be sympathetic to the value of this habitat and potential impacts on breeding birds, their eggs, nests and young. The breeding bird season is generally accepted as being between March and September. Consideration and implementation must be given to the following options most appropriate to the scheme. - Undertake vegetation clearance between the months of October and February where possible. - Clearance between the months of March and September should be subjected to a search for active birds' nests 24 hours prior to commencement of works.	Works outside of the breeding season (Oct-Feb) If unachievable, follow steps in recommendation.
Enhancement Prescriptions	
Soft landscaping proposals should seek to include areas of open space to be enhanced with native planting for the benefit of biodiversity, guided by a biodiversity impact assessment.	During design stage
Three Woodstone Estella House Sparrow Nest Box (or similar approved) should be erected onto or integrated into the fabric of the new hotel building, at a minimum height of 2.3m, out of direct sunlight, facing in a north – easterly direction. Two Swift Woodstone Build-In Swift boxes, could also be or integrated into the fabric of the new hotel building, at a minimum height of 2.3m (or three courses below the apex), out of direct sunlight, facing in a north – easterly direction.	During construction

7.4 Roosting Bats

Roosting Bats	Timing
Recommendations	
Building B1 and B2 was assessed to hold 'Low' suitability for roosting bats. Building B1 is due to be retained and unimpacted by the proposals, and therefore no further survey would be required upon this building. Therefore, one further presence/likely absence surveys are recommended upon building B2, which could be impacted by the development. If evidence of roosting bats is found, then survey results will (be increased to three visits) inform a license from Natural England.	Low Suitability Buildings: One survey between May – August. Surveys to be carried out in suitable weather conditions and required prior to determination of application.
Retained trees/buildings with suitability should have indirect disturbance prevented by employing a sensitive lighting scheme during construction works, and artificial security lighting should not be installed post construction in a way which directs lighting towards the notable trees (Appendix 1).	During and post development
Enhancement Prescriptions	
Two Beaumaris bat boxes could be erected onto the external fabric of new building, positioned on a south-western elevation at a height of at least 5 metres with an unobstructed flight path.	During construction

7.5 Foraging and Commuting Bats

Foraging and Commuting Bats	Timing
Recommendations	
The extent of disturbance to foraging and commuting bats within the area should be reduced where possible by employing a sensitive lighting scheme during construction works, and artificial security lighting should not be installed post construction in a way which directs lighting towards the hedge boundaries and mature trees. If lighting is required, a scheme should be devised and positioned to have minimal disturbance following the guidance of an ecologist. Any lighting used during the development should be directed away from the north-western boundary with overspill less than 1lux (ideally 0) onto suitable habitats.	During and post development
Enhancement Prescriptions	
Soft landscaping proposals should seek to incorporate native tree and shrub species wherever possible, which are beneficial to native invertebrate species, the primary component of UK bat species' diets. Planting should consider species that attract night-flying insects such as night-scented stock (<i>Matthiola longipetala</i>) and evening primrose (<i>Oenothera biennis</i>).	During design stage

	Timing
Recommendations	
Appropriate precautions should be employed before and during construction works to prevent harm to this protected species. a) A Preworks check of the site should be undertaken within three months prior to the onset of construction related activities. b) Any exposed excavations to be left overnight are to be covered at the end of each working day or include a means of escape for any fallen animals (e.g. a scaffolding plank). Any temporarily exposed open pipes are to be capped to [REDACTED] gaining access. c) [REDACTED] be encountered during the construction phase, all works should cease, and the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist should be sought.	Pre and during development
Enhancement Prescriptions	
Soft landscaping proposals should include areas of open grassland planted with native fruit bearing species.	During design stage

7.7 Reptiles

Reptiles	Timing
Recommendations	
The following reasonable avoidance measures should be followed during the construction phase to prevent reptiles colonising any potential habitat incidentally created by spoil, open trenches or arisings. – Any tall grass, ruderal, or tall forb vegetation to be directionally strimmed in a two-phase process during the active season (March – October) to allow for any potential herptiles to disperse, the first cut to reduce the height to 30cm, then the second cut to 10-15cm. – All materials to be stored off the ground (for example on pallets) to minimise the likelihood of herptiles accessing them for refugia. – All spoil/waste materials to be removed from site at the end of each working day (or stored in a skip). If any evidence of reptiles is uncovered during development works, then works should cease and the advice of an ecologist sought.	During active reptile season between March – September in conditions where reptiles are most active.
Enhancement Prescriptions	
Use of native shrubs in soft landscaping proposals will provide benefits on site for native fauna post-development.	During design stage

7.8 Mammal Species of Principal Importance

Mammal Species of Principal Importance	Timing
Recommendations	
Hedgehogs may use the site for foraging or commuting purposes. The recommended reasonable avoidance measures should be followed: - Any temporarily exposed open pipes are to be capped to prevent hedgehogs or brown hare gaining access. - Undertake works during daylight hours. - The vegetation should be checked prior to removal. - Search areas of deadwood, brash, and discarded items by hand before removing. - If burning any cleared vegetation, carry out immediately after piling to prevent hedgehogs moving in prior to burning. - Any exposed excavations to be left overnight are to be covered at the end of each working day, or include a means of escape for any fallen animals (e.g., a scaffolding plank).	During clearance and development
Enhancement Prescriptions	
The inclusion of 'hedgehog highways' should be implemented into the design of the proposed gardens whereby a 13cm x 13cm hold should be cut into the base of fences creating a corridor across the site for hedgehogs.	During design stage

7.9 Otter

Otter	Timing
Recommendations	
The proposed development has the potential to indirectly negatively impact otter that may be utilising the watercourse 20m from the site. Details on the exact extent of construction area of the proposed development are not available at this stage, however: - Where possible, a 10m buffer should be established between construction activities associated with the proposed development and the adjacent watercourses. This will naturally be achieved given the red line boundary is 20m from the watercourse. - Watercourses should also be protected during construction works to avoid harm/disturbance to this species. Measures to achieve this should be outlined within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP should include dust and pollution prevention measures to ensure indirect impacts to potential otter habitat are mitigated.	Pre-construction, as an appropriately worded planning condition

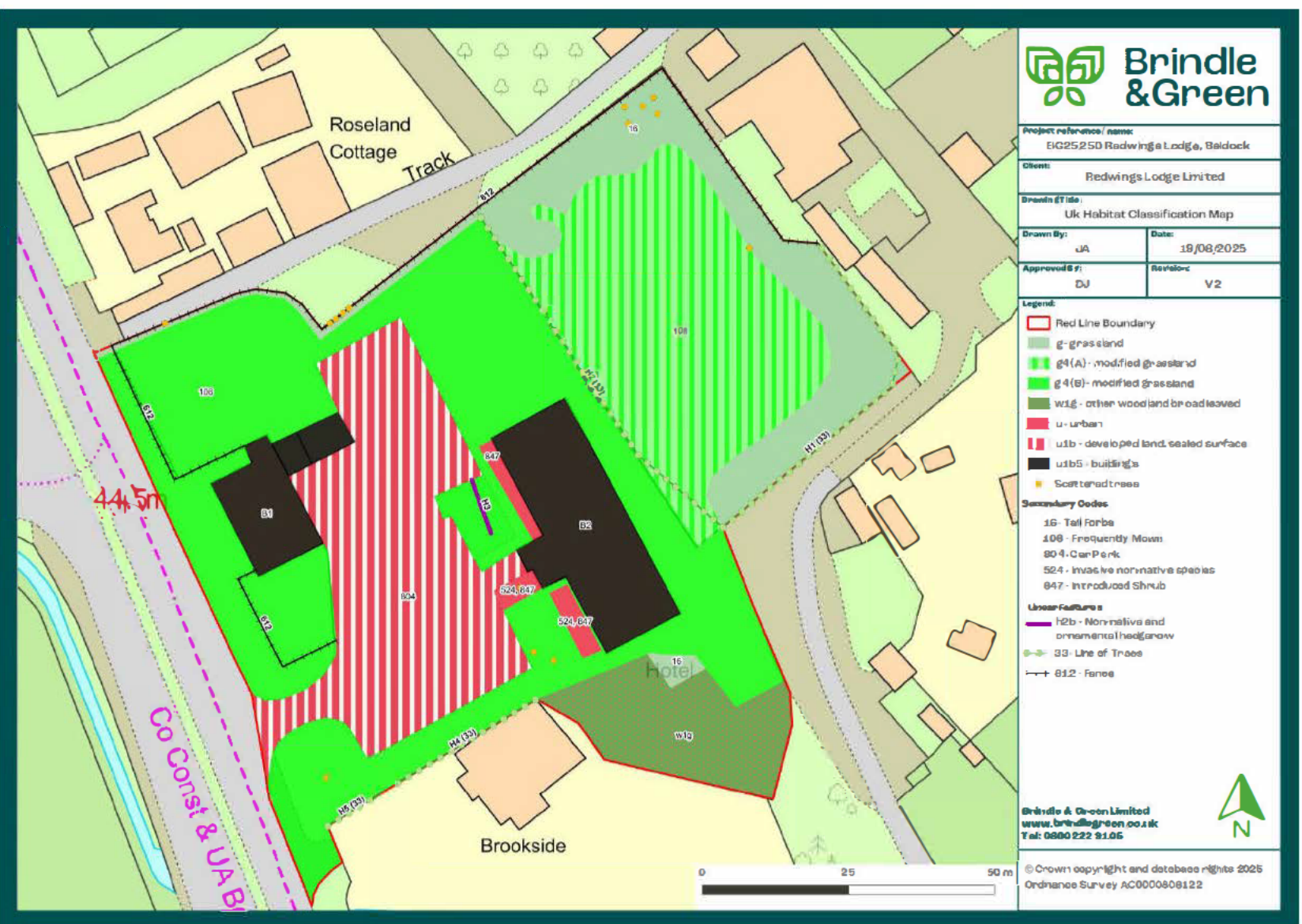
7.10 Water vole

Water vole	Timing
Recommendations	
The proposed development has the potential to indirectly impact water vole that may be utilising the watercourse 20m from the site. Details on the exact extent of construction area of the proposed development are not available at this stage, however: - Where possible, a 10m buffer should be established between construction activities associated with the proposed development and the adjacent watercourses. This will naturally be achieved given the red line boundary is 20m from the watercourse. - Watercourses should also be protected during construction works to avoid harm/disturbance to this species. Measures to achieve this should be outlined within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMP should include dust and pollution prevention measures to ensure indirect impacts to potential water vole habitat are mitigated.	Pre-construction, as an appropriately worded planning condition

7.11 Invasive species

Invasive Species – Wall Cotoneaster	Timing
Recommendations	
Wall cotoneaster should be controlled / removed and disposed of appropriately by a specialist and suitably qualified contractor	During site clearance and development.

Appendix 1 – UK Habitat Classification Map



Appendix 2 – Plant Species List

Table 9: Plant Species List with DAFOR Scale

Scientific nomenclature follows Stace (2010) for vascular plant species and common names follow BSBI List of British & Irish Vascular Plants and Stoneworts.

Please note that this plant species list was generated as part of a UKHab survey and does not constitute a full botanical survey.

Abundance was estimated using the DAFOR scale as follows:

D = dominant, A = abundant, F = frequent, O = occasional, R = rare, LF = locally frequent

Common Name	Scientific Name	Estimated Abundance (DAFOR)
Annual Meadow Grass	<i>Poa annua</i>	F
Black Medic	<i>Medicago lupulina</i>	R
Boxwood	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	R
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	R
Bulbous Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus bulbosus</i>	R
Common Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	A
Common Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	R
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	O
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	R
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	R
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	O
Dovesfoot Cranesbill	<i>Geranium molle</i>	O
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	R
Elm	<i>Ulmus</i> spp.	O
False Brome	<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	O
Greater Burdock	<i>Arctium lappa</i>	R
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	LF
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	O
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	R
Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	R
Lesser Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	O
Leylandii	<i>Cupressus × leylandii</i>	LF
Lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	LF
Norway Maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>	R
Ornamental Prunus	<i>Prunus</i> spp.	R
Perennial Rye Grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	D
Plum	<i>Prunus domestica</i>	LF
Scots Pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	R
Wall Barley	<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	R
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	O

Appendix 3 – General References

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Appendix 4 – Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Articles of British wildlife and countryside legislation, policy guidance and both Local and National Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) are referred to. The articles of legislation are:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- Department for Communities and Local Government. National Planning Policy Framework. (2024)
- EC Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC
- The Protection of [REDACTED] Act 1992
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Including National and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP / HPI))
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997
- The Environment Act 2021
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Appendix 5 – Legislation, Guidance and Methodology

Breeding Birds

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition, for species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly cause disturbance at, on or near an 'active' nest.

The bird breeding season is typically accepted to start in February/March and continue through until September/October, however breeding birds can be found all year round depending on the given species and climatic conditions.

A site's habitat composition, locality, association to designated sites as well as current usage and management are all considered in the decision as to whether further bird related surveys are required. In addition, surveys may be recommended based on incidental bird records collected during a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, species identified within an ecological data search or target species listed within a local biodiversity action plan.

Bird surveys are carried out in accordance with:

— Gilbert G, Gibbons DW, Evans J. (1998) Bird Monitoring Methods. RSPB.

Bats

Roosting Bats

All bats in the United Kingdom and their habitats are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is an offence to damage or destroy any bat roost, intentionally or recklessly obstruct a bat roost, deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat or intentionally kill, injure or take any bat.

Areas of concern; can be encountered in many types of structure and care should therefore be taken when undertaking maintenance or demolition of suitable structures and trees.

Site assessments of buildings, commuting and foraging habitat and trees are undertaken in accordance with:

- Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, (4th edition). Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-978-1-7395126-0-6 (Table 10, Table 11 and Table 12).

Preliminary Ecological Surveys look for evidence of bat presence such as feeding remains, bat droppings, roosting individuals and staining around potential access points. The suitability of site features are also assessed because absence of bat evidence, is not confirmation of a negative result.

Within trees, features searched for include; natural holes, woodpecker holes, cracks/splits in major limbs, loose bark, hollows, and dense cover of ivy over the tree. If evidence is found, on a building supports features conducive to supporting roosting bats then further presence / absence bat surveys and/or roost characterisation surveys will be recommended.

Foraging and Commuting bats

Habitat features on site are assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bat populations. This assessment is independent from the suitability of the site to support roosting bats, and provides information on the likelihood of bat foraging activity within the local environment, and the dependence of individuals on these features for commuting to alternative roosting sites, foraging and migration.

Table 10: Guideline for assessing the suitability of a structure to support roosting habitat amended from Collins, J (2023)

Category	Description of Roosting Habitat	Number of additional presence / absence surveys required
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats at any time of year (complete absence of potential roosting features).	None
Negligible Suitability	Suitable cavities may exist, but these are less than ideal. Uncertainty remains as bats can use these features on occasion.	None
Low Suitability	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. The feature and surrounding habitat do not provide enough shelter, conditions + space for larger roost types such as a maternity or hibernation roost.	One survey between May and August

Category	Description of Roosting Habitat	Number of additional presence / absence surveys required
Moderate Suitability	A structure considered to have one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions* and surrounding habitat but are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (With regard to roost type only – assessments are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Two surveys between May and September (with at least one survey undertaken between May and August). Surveys should be spaced at least 3 weeks apart.
High Suitability	A structure 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 habitat.	Three surveys between May and September (with at least two surveys undertaken between May and August). Surveys should be spaced at least 3 weeks apart.
Confirmed	This category is where positive evidence of bats has been recorded. For example, bats are found; bat droppings may be present at a suitable location for roosting bats; existing bat records may be associated with the structure.	

* In this context conditions refers to the level of disturbance, light, height above ground, temperature, and humidity etc

Table 11: Guideline for assessing the suitability of a tree to support roosting habitat amended from Collins, J (2023)

INITIAL STAGE (Site scoping/PEA/PRA)		
Category	Description	Survey effort to establish the presence/absence of bats
NONE	Either no PRFS in the tree or unlikely to be any	None
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree	Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) to further assess suitability
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present	Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) to further assess suitability
DETAILED STAGE (PEA/PRA/GLTA)		
PRF-1	PRF only suitable for individual bats or small numbers of bats due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats	None – precautionary method of works for removal and provision of roosting compensation

INITIAL STAGE (Site scoping/PEA/PRA)		
Category	Description	Survey effort to establish the presence/absence of bats
PRF -M	PRF suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony	Three Climbing inspection surveys for features to be undertaken May to September with at least 2 May to August. Surveys should be 3 weeks apart. If climbing and inspection not possible, 3 dusk emergence surveys with NVAs (Night Vision Aids) to be undertaken May to September with at least 2 May to August. Surveys should be 3 weeks apart. Should a maternity colony be confirmed less invasive methods, such as dusk emergence survey with NVAs should be employed.
Known roost	Known roost present through local records, evidence, sightings, etc	Three Climbing inspection surveys for features to be undertaken May to September with at least 2 May to August. Surveys should be 3 weeks apart. If climbing and inspection not possible, 3 dusk emergence surveys with NVAs (Night Vision Aids) to be undertaken May to September with at least 2 May to August. Surveys should be 3 weeks apart. Should a maternity colony be confirmed less invasive methods, such as dusk emergence survey with NVAs should be employed.

Table 12: Potential suitability of foraging and commuting habitat within an application boundary. Features should be assessed following this guide and professional judgement. Adapted from Collins, J (2023)

Category	Description of commuting and foraging habitat	Survey effort to establish the value of commuting and foraging habitat**
Negligible Suitability	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.	None

Category	Description of commuting and foraging habitat	Survey effort to establish the value of commuting and foraging habitat**
Low Suitability	Habitat which could be used by low numbers of commuting bats such as an isolated gappy hedgerow, or an unvegetated stream unconnected to suitable habitat in the wider environment. Suitable, yet isolated habitat that could be used by foraging bats such as individual trees, or a patch of scrub.	Nighttime bat walk (NBW) survey: One survey visit per active season (Spring – April/May, Summer (June/July/August) – autumn – September/October). AND Static automated surveys: Data to be collected over a five-night period, per season. (Spring – April/May, Summer (June/July/August) – autumn – September/October).
Moderate Suitability	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by commuting bats, notably tree lines, hedgerows or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape which could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, open water, scrub or grassland.	Nighttime bat walk (NBW) survey: One survey visit per active season (Spring – April/May, Summer (June/July/August) – autumn – September/October). AND Static automated surveys: Data to be collected over a five-night period, per month (April to October)
High Suitability	Continuous, High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape which is considered to be highly conducive to commuting bats including river valleys, stream, hedgerows, and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree lined watercourses, and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.	Nighttime bat walk (NBW) survey: One survey visit per active season (Spring – April/May, Summer (June/July/August) – autumn – September/October). AND Static automated surveys: Data to be collected over a five-night period, per month (April to October)

** This is only a guide for survey effort required, the complexity of the site and the proposed disturbance / loss of features will determine the extent of works required on a site by site basis

are protected under the Protection of Act 1992. It is illegal to wilfully kill, injure, disturb or take or attempt to do so and it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct access to any part of

Site assessments are undertaken in accordance with:

— Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). Surveying

During the PEA, the site and the 30-metre zone of Influence considered for this species are searched for evidence. The surveyor will identify evidence of activity, or habitat suitability for this

protected species. Even if no [REDACTED] activity is found, if local conditions suggest that the habitat may be [REDACTED] further surveys will be recommended.

Amphibians

The great crested newt and natterjack toad are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The legislation protects these amphibians and their place of shelter or protection which may extend 500m from the breeding pond.

Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

The great crested newt, is fully protected under the Conservation of Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended), making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, disturb or take great crested newts, intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to any place used by the animal for shelter or protection.

The legislation protects these amphibians and their place of shelter or protection which may extend 500m from the breeding pond. Sites should be considered suitable to support great crested newts if distribution and historical records suggest newts may be present, there is a pond within 500m of the development or the development site includes suitable terrestrial habitat refuges.

Great crested newt site assessments are undertaken in accordance with:

- English Nature. (2001) Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough, and
- Langton T, Beckett C and Foster J (2001) Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook. Froglife, Halesworth.

Prior to a site visit, a desk study pond search is undertaken. When searching for ponds, Brindle & Green apply a total of 4 sources to establish their location. The following online sources are used:

- OS MAPPING VIA EMAP SITE
- GOOGLE EARTH PRO,
- GOOGLE MAPS and
- MAGIC MAPS

Each identified pond (Access permitting) is subjected to a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment providing a score for each pond. This survey should be undertaken during the summer period to be fully accurate, however assumptions can be made out of season to guide survey recommendations.

Reptiles

Two species of reptile, the sand lizard and smooth snake, and their habitats are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. All other native British reptiles are protected against intentional killing and injury.

British reptiles are found in exposed, undisturbed areas, such as areas without cultivation with differing areas of grassland sward length. Suitable areas include abandoned sand quarries, fallow farmland land, heathland, post-industrial land, railway corridors etc. If these types of suitable features are found then further reptile surveys are recommended.

- Edgar P, Foster J and Baker J (2010) Reptile Habitat Management Handbook. Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bournemouth.
- Gent T and Gibson S (2003) Herpetofauna Workers Manual. JNCC, Peterborough.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Otters are fully protected as a European Protected Species (EPS) under the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended) and are also listed under Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Their legal protections make it an offence to, recklessly or intentionally, capture, kill disturb or injure otters, to damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (holt), to obstruct access to a place of rest or shelter and to possess, sell control or transport live or dead otters or parts thereof.

Habitat assessments for otters were informed by:

- Chanin P (2003b) Monitoring the Otter *Lutra lutra*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 10

Otters have been recorded utilising almost every type of waterbody and watercourse in the UK including rivers, streams, canals, lakes and ponds and although most populations in England and Wales are usually restricted to freshwater, coastal populations are present in Scotland. They will also use small streams and ditches (including dry ditches) as regular commuting routes and are found in a range of situations from rural to heavily urban sites.

Surveys are recommended where the proposals have the potential to result in a breach of protective legislation listed above. Surveys can be undertaken at any time of year (however optimal timing in spring when water levels fall and prints can be readily observed in soft mud). Surveys focus on searching for evidence of otter presence including spraints, prints, feeding remains and otter slides. They also include searching for resting places such as holts, couches and natal dens.

Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*)

The water vole receives full protection Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Legal protection makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) a water vole. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection or disturb water voles while they are using such a place.

Water vole site assessments were undertaken in accordance with:

- Strachan R. Moorhouse T, and Gelling M (2011) Water Vole Conservation Handbook.(3rd Edition) Wildlife Conservation Research Unit.

Water vole are usually found along water bodies that have still or slow flowing deep water with an abundance of bankside herbaceous vegetation. Such areas include dykes, rivers, streams and drains, but they can also be found on isolated large ponds.

If these types of suitable features are found during a PEA, then water vole surveys are recommended.

Invasive non-native weeds

Plant species such as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) are examples of invasive non-native weeds classified under Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside act 1981. Any person who causes these species to grow or spread in the wild by dumping or other means is guilty of an offence. The plant and the soil these species are found growing in are classified as waste material and should be treated as such.

A simple walk over survey of the site to determine if these species are present was carried out during the PEA. A full list of Schedule 9 species can be found at Plantlife.org

Ecological Enhancement

In December 2024 the Department for Communities and Local Government published the National Planning Policy Framework. This sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity through the planning system. The document states - opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged.

For new buildings guidance such as in the following will be used:

- Williams, C. (2010) Biodiversity for Low and Zero Carbon Buildings, A Technical Guide for New Build. Riba Publishing.

Designated Sites

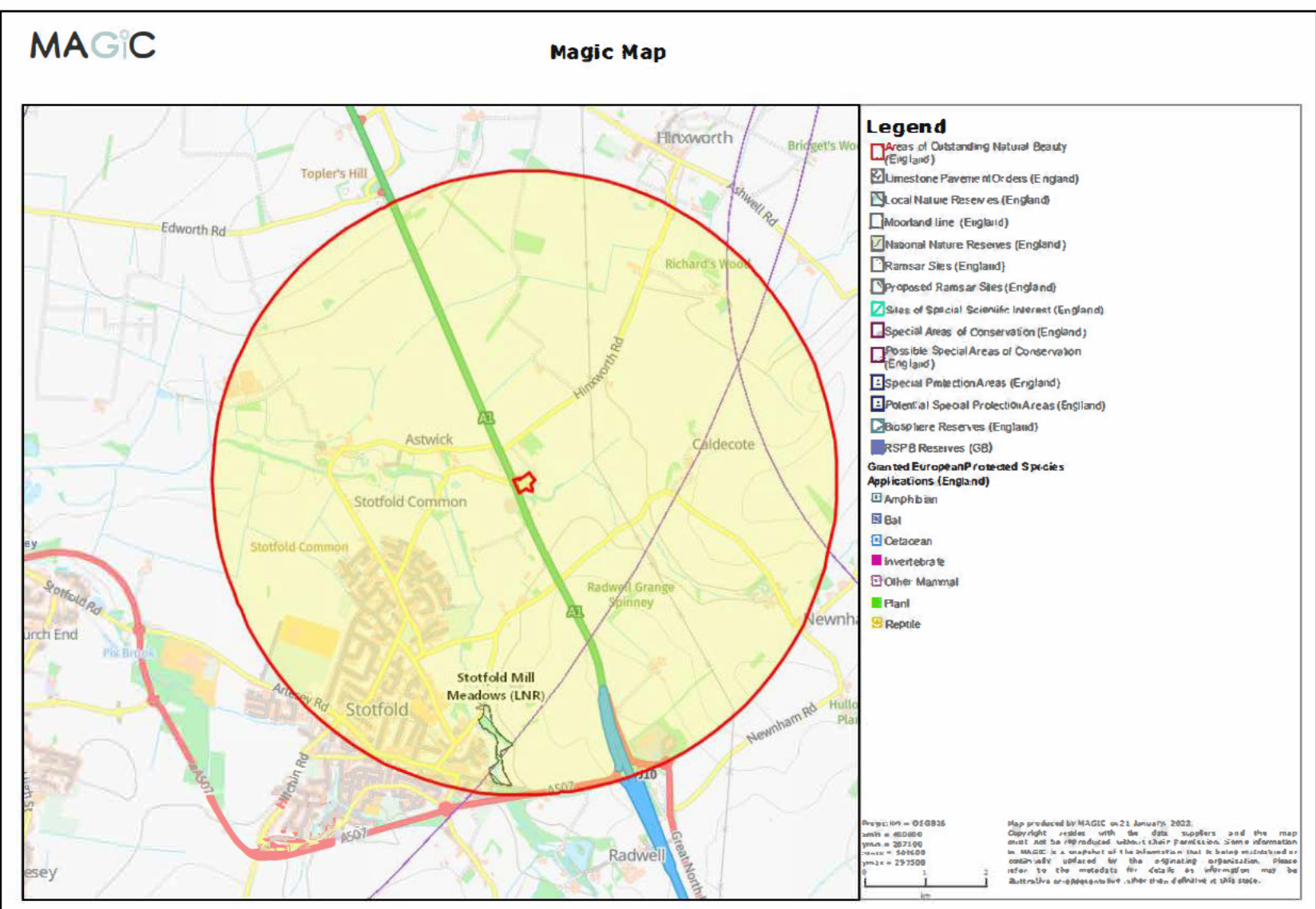
Designated areas are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) while others have been designated as having European protection status. Local authorities can also designate areas for nature conservation and in doing so may impose local authority byelaws to support local nature conservation objectives.

European designated status includes Special Protection Areas (SPAs) that preserve areas for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which provides protection for habitats and the species which these habitats support.

Information of Designated Protected Areas is received through Ecological Data Searches and Magic Map searches.

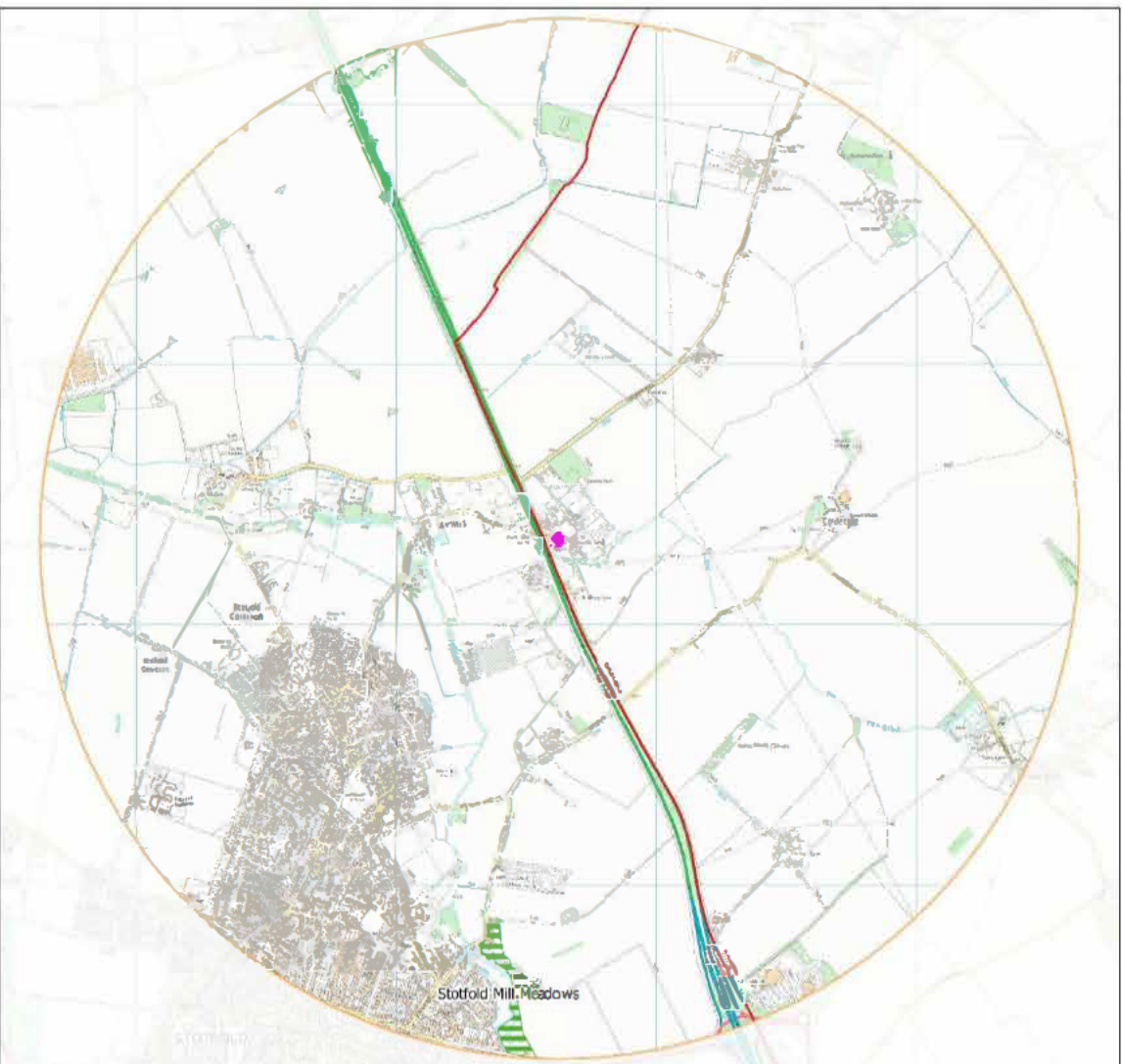
Appendix 6 – Proposed Plans





Appendix 8 – Ecological Data Search Information

National Sites Map 1



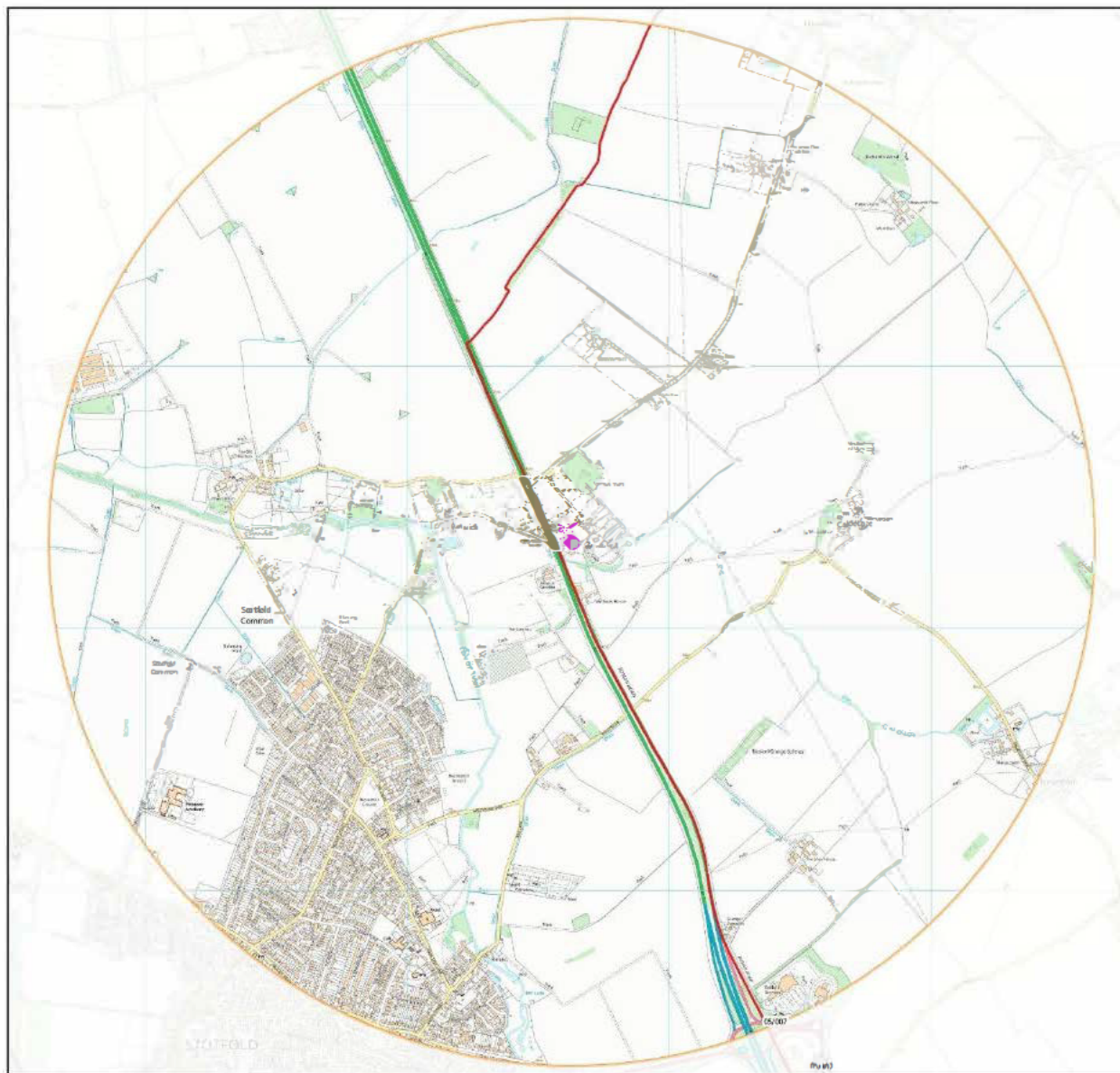
- Search Information**
- Search point
 - Search area
- National Sites**
- Statutory Sites
 - LNR
- Administrative Area**
- Hertford County Boundary

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Local Sites Map 1

Search Information

- ◆ Search point
- Search area

Local Sites

- Local Wildlife Sites

Administrative Area

- Herts County Boundary

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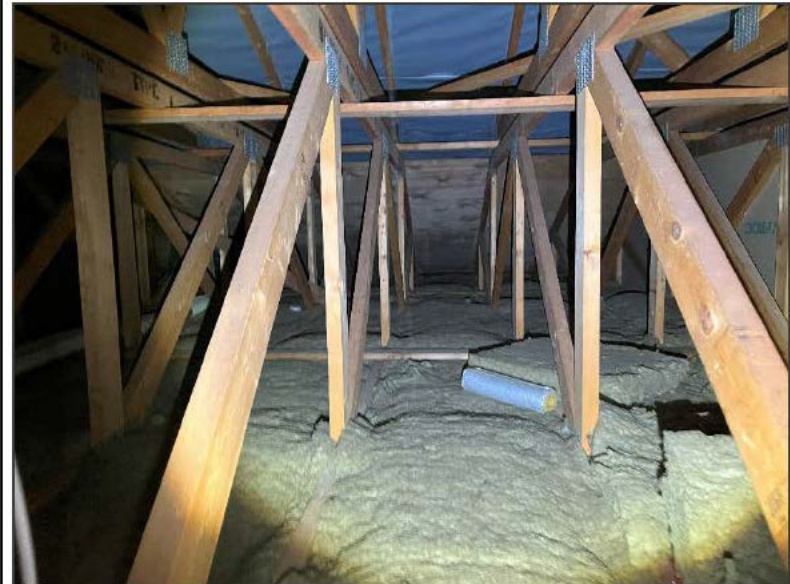
Appendix 9 – Building Photographs and Potential Roost Features Plan

Table 13: Building Photographs showing Potential Roost Features

Image	Description
Building B1	
	Photograph 1; showing no Potential Roosting Features upon the northern aspect of Building B1.
	Photograph 2; showing a missing roof tile upon the southern aspect of Building B1.

Image	Description
	Photograph 3; showing no Potential Roosting Features upon the southern aspect of Building B1.
	Photograph 4; showing no Potential Roosting Features upon the eastern aspect of Building B1.
Building B2	
	Photograph 5; showing potential roosting features in the form of areas of lifted lead flashing upon the northern aspect of Building B2.

Image	Description
	Photograph 6; showing potential roosting features in the form of a cracked ridge tile upon the eastern aspect of the roof of building B2.
	Photograph 7; showing render walls and tight fitted roofing tiles presenting no potential roosting features upon the southern aspect of the roof of building B2.

Image	Description
	Photograph 8; showing potential roosting features in the form lifted roofing tiles upon the western aspect of building 82.
	Photograph 9; showing the interior roof void of building 82.

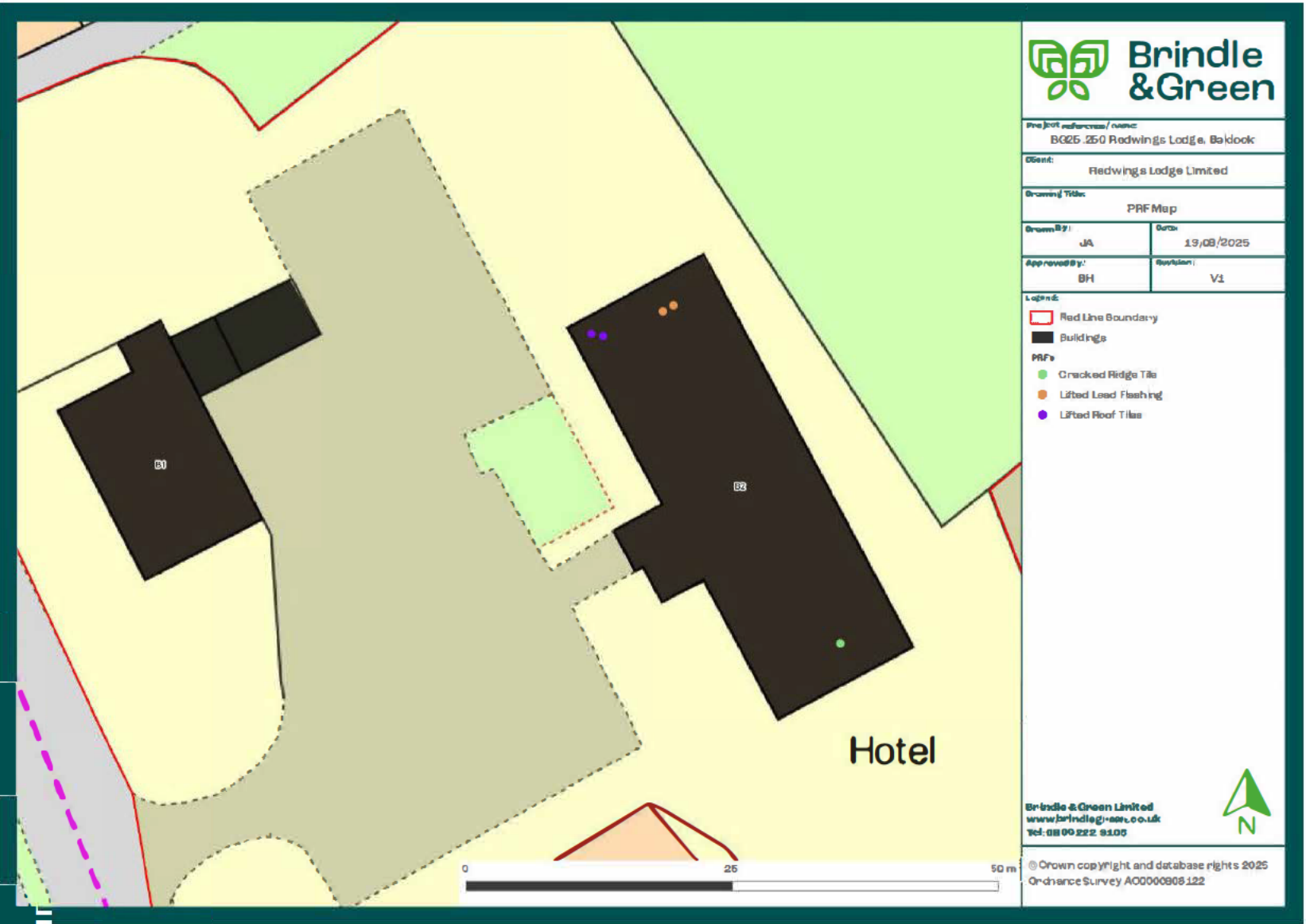


Figure 13: Plan showing Potential Roost Features