# High Meadow, Saltwood

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

A Report for Hollaway Studio

March 2022

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# High Meadow, Sandling Road, Saltwood

## Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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|---|---|---|---|
| **Client:** | Mr and Mrs Sercombe | | |
| **Project Ref:** | High Meadow, Saltwood | | |
| **Report Ref:** | J21078_PEA | | |
| **Author:** | **Technical Review:** | **Approved By:** | |
| Alana Ball MSc Ecologist<br>Lottie Gibbons Assistant Ecologist | Lorna Roberts BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM Principal Ecologist | Charlotte Bell BSc (Hons) MCIEEM Principal Ecologist | |
| **Revision Ref:** | **Status/ Comment:** | **Date of Issue:** | |
| n/a | Issued in Draft for Client | 14th March 2022 | |

**Disclosure:**



It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to meet the client's requirements, no site survey can ensure a complete assessment or prediction of the changeable onsite environment.

*Should more than 12 months elapse between the date of this survey and any subsequent development, it may be necessary to consider the need for an update survey to be undertaken.*

## CONTENTS

# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 In response to the proposed development at High Meadow, Saltwood, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Site has been undertaken, the results of which serve to determine the Site's ecological importance and potential to support habitats and species of conservation concern.

1.2 There is one statutory designated site within 2km of the Site and four non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the Site's boundary. However, due to the spatial separation between the Site and these designated sites, and the limited scope of the development, it is considered highly unlikely that the proposed development would affect any of these designated sites of conservation importance. For the same reasons, it is considered unlikely to affect any areas of ancient woodland or Habitats of Principal Importance, as listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

1.3 Habitats within the Site, including scattered trees, amenity grassland and introduced shrub, are common and widespread. Therefore, no further botanical surveys are required to enable a robust assessment of their intrinsic ecological importance. It is recommended that trees should be retained and protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction' where possible. Should trees require removal, these should be replaced with native specimens of local provenance.

1.4 The main residential building (B1) to be affected by the proposed development has been assessed as having '**Moderate**' suitability to support roosting bats and in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Guidelines (Collins, 2016) requires two dusk emergence/pre-dawn re-entry survey visits. The air raid shelter (B2) was also identified as having '**Low**' potential to support roosting bats and requires one dusk emergence/pre-dawn re-entry survey visit.

1.5 One *Eucalyptus gunni* tree within the Site was identified as having '**Low**' suitability to support roosting bats. If to be removed, in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust good practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) the tree can be removed following precautionary sensitive clearance methods (i.e. soft-felling preceded by inspection by a bat licensed ecologist).

1.6 Lighting can be detrimental to the use of tree lines and hedgerows by nocturnal species including bats, and any external lighting proposed for the Site should avoid direct illumination of any potential commuting, foraging or roosting features.

1.7 Suitable bird nesting habitat exists in the form of buildings, introduced shrub and scattered trees. The application of sensitive timings and methods of best practice for vegetation clearance in relation to breeding birds will be required.

1.8 The majority of the habitats onsite are sub-optimal for reptiles. The grassland should be maintained at <10cm to remain sub-optimal for reptiles and clearance of any habitats identified as suitable for reptiles (waste/rubble piles, compost piles and the defunct brick garden wall) should be conducted under precautionary sensitive timing and methods.

1.9 The Site provides suitable habitat for notable species such as common toad *Bufo bufo* and West European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* which are Species of Principal Importance under s41 of the NERC Act 2006. Precautionary measures should be put in place to ensure these species are not harmed by the proposed development.

1.10 The likelihood of other protected species to occur within the Site is considered negligible and no further surveys for other protected species are required. Should at any point a protected or notable species be identified within the Site then all works should **stop**, and the appointed ecologist consulted on the appropriate manner in which to proceed.

1.11 In accordance with the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, recommendations to enhance the Site's suitability for wildlife have been provided.

## 2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Client: Mr and Mrs Sercombe

Site Address: High Meadow, Sandling Road, Saltwood, Hythe, Kent, CT21 4QJ

Attending Ecologists: Jacob Tassaker MSc and Alana Ball MSc

Survey Dates: 28th January 2022

Site Proposals: Demolition of the existing fire damaged residential building and outbuilding, followed by the construction of three new residential properties with associated access and landscaping.

Associated Planning Reference Number: Not yet submitted

Source of Relevant Documents:

| Document: | Source: |
|---|---|
| Site Location Plan: | Google Earth Pro |
| Desk Study: | Kent Biodiversity Records Centre (KMBRC)<br>Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) |

# 3 INTRODUCTION

## 3.1 Context

3.1.1 In April 2021, GES was appointed by Mr and Mrs Sercombe to provide ecological support in response to a proposed development at High Meadow, Saltwood (henceforth referred to as the 'Site'). A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of three new residential properties at the Site.

3.1.2 The habitats within the Site and their suitability to support protected species were assessed and appropriate recommendations for further surveys and mitigation, if required, are provided within this report. Ecological features of interest are depicted in Figure 1 - Phase 1 Habitat Map.

3.1.3 The Site is located on the outskirts of the town of Hythe, Kent, at OS National Grid Reference: TR 15429 35706. The geographical location of the Site is depicted in Image 1 below.

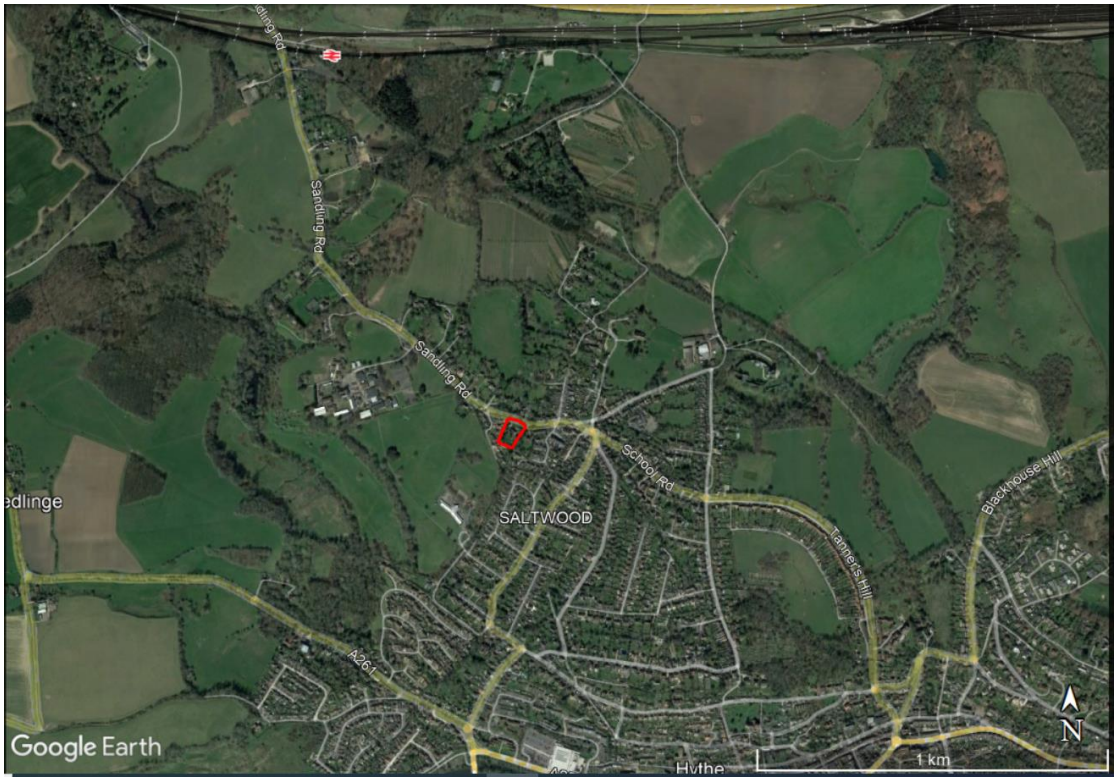


*Image 1 – Geographical location of High Meadows (the Site)*

## 3.2 Site Description

3.2.1 The Site occupies approximately 0.4ha and consists of a single derelict residential building and an above-ground air raid shelter surrounded by amenity grassland, scattered trees and

introduced shrubs.

3.2.2 The Site is bounded by residential properties and associated gardens to the east, south and west. Sandling Road abuts the northern boundary and provides access to the Site. Saltwood and Hythe lie to the south-east of the Site, with agricultural fields, blocks of woodland and interconnected hedgerows further to the north, west and southwest. The M20 and railway line lie 1.1km to the north.

### 3.3 Legislation and Planning Policies

*Legislation*

3.3.1 The main pieces of legislation that apply to ecological issues within England and Wales are:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Hedgerows Regulations Act 1997
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- The Wild Mammal (Protection) Act 1996

3.3.2 The above summary serves as guidance only. Further information is presented in Appendix B.

*UK Planning Policy*

3.3.3 The recommendations of this report are in line with the key principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 and Government Circular 06/05.

3.3.4 Policy NE2 *Biodiversity* of the Folkestone and Hythe District Council Local Development Framework (adopted September 2020) seeks to ensure the protection of designated sites, the conservation of habitats and species of principal importance (HPI and SPI) listed under Section 41 (s41) of the NERC Act 2006 and protected species, as well as requiring biodiversity enhancement.

3.3.5 Policy NE2 is a strategic policy requiring biodiversity to be conserved and enhanced by enhancing, retaining and protecting existing sites and features of nature conservation value including wildlife corridors, ancient woodland and geological exposure through the promotion of a Biodiversity Action Plan and Green Infrastructure Plan.

### 3.4 Objectives of the Survey

3.4.1 The objectives of the survey were to:

- Classify the main habitats present within the Site;
- Evaluate the ecological importance of these habitats;
- Evaluate the potential for protected species and otherwise notable species to occur within the Site; and
- Provide appropriate recommendations for further surveys and mitigation where required, as well as identify opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.

# 4 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

## 4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 To provide additional background to the survey and to highlight likely features or species groups of interest, a desk study was undertaken in February 2022 to determine the presence of sites and habitats of conservation importance, together with historical records of protected and notable species of relevance to the Site.

4.1.2 The following bodies were consulted for the desk study:

- Google Earth Pro.
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Magic.defra.gov.uk.
- Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC).

4.1.3 The desk study involved obtaining the following information:

- International statutory designations within 5km
- National statutory designations within 2km
- Non-Statutory Designated Sites within 1km
- Protected and notable species within 2km
- Bat records within 5km
- Ancient woodland parcels within 30m
- Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC Act 2006) within or adjacent to the Site.

4.1.4 These search areas are considered sufficient to cover the potential zone of influence of the proposed development.

## 4.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

4.2.1 The Site was surveyed using the methodology outlined in 'The Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit' (JNCC, 2016). The techniques applied during the survey involve identifying the main plant communities present on the Site and classifying the habitat types following the JNCC methodology. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and enables areas of greater botanical interest which may require further, more detailed, surveys to be identified.

4.2.2 Any occurrences of recognised invasive species as listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were also noted.

4.2.3 A map of the habitats and areas of interest (using a variation of the JNCC (2016) protocol for Phase 1 Habitat plans) is provided in Figure 1 - Phase 1 Habitat Map. Photographs of features of interest are presented in Appendix A.

4.2.4 The survey was undertaken by Senior Ecologist Jacob Tassaker MSc and Ecologist Alana Ball MSc on 28th January 2022.

### 4.3 Protected and Notable Species

4.3.1 The survey was 'extended' to consider the suitability of the Site to support protected and notable species. Species considered included those identified during the desk study, or those considered appropriate by the surveyor during the survey. The suitability of the habitats present on the Site were also assessed for their provision of connectivity from other areas of potentially suitable habitat.

4.3.2 Core species considered during the survey are as follows.

Badger

4.3.3 Habitats suitable for badger *Meles meles,* such as woodland, dense scrub, mature hedgerows and grassy banks, were searched for within the Site, as well as any evidence of badger activity such as:

- Presence of setts, indicated by suitably sized holes or burrows;
- Evidence of badger latrines, badger hair and/or footprints; and
- Evidence of well-used runs supported by secondary evidence such as foraging signs.

Bats

4.3.4 All of the trees within the Site were subject to a ground-level preliminary bat roost assessment in accordance with current Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) good practice survey guidance (Collins *et al*., 2016). Trees were visually inspected for potential roosting features (PRFs) such as splits, fissures, cavities, delaminated bark, heavy ivy *Hedera* sp. cover and woodpecker holes. Evidence such as droppings, staining and bats themselves were searched for below and in suitable features, with the use of high-powered torch, telephoto lens camera and binoculars (where necessary). The quality and quantity of PRFs identified were used to categorise each tree as having 'Confirmed roosts'; or 'High', 'Moderate', 'Low' or 'Negligible' suitability to support roosting bats.

4.3.5 A full external inspection was undertaken of the buildings present within the Site (and internal of the above ground bunker), with the use of high-powered torch and binoculars (where required). Any potential roosting or access points for bats such as raised fascia boards, missing/lifted tiles, cracks or crevices in brick/blockwork and/or gaps in soffit boxes were recorded and searched for evidence of use by bats (staining, droppings, scratch marks, or the bats themselves). The results of the scoping survey enabled the buildings to be categorised as having 'Confirmed roosts'; or 'High', 'Moderate', 'Low' or 'Negligible' suitability to support roosting bats.

Breeding Birds

4.3.6 The habitats within the Site were assessed for their suitability to support nesting birds. Factors considered include suitable cover and feeding habitat. Evidence was searched for in the form of any active or disused birds' nests.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

4.3.7 Any suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* including long grass, tall ruderal, woodland and hedgerow borders, as well as wood and rubble piles that act as hibernacula, was recorded. A search for any ponds or standing waterbodies within 250m of the Site, that may provide breeding habitat for GCN, was also conducted via a review of available OS mapping.

Hazel Dormouse

4.3.1 The Site was surveyed for suitable hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* habitat, such as the presence of a well-connected understorey broadleaf habitat, hedgerows, mature scrub and suitable food sources such as oak *Quercus sp.,* hazel *Corylus avellana* and other nut-bearing trees, fruiting trees and shrubs, flowers and invertebrates. Evidence of hazel dormouse searched for included woven nests and/or dormouse-gnawed nuts.

Reptiles

4.3.2 Suitable habitat for reptiles was searched for including long grass, vegetated boundaries, woodland and hedgerow borders, as well as wood, log and rubble piles that act as hibernacula.

### 4.4 Constraints

4.4.1 Although the optimal period for conducting Phase I habitat surveys is during the period April to September inclusive, they can be undertaken at any time of year, and due to the nature of the habitats within the Site which were amenity grassland/introduced shrub with low species

diversity, the level of information gathered during this survey is considered sufficient to effectively evaluate the on-site habitats.

4.4.2 It is important to note that ecological surveys provide information regarding the ecological baseline of a site for only a 'snapshot' of time. Therefore, if significant time lapses between the surveys and the implementation of proposals, updated ecological surveys may be required to identify any change in the baseline. Therefore, if a year lapses between the progression of the proposed works, it is recommended that ecological advice is sought regarding the applicability of the survey findings, in line with advice given by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys (CIEEM, 2019).

4.4.3 All measurements and indications of area given within this report are approximate.

4.4.4 There was no internal access to the derelict residential building (B1) due to severe fire damage making sections of the building unsafe. However, external assessment of the building, and an internal assessment of the air raid shelter (B2), was considered sufficient to enable a robust preliminary assessment of the bat roosting potential of the buildings, with further dusk emergences surveys recommended for the buildings that have been identified as offering potential bat roosting opportunities.

4.4.5 It should be noted that the absence of a species from biological records cannot be taken to represent actual absence. Species distribution patterns should be interpreted with caution as they may reflect survey/reporting effort rather than actual distribution.

# 5 SURVEY RESULTS

## 5.1 Desk Study

*Designated Sites*

5.1.1 Statutory and non-statutory designated sites identified within the potential zone of influence of the Site are presented in Table 1 below. There are no internationally important statutory sites present within 5km of the Site.

*Table 1 – Designated sites within 2km of the Site.*

| Site Name | Description | Distance from Site |
|---|---|---|
| **Statutory Designated Sites** | | |
| Nationally Important Sites (SSSI) | | |
| Lympne Escarpment SSSI | *"Lympne Escarpment SSSI is a 143.1 ha biological site of special scientific interest to the west of Hythe in Kent…The site consists of a steep escarpment of Kentish ragstone formed by the Hythe Beds of the Lower Greensand…The grassland and woodland of this site are among the best remaining examples of semi-natural habitats on ragstone in Kent…Lympne Park Wood is the largest remaining example of ash coppice woodland on the ragstone escarpment. It is thought to be of ancient origin with a long history of woodland cover."* | 1km SW |
| **Non-statutory Designated Sites** | | |
| Brockhill Country Park, Saltwood (LWS) | *Greenspace with a lake, meadows & woods, plus a playground, trails & vegetarian cafe* | 0.3km W |
| Chesterfield Wood, Sandling Park (LWS) | *The woodland area of the Brockhill Country Park.* | 0.8km NW |
| Saltwood Valley (LWS) | *Grassland and woodland.* | 0.9km NE |
| Royal Military Canal (LWS) | *Stretching for 28miles the canal runs from Hythe, Kent to Cliff End in East Sussex.* | 0.9km S |

(SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest, LWS - Local Wildlife Site)

5.1.2 The Site also lies within the SSSI Impact Risk Zones of Seabrook Stream SSSI, Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SSSI and Folkestone Warren SSSI; however, the scope of the proposed works does not meet the criteria that would warrant further consultation with Natural England and therefore no further consideration is required.

*Ancient Woodland*

5.1.3 There are no ancient woodland parcels present within 30m of the Site. The closest is an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) called Heane/Willow Woods which lies 0.5km northwest of the Site.

*NERC s41 Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI)*

5.1.4 There are no NERC Act s41 HPIs present within or adjacent to the boundary of the Site.

*Protected and Notable Species*

5.1.5 Relevant records of protected and notable species returned by the desk study are presented in Table 2 below.

*Table 2 – Relevant records of protected and notable species within 2km of the Site*

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Closest Record | Most Recent Record |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Bats** | | | |
| Brown long-eared bat | *Plecotus auritus* | 800m NE (2009) | 2019 |
| Common pipistrelle | *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* | 635m NW (2011) | 2021 |
| Daubenton's bat | *Myotis daubentonii* | 700m NE (1991) | 2019 |
| Nathusius' pipistrelle | *Pipistrellus nathusii* | 730m E (2004) | 2019 |
| Natterer's bat | *Myotis nattereri* | 725m E (2009) | 2009 |
| Noctule | *Nyctalus noctula* | 700m NE (2010) | 2019 |
| Serotine | *Eptesicus serotinus* | 785m SW (2009) | 2019 |
| Soprano pipistrelle | *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* | 700m NE (2010) | 2021 |
| **Birds** | | | |
| Stock dove | *Columba oenas* | 1.45km W (2007) | 2011 |
| Bullfinch | *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* | 1.45km W (2015) | 2016 |
| Dunnock | *Prunella modularis* | 1.45km W (2010) | 2018 |
| Greenfinch | *Carduelis chloris* | 1.45km W (2012) | 2019 |
| Mistle thrush | *Turdus viscivorus* | 1.45km W (2009) | 2017 |
| Starling | *Sturnus vulgaris* | 1.45km W (2010) | 2018 |
| House sparrow | *Passer domesticus* | 1.45km W (2015) | 2019 |
| Wood pigeon | *Columba palumbus* | 1.45km W (2012) | 2018 |
| **Mammals** | | | |
| Eurasian badger | Meles meles | 0.76km SW (2013) | 2014 |
| West European hedgehog | Erinaceus europaeus | 1.77km S (2014) | 2014 |
| **Herpetofauna** | | | |
| Common toad | *Bufo bufo* | 0.2km W (2013) | 2019 |
| Slow worm | *Anguis fragilis* | 0.56km (2016) | 2017 |
| Great crested newt | *Triturus cristatus* | 0.57km N (2017) | 2017 |
| Common lizard | *Zootoca vivipara* | 1.27km N (2019) | 2019 |
| Grass snake | *Natrix helvetica* | 0.55km NE (2019) | 2019 |

5.1.6 The bat records included roosts of several species, namely: serotine, Daubenton's bat, Natterer's bat, Nathusius' pipistrelle, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long eared bat within 5km of the Site, including hibernation and maternity roosts.

5.1.7 Additionally, the desk study returned one record of a site subject to a Natural England (NE) European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence for bats (ref. EPSM2010-2295), located 1.2km south-east of the Site and was granted for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and Nathusius' pipistrelle bats in 2010.

5.1.8 There are no NE EPSM licensed sites for hazel dormouse or great crested newt within 2km of the Site.

5.1.9 The desk study also returned two records of Great Crested Newt Survey Licence Returns (England) in 2017. The closest record confirms the presence of GCN within 0.5km north-east of the Site.

### 5.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

5.2.1 The following habitat types were recorded within the Site on 28th January 2022:

- Amenity grassland
- Introduced shrub
- Scattered trees
- Bare ground
- Hardstanding
- Buildings

5.2.2 A summary of the key botanical species present and a description of each habitat type is provided below. Site photographs are provided in Appendix A and a more comprehensive species list per habitat type is provided in Appendix C.

*Amenity grassland*

5.2.3 The majority of the Site comprised amenity grassland, with a sward height of approximately 10-15cm in the form of a residential garden. Grass species present included dominant perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne,* occasional Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus,* fescue *Festuca sp.* and meadow-grass *Poa sp.* Herbaceous species present included locally abundant ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and bryophytes, frequent creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens,* occasional common daisy *Bellis perennis,* spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* and dandelion *Taraxacum sp.,* rare ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris,* primrose *Primula vulgaris*, white clover

*Trifolium repens*, bristly ox-tongue *Helminthotheca echioides* and smooth sow thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*.

5.2.4 TN1 on Figure 1 indicates the location of earth banks located in the north of the Site.

5.2.5 TN2 on Figure 1 indicates the location of waste/rubble piles in the northwest of the Site within the amenity grassland.

*Introduced shrub*

5.2.6 Introduced shrub surrounded the amenity grassland and formed the boundaries of the Site. The introduced shrub was generally well maintained, with bark chipping covering the ground below, no understorey or ground flora and a log border separating the introduced shrub areas from the amenity grassland. Species present included cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, Portuguese laurel *Prunus lusitanica*, bay *Laurus nobilis*, bamboo *Bambusa vulgaris*, butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii*, rhododendron *Rhododendron sp*. and more.

5.2.7 There is also a derelict garden wall located within the centre of the Site surrounding an area of introduced shrub.

5.2.8 TN3 on Figure 1 indicates the location of compost heaps within the introduced shrub habitat along the western boundary of the Site.

*Scattered trees*

5.2.9 Scattered mature trees are present within the introduced shrub along the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the Site. Species present included monkey puzzle *Araucaria araucana*, Yew *Taxus baccata*, common lime *Tilia X europaea*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, holly, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, Leyland cypress *Cupressus leylandii*, magnolia *Magnolia sp.*, Norway maple *Acer platanoides,* silver birch *Betula pendula*, bay laurel, copper beech *Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea', cider gum *Eucalyptus gunnii*.

*Tree lines*

5.2.10 Tree line TL1 was located along the northern boundary of the Site. Species present include common lime, beech, bay and Leyland cypress.

*Bare ground*

5.2.11 An area of bare ground was present within the northern part of the Site as a gravel driveway.

*Hardstanding*

5.2.12 Hardstanding was present in the form of a paved patio area to the south of building B1.

5.2.13 TN4 on Figure 1 indicates the location of a dry swimming pool.

*Buildings*

5.2.14 There were two buildings present within the Site. Building B1 was a derelict mock-tudor style brick construction residential building located in the centre of the Site, which is partly burnt down. Building B2 was an above-ground air raid shelter of brick construction, located in the north of the Site. A more detailed description of the structures and their suitability to support protected species is provided below.

## 5.3 Protected and Notable Species

*Badgers*

5.3.1 The amenity grassland and scattered trees provide sub-optimal foraging habitat for badgers and the earth banks (TN1) located on-site provide limited opportunity for sett creation. However, there was no evidence of badger activity recorded during the survey.

*Bats*

Foraging and Commuting Habitat

5.3.2 The Site and its surrounds provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats, with the wider landscape featuring hedgerows, tree lines, woodland and open grassland.

Roosting Habitat - Buildings

5.3.3 A description of the buildings within the Site and their bat roost suitability is provided in Table 3 below.

*Table 3 – Building Descriptions and Bat Roosting Suitability*

| Building Reference | Description | Potential Roosting Features (PRF) | Suitability |
|---|---|---|---|
| B1 | Large derelict residential building, with a footprint of c. 300m$^2$. Comprised of a two-storey main section of the building which no longer has an intact roof due to fire damage, with a front porch to the north, a single storey section to the east and a garage further east. It is of brick construction with pebbledash render. | Under slipped /lifted/missing roof tiles of the front porch and single storey extension, missing ridge tiles, gaps under lead flashing and around window frames, around dormer windows, and between lifted pebbledash render and brickwork. | Moderate |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | A brick chimney remains standing within the main section, as well as some of the walls. The single storey eastern section has an intact pitched roof with clay tiles.<br><br>No internal access to the building. | | |
| B2 | Single-storey air raid shelter with an approximate footprint of 14m$^2$. Solid brick walls, open doorway and windows with access to the interior. Roof is comprised of concrete aggregate slabs, reinforced with corrugated metal sheeting underneath. | Gaps between the roof and the top of the brick wall, forming a crevice. | Low |

*Bats*

Roosting Habitat - Trees

5.3.4 The majority of the trees within the Site are subject to tree preservation orders (TPOs) and are subsequently being retained within the development proposals. However, a detailed ground-level preliminary roost assessment was undertaken of the trees within the Site. A single eucalyptus tree (T38 on the Tree Constraints Plan, and therefore labelled as T38 on Figure 1) was identified as having '**Low**' suitability to support roosting bats due to the lifted bark around the pollarded section of the tree. A large wound at 1.5-2.5m on the south-west facing trunk has formed a crevice between the exposed heartwood and the bark of the tree.

*Breeding Birds*

5.3.5 Suitable nesting habitat is present onsite in the form of scattered trees, introduced shrubs and buildings.

*Great Crested Newts (GCN)*

Terrestrial Habitat

5.3.6 The majority of habitats within the Site provide limited sub-optimal habitat for GCN in the form of amenity grassland and introduced shrub. Waste/rubble piles (TN2), compost heaps (TN3) and the defunct brick garden wall in the centre of the Site surrounding the introduced scrub provide limited refuge and hibernation opportunities.

Aquatic Habitat

5.3.7 A review of available online OS and aerial mapping only identified the presence of a swimming pool, located within the Site.

5.3.8 The swimming pool (TN4) was present in the south-east of the Site. However, the swimming pool was unused and dry at the time of the survey and it is not suitable aquatic habitat for GCN. Therefore, there are no suitable waterbodies within 250m of the Site and GCN are considered likely to be absent from the Site.

*Hazel dormouse*

5.3.9 There is limited suitable habitat within the Site for hazel dormouse in the form of introduced shrub and scattered trees, with no understorey. Furthermore, the Site is not connected to suitable habitat in the wider area and therefore hazel dormice are likely to be absent from the Site.

*Reptiles*

5.3.10 The amenity grassland and introduced shrub provides sub-optimal habitat for reptiles. The waste/rubble piles (TN2), compost heap (TN3) and defunct brick wall provide suitable refuge for reptiles.

*Other Protected Species*

5.3.11 The Site provides suitable habitat in the form of amenity grassland, scattered trees and introduced shrub, for a variety of notable species such as common toad and West European hedgehog which are SPI listed under s41 of the NERC Act 2006.

5.3.12 Beyond those noted above, no evidence of other species of conservation concern were recorded within the Site during the survey.

# 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.1 Designated Areas

6.1.1 There is one statutory designated site within 2km of the Site. Lympne Escarpment SSSI, located approximately 1km south-west of the Site. The closest non-statutory designated site, Brockhill Country Park, Saltwood (LWS) lies 0.3km west of the Site boundary.

6.1.2 When considering the small scale of the proposed development, providing best practice construction methods are followed, it is highly unlikely that works within the Site will result in impacts to any designated sites.

## 6.2 Habitats and Botanical Species of Interest

*Ancient Woodland*

6.2.1 The closest area of ancient woodland shown on MAGIC is an Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) (Heane/Willow Woods) which lies 0.5km north-west of the Site. This is well beyond the distance set out within the guidance from Natural England and the Forestry Commission which states that no development should occur within 15m of an ancient woodland, and it is therefore highly unlikely that the proposed works will result in detrimental impacts on this or any other area of ancient woodland, given the distance and lack of structural and functional connectivity with the Site.

6.2.2 The closest NERC s41 HPI is an area of 'deciduous woodland' located 0.3km south-west of the Site. The proposed development should not have any detrimental effects on this or any other HPI within 2km of the Site due to the limited extent of the development.

*Trees*

6.2.3 Mature trees exist within the Site, and it is recommended that these trees are retained, where possible. Retained trees should be protected during construction in accordance with the British Standard 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. An example of the tree protection measures is provided in **Figure 2**.

6.2.4 Should tree removal be required, they should be replaced on a like-for-like basis using native species such as pedunculate oak, yew *Taxus baccata*, beech *Fagus sylvatica* or similar.

*Habitats - general*

6.2.5 The remainder of habitats within the Site are highly managed ornamental/amenity habitats which support common and widespread species (and include non-natives). Therefore no further botanical surveys are required in this instance.

*Non-Native Invasive Species*

6.2.6 Species of three-cornered garlic, winter heliotrope and rhododendron sp. were recorded within the Site. Three-cornered garlic is listed as non-native invasive species on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Winter heliotrope and rhododendron sp. are listed as an invasive non-native species on the GB non-native species secretariat (NNSS). Appropriate measures should be put in place to ensure the proposed works does not result in the spread of these species offsite.

6.2.7 Appropriate measures for managing invasive non-native species should follow recommendations such as those on RHS invasive non-native plants and NNSS Horticultural Code of Practice.

### 6.3 Protected and Notable Species

*Badger*

6.3.1 The habitat on-site provides sub-optimal foraging habitat, and the earth banks (TN1) provide limited opportunity for sett creation. However, no evidence of badger or badger setts were recorded within the Site.

6.3.2 Despite no evidence of badgers being recorded, they are a highly mobile species which can readily excavate setts. Therefore, if works do not commence within 12 months of the PEA survey date, an updated badger survey of the Site should be carried out prior to works commencing.

6.3.3 Furthermore, any excavations that are created during the course of the construction that are greater than 1m in depth should either be covered over at night or should have at least one sloping side of no greater than a 45$^{o}$ angle to enable any badgers or other mammals that may fall in to escape unharmed. Any spoil piles created as a result of construction works should be fenced/covered to prevent badgers establishing setts.

*Bats – Roosting habitat*

Buildings

6.3.4 All British bats are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation affords them protection against killing, injury and disturbance as well as the destruction, damage or obstruction of access to their places of rest.

6.3.5 Numerous features suitable for use by bats were noted within B1, which will be demolished as part of the proposals. Connectivity to areas of high quality bat foraging and commuting

habitat exists within the surroundings. When considering this and the presence of historical records of bats and their roosts within the wider landscape, the building is considered to be of **'Moderate'** suitability to support roosting bats.

6.3.6 The air raid shelter (B2) was also considered to have '**Low**' suitability to support roosting bats due to the presence of potential roosting features within the structure which could support individual or low numbers of day-roosting bats.

6.3.7 In accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Survey Good Practice Guidelines (Collins *et al*., 2016), two dusk emergence and/or pre-dawn re-entry survey visits are required of B1, and a single dusk emergence or pre-dawn survey visit will be required for B2.

6.3.8 To ensure a robust dataset is collated, this survey must be undertaken by a team of suitably experienced ecologists within the appropriate survey season (May to August inclusive) and in suitable conditions.

6.3.9 The information obtained from the emergence/re-entry surveys will inform the requirement for further mitigation in respect of bats, such as an appropriate protected species mitigation licence from Natural England.

Trees

6.3.10 It is understood that the majority of the trees within the Site have tree preservation orders (TPOs) and will be retained as part of the proposed development.

6.3.11 A single Eucalyptus tree was identified as having '**Low**' suitability to support roosting bats. If this tree requires removal, in accordance with BCT Guidelines (2016) the tree should be soft-felled under the guidance of a suitably experienced ecologist outside of the bat hibernation period (1st December-1st March) and in suitable weather conditions for bats to be active. Should evidence of roosting bats be recorded in any trees to be impacted by the development, further surveys and an appropriate EPSML (European Protected Species Mitigation Licence) from Natural England may be required prior to felling.

*Bats – Foraging habitat*

6.3.12 Suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat is present within the Site. Since lighting can be detrimental to bats using vegetation for foraging and commuting, any external lighting proposed for the development (including during construction) should be sensitive to commuting/foraging features, such as mature trees and tree lines, both on and adjacent to the Site. Direct illumination of such features should be avoided, for example through the use

of directional and low-level/downward pointing lighting (light spill must only be at or below the horizontal plane), ideally of a colour temperature of 2700K or less, with no UV component and motion activated. All lighting should be sensitively designed in accordance with the industry standard Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust and Institutions of Lighting Professionals, 2018 available at the following link; https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/.

6.3.13 Providing appropriate mitigation in line with the above guidance is applied, bat activity surveys are not required in this instance.

*Breeding Birds*

6.3.14 Suitable nesting habitat exists within the Site in the form of buildings, introduced shrub and scattered trees. As all nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) any removal of suitable bird nesting habitat should be conducted outside the core breeding period for birds of late February – August inclusive.

6.3.15 Should this timeframe be unobtainable, a thorough search for the presence of breeding birds should be conducted by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to the start of works. Should evidence of breeding birds be recorded, works within 5m of any nest, or works that have potential to destroy any nest(s), must not proceed until the eggs have hatched and the chicks fledged, or the nest is deemed by a suitably experienced ecologist to no longer be in use.

*Great Crested Newt*

6.3.16 The Site offers limited suitably terrestrial habitat and lacks the waterbodies essential to the reproduction of GCN. In addition, the desk study revealed no aquatic habitat within the wider landscape. GCN are deemed to be likely absent from the Site and therefore no further survey or mitigation for this species is required.

*Hazel Dormouse*

6.3.17 No evidence of hazel dormouse was recorded during the survey and there is limited suitable habitat within the Site, within no connectivity to suitable surrounding habitats. Therefore, no further consideration is required in relation to hazel dormouse.

*Reptiles*

6.3.18 All UK native reptile species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) from intentional killing and injury amongst other offences.

6.3.19 The amenity grassland and introduced shrub onsite provides sub-optimal habitat for reptiles. However, the waste/rubble pile (TN2), the compost heaps (TN3) and defunct brick wall onsite provide suitable refuge and hibernation opportunities for reptiles. The desk study returned records of slow worm, common lizard and grass snake within 2km of the Site. As the majority of suitable reptile habitat will remain unaffected by the proposed development at the peripheries of the Site, further surveys are not required.

6.3.20 However, it is recommended that the amenity grassland be maintained at 10cm or less to prevent the grassland becoming more suitable for reptiles. A small area of long grass should also be provided as part of the final landscaping proposals to replace any suitable habitat (e.g., compost heap and brick wall) that will be lost to the development.

6.3.21 Should suitable reptile habitat require clearance, this should be preceded by a sensitive, fingertip, destructive search of the area to be cleared, carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist. Clearance of any compost heaps/rubble and the garden wall should then be undertaken using hand tools under the supervision of the ecologist. Sensitive clearance should take place during the active season for reptiles (April to early October).

*Other species*

6.3.22 The Site offers suitable habitat for common toad and West European hedgehog. The majority of habitat to be affected is unlikely to impact common toads and West European hedgehogs; however the precautionary sensitive clearance methods above will ensure that any common toads and hedgehogs present remain unharmed through the course of the works.

6.3.23 To compensate the loss of any suitable habitat it is recommended that a single hedgehog box be installed within a vegetated area of the Site prior to development.

6.3.24 To prevent small mammals becoming trapped in excavations, any trenches or deep pits should be covered or backfilled overnight. If this is not possible, a means of escape should be provided to allow any mammals falling in to escape.

6.3.25 Beyond those noted above, there are no obvious and immediate issues regarding other protected species on the Site and no further surveys to determine the presence of other protected species is required in this instance.

6.3.26 Should a protected or otherwise notable species be identified within the Site at any point during the works, then all works should **stop**, and the appointed ecologist consulted on the appropriate manner in which to proceed.

# 7 ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

7.1 Opportunities to include biodiversity enhancements within the Site exist and in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF 2021 (as amended) the following recommendations are considered appropriate for the Site:

- The installation of 3 x bird boxes on trees within the Site would benefit a diversity of bird species. Boxes should be a mixture of open fronted and hole fronted nest boxes for mounting on trees, such as those available from www.nestbox.co.uk. To maximise suitability, boxes should be installed on sheltered aspects close to vegetation at a height of 2-3m, preferably on north, north-east or north-west facing elevations.
- The installation of bat boxes on trees and/or buildings within the Site would benefit a diversity of bat species and increase the Site's potential for roosting bats. To maximise suitability, boxes should be installed on sheltered aspects close to vegetation (mature trees and tree lines) at a height of at least 3m, preferably on south, south-east or south-west facing elevations. In this instance, it is recommended that 3 x Schwegler 2FN, Lunar or Miramare should be installed on suitable trees within the Site.
- The incorporation of a hedgehog house in addition to the one mentioned in the mitigation section of this report, within a suitable location within vegetated areas of the Site, away from potential disturbance, would provide an enhancement for this species. To allow hedgehogs to safely travel both within the Site and the wider surroundings, hedgehog holes should also be installed in any fences on-site and small sections of unmanaged grassland should be provided within the peripheries of the Site to provide further sheltering opportunities.
- Any scrub clearance should be used as an opportunity to create log and brash piles to enhance the opportunities within the Site for a range of wildlife, including hedgehogs, reptiles and amphibians.
- The incorporation of a wildlife-friendly planting scheme, using native plant species, or non-native species with a known benefit to wildlife, such as those on the RHS plants for pollinators lists and/or provision of wildflower grassland areas subject to a lighter management regime, would be of benefit to invertebrates and subsequently biodiversity in general. Night-flowering species which encourage crepuscular/nocturnal invertebrates should also be incorporated to benefit bats.

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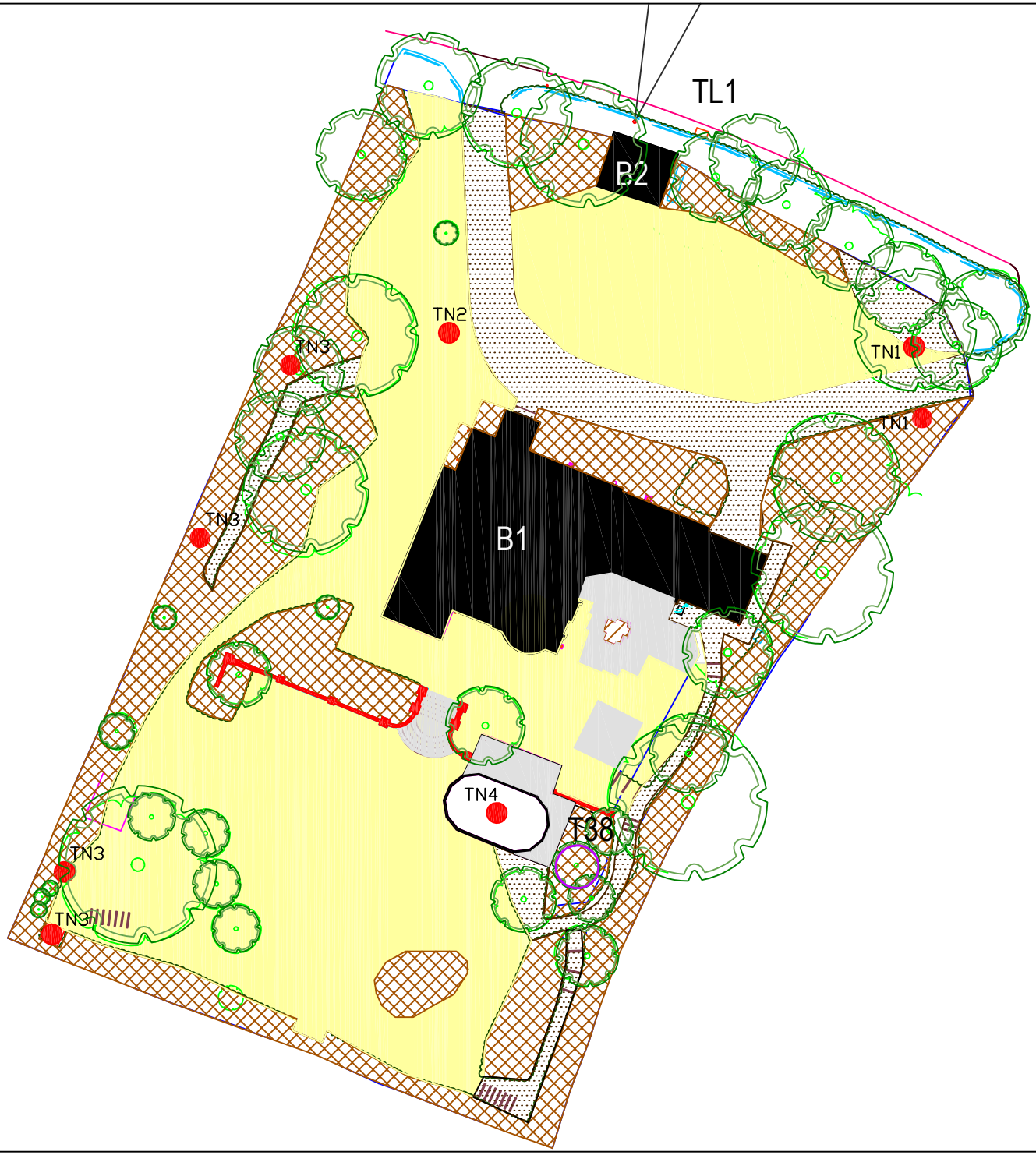
# Figures




## Legend

- Site Boundary
- Amenity Grassland
- Introduced Shrub
- Hardstanding
- Building
- Tree
- Bare Ground
- Wall
- Target Note
- Tree with low bat roost potential

Job Reference : J21078_PEA

Project Title: High Meadow, Saltwood

Drawing Title
Figure 1: Phase 1 Habitat Map

Date : 01-03-22 Checked : GN

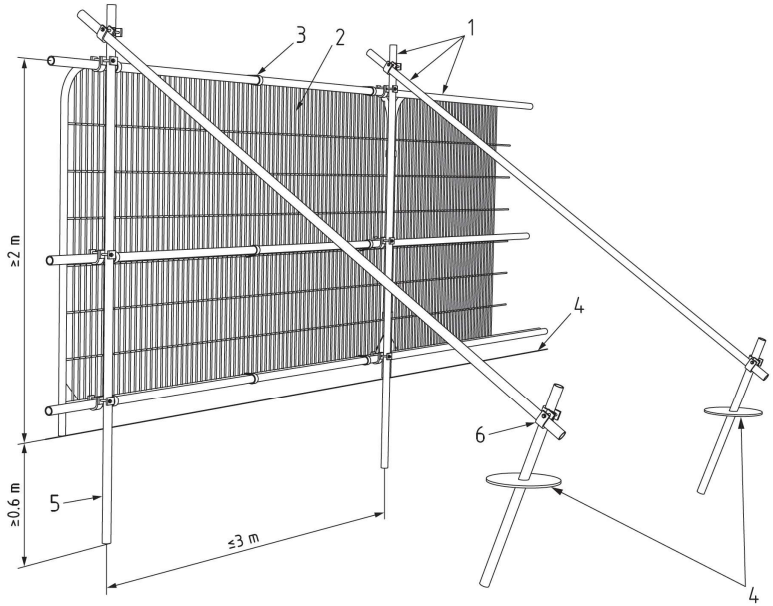
Drawn : CB Approved : N/A

Status : Final Scale : NTS



Greenspace Ecological Solutions

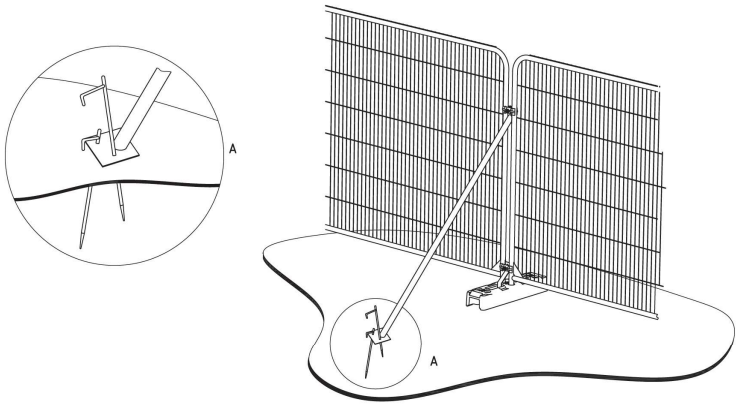
Default specification for protective barrier



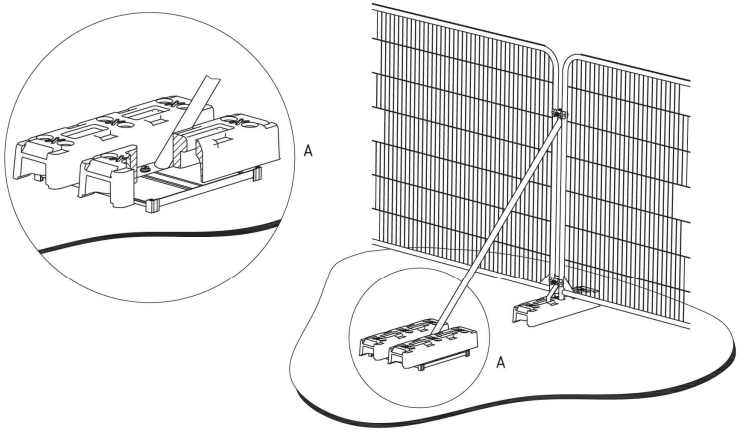

**Key**

1 Standard scaffold poles
2 Heavy gauge 2 m tall galvanized tube and welded mesh infill panels
3 Panels secured to uprights and cross-members with wire ties
4 Ground level
5 Uprights driven into the ground until secure (minimum depth 0.6 m)
6 Standard scaffold clamps

**Examples of above-ground stabilizing systems**




a) Stabilizer strut with base plate secured with ground pins




b) Stabilizer strut mounted on block tray

Job Reference : J21078_PEA

Project Title: High Meadow, Saltwood

Drawing Title
Figure 2: Tree Protection Measures

Date : 01-03-22 Checked : GN

Drawn : CB Approved : N/A

Status : Final Scale : NTS

Greenspace Ecological Solutions

# Appendices

## APPENDIX A – PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 1. Amenity grassland on-site.

Plate 2. Bare ground driveway.

Plate 3. Introduced shrub on-site.

Plate 4. Derelict residential building (B1) – moderate bat roost potential.

Plate 5. Internal view of B1 (not accessible).

Plate 6. Air raid shelter (B2) – low bat roost potential.

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| Plate 7. Internal view of B2. | Plate 8. Eucalyptus tree (T38) – low bat roost potential. |
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| Plate 9. Earth banks (TN1). | Plate 10. Waste/rubble pile (TN2). |
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| Plate 11. One of the compost heaps (TN3). | Plate 12. Derelict garden wall. |
|  |  |
| Plate 13. Dry swimming pool (TN4). | Plate 14. Low bat roost potential feature on building B2 (wall top) |

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|---|---|
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| Plate 15. Lifted hip tiles providing bat roost potential on the eastern extension of B1 | Plate 16. Bat roost potential in the porch roof and in the hanging tiles above, on the northern elevation of B1 |
|  |  |
| Plate 17. Several missing roof tiles on the eastern extension of B1. | Plate 18. Bat roost potential on B1 between the broken render and brickwork |
|  |  |
| Plate 19. The largest compost heap at the southern end of the garden. | Plate 20. A large monkey puzzle tree, the southern elevation of the building B1 and the edge of the dry swimming pool and introduced shrub. |

## APPENDIX B – Legislation

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) transposes European Union Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law. These regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European Sites', the protection of 'European Protected Species' and the adaptation of planning controls for the protection of such sites and species. Under the regulations, public bodies have a duty in exercising their functions to have regard to the EC Habitats Directive.
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides detail on a range of protection and offences relating to wild birds, other animals, and plants. The level of protection depends on which Schedule of the Act the species is listed on. Licences are available for specific purposes to permit actions that would otherwise constitute an offence in relation to species.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 imposes an obligation on all public bodies, including local authorities, to consider whether their activities can contribute to the protection of wildlife. The duty is created by section 40(1) of the Act, which states that: "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity."
- Hedgerows Regulations Act 1997 are enforced under the Environment Act 1995, and serves to: restrict the removal of hedgerows, or parts of hedgerows which are over 20m in length. In this case, removal includes digging up and replanting elsewhere, as well as removing from the land completely or destroying in the course of other actions. This includes developments or activities which destroy the roots, causing the vegetation to die.
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 exists to protect badgers *Meles meles* from cruelty. Under the act it is a criminal offense to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so, or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett.
- The Wild Mammal (Protection) Act 1996 protects wild mammal species from certain cruel acts, including kicking, beating, nailing, or otherwise impaling, stabbing, burning, stoning, crushing, drowning, dragging or asphyxiation of any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering. Crushing and asphyxiation are most likely to occur as a result of

development proposals, should these works collapse any mammal burrows, or encounter wild mammals on site.

# APPENDIX C: SPECIES LIST

| Common Name | Scientific Name | DAFOR |
|---|---|---|
| **Amenity grassland** | | |
| Perennial rye grass | *Lolium perenne* | D |
| Fescue | *Festuca sp.* | O |
| Yorkshire fog | *Holeus lanatus* | O |
| Meadow-grass | *Poa sp.* | O |
| Ground ivy | *Glechoma hederacea* | LA |
| Bryophytes | *Bryophyta sp.* | LA |
| Creeping buttercup | *Ranunculus repens* | F |
| Common daisy | *Bellie perennis* | O |
| Spear thistle | *Cirsium vulgare* | O |
| Dandelion | *Taraxacum officinale* | O |
| Ragwort | *Jacobaea vulgaris* | R |
| Primrose | *Primula vulgaris* | R |
| White clover | *Trifolium vulgaris* | R |
| Bristly oxtongue | *Helminthotheca echioides* | R |
| Smooth sow thistle | *Sonchus oleraceus* | R |
| ***Introduced Shrub*** | | |
| Cherry laurel | *Prunus laurocerasus* | O |
| Portuguese laurel | *Prunus lusitanica* | O |
| Bay laurel | *Laurus nobilis* | O |
| Bamboo | *Bambusa vulgaris* | O |
| Butterfly bush | *Buddleja davidii* | O |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Rhododendron | *Rhododendron sp.* | O |
| Dogwood | *Cornus sanguinea* | O |
| Rose | *Rosa sp.* | O |
| Bear's breeches | *Acanthus mollis* | O |
| Hydrangea | *Hydrangea sp.* | O |
| Holly | *Ilex aquifolium* | O |
| Hart's-tongue fern | *Asplenium scolopendrium* | O |
| Pendulous sedge | *Carex pendula* | O |
| Foxglove | *Digitalis purpurea* | O |
| Three-cornered garlic | *Allium triquetrum* | O |
| Winter heliotrope | *Petasites pyrenaicus.* | O |

**Scattered Trees**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Common Lime | *Tilia x europaeus* | D |
| Yew | *Taxus baccata* | A |
| Bay | *Laurus nobilis* | F |
| Ash | *Fraxinus excelsior* | O |
| Holly | *Ilex aquifolium* | O |
| Silver birch | *Betula pendula* | O |
| Magnolia | *Magnolia sp.* | O |
| Leyland cypress | *Cupressus leylandii* | O |
| Oak | *Quercus robur* | R |
| Beech | *Fagus sylvatica* | R |
| Monkey puzzle | *Araucaria araucana* | R |
| Norway maple | *Acer platanoides* | R |
| Copper beech | *Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea'* | R |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dogwood | *Cornus sanguinea* | R |
| Hawthorn | *Crataegus monogyna* | R |
| Mimosa | *Acacia dealbata* | R |
| Cider gum | *Eucalyptus gunni* | R |

| Key | |
|---|---|
| Dominant | D |
| Abundant | A |
| Locally Abundant | LA |
| Frequent | F |
| Occasional | O |
| Rare | R |