



**Land to the Rear of
32 Avondale Road
Waterlooville
Hampshire
PO7 7ST**

Ecological Appraisal



Report Number: 0608

Issue Number: 01

Date of Issue: 18th August 2023

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1.0 Summary

The proposal is to construct a new residential dwelling on an area of land which was previously part of a garden for the adjacent property. At the time of survey the land had been cleared and there was no vegetation on site except for occasional shrubs along the boundary, the land was previously bramble scrub with some small shrubs. The land currently has negligible ecological value.

A range of features and landscaping measures will be installed into the new design to provide a Net Gain for Biodiversity, this will include new landscaping measures like trees and hedgerows and new wildlife features incorporated into the fabric of the new house for bat and birds.

2.0 Introduction

Background

- 2.1 Peach Ecology was instructed in April 2023 to carry out an Ecological Appraisal of the Land to the Rear of 32 Avondale Road, Waterlooville, Hampshire, PO7 7ST (central Grid Reference: SU 68731 09669). Site location is shown in **Appendix A**, with the existing site plan shown in **Appendix B**. This report has been produced to support the planning application to Havant Borough Council for permission to construct a new dwelling as shown in **Appendix C**. This report describes the existing ecology based upon the findings of a site visit, a protected species data search and review of local and national policies.

Description of site and surrounding area

- 2.2 The site is part of the garden of another property and at the time of survey it had been cleared leaving bare earth and woodchip everywhere. The site is located in a residential area with houses on the northern, western and southern sides. A house is located to the east but within 20m is a waterway and wildlife corridor going north/south. The wider area within 0.5 km is mostly residential properties and roads with some small areas of open space. The properties are separated by mature lines of trees in places. Just over 0.5km to the north is an extensive area of woodland.

Brief

- 2.3 To carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal of the site where the dwelling is proposed and inform the clients of any ecological implications associated with the proposals.

3.0 Methodology

Desk Study

- 3.1 Ecological data relating to European Protected Species licenses from within 2km was gathered using Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), a DEFRA-run website. The results of this are shown in **Appendix D**. Ordnance Survey maps and aerial images were assessed to check for other relevant data on notable habitats and species nearby, including wildlife corridors where the site connects into the surrounding area.

Site Assessment

- 3.2 A site assessment was conducted on 4th April 2023 and again on the 2nd May 2023 by Davog McCloskey BSc (Hons) MCIEEM.

Bats

- 3.3 The site was surveyed in accordance with current bat survey guidance (BCT, 2016) for roosting features that could support bats and for the sites potential to act as a commuting and feeding corridor for bats.

Birds

- 3.4 The value of the habitat where the new dwelling is proposed was also surveyed and an assessment of the surrounding habitat up to and beyond the river was undertaken visually and as part of a desk top assessment.

Dormice

- 3.5 The suitability of the habitat was assessed for dormice in terms of trees and hedgerows and the connectivity of the site to other areas of suitable habitat locally. Any small mammal feeding signs were checked and assessed, these include teeth marks on hazel nuts and other nuts and any evidence of nest building.

Great Crested Newts

- 3.6 Any ponds on site and within the vicinity of the site were noted and the potential of the land to act as a commuting route, shelter or foraging resource for great crested newts (GCN) was assessed.

Reptiles

- 3.7 Habitat features suitable as hibernacula, foraging or basking areas were noted. Extant refugia were all carefully examined to look for reptiles or for evidence of reptiles, including shed skins.

Badgers

- 3.8 A thorough search for badger setts and other signs of badger was undertaken within the site and on the land where the new dwelling is proposed. Signs of badger include: Dung pits and latrines; Tracks, footprints and paths; Hairs on vegetation and fences. Setts found were examined to establish their level of usage.

Otters and Water Voles

- 3.9 An assessment of the immediate area of the river was undertaken to look for signs of otters and water voles, including spraints, droppings, holes, burrows, feeding signs.

Stag Beetles

- 3.10 The site was assessed for its potential to support stag beetles by checking for suitable habitat including tree stumps and rotting wood piles.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Desk study

Designated sites

- 4.1 There are no designated sites within 2km however the site does lie within 5.6km of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 4.2 It is recognised that there is the potential for a likely significant effect on the protected Solent sites from additional residential development especially when looked at in combination with other proposals, where new residents may contribute to increased recreational disturbance – this is set out in detail in the Solent Disturbance Mitigation Project (SDMP) which was produced in association with Natural England. A contribution per dwelling will need to be paid to the local Planning Authority to mitigate against the effects of recreational disturbance on the protected Solent habitats and species in line with the Havant Borough Local Plan.
- 4.3 Although there are no designated sites within 2km the site lies just over 20m from a stream to the east. The species associated with and this habitats is susceptible to changes in water quality and levels and therefore there is the potential for impacts from pollution and drainage associated with the proposals. The in-combination effects of different developments can have a significant effect on rivers and therefore it is important that pollution and drainage are considered early on to minimise or eradicate negative effects of the development.

Bats

- 4.4 Three European Protected Species licences for bats have been granted within 2km of the site, indicating the importance of the local area to these species. These include:
- EPSM2013-5591 within 100m to the west for Brown Long-ear and Common Pipistrelle
 - EPSM2010-1953 nearly 2km to the west for Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle
 - EPSM2012-4933 nearly 2km to the west for Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle
- 4.5 The local area has high value to roosting, commuting and foraging bats due to the presence of a wildlife corridor consisting of a waterway and woodland a short distance away to the east and the new house will be located adjacent to this and therefore the new dwelling will need to be designed to avoid any internal or external lighting issues which could contribute to a disruption in bat behaviour. This is achievable through suitable design. Internal luminaires can be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill. Only luminaires with an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control should be used externally – See ILP Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. Luminaires should always be mounted on the horizontal, ie no upward tilt. Only external security lighting will be used and this should be set on motion-sensors and short (1min) timers. As a last resort, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. Lighting will be in accordance with Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK.

Site Assessment

Cleared vegetation and defunct hedgerow

- 4.6 The site had been cleared of vegetation at the time of survey and therefore aerial images and a discussion with the owner were used to assess what the habitat was like previously and it is likely this consisted of bramble scrub with some shrubs like elder and hawthorn.
- 4.7 At the time of survey the site was covered in woodchip and bare earth (Photo 1) and the remains of the footings of a shed was present (Photo 2). The only remaining vegetation on site was some Nettles, Bramble, Pendulous Sedge, Broad-leaf Dock and Goosegrass. Seven old tree stumps were located within the site area. To the north of the site along the boundary were the remains of some Dogwood (Photo 3) which may have grown through from the neighbouring garden and to the south of the site along the boundary was a defunct hedgerow containing Bramble, Bindweed, Holly, Box, Ivy and Ash (Photo 4). There was no vegetation along the western boundary, a Laurel hedge is located on the adjacent property.
- 4.8 The new proposed dwelling will be constructed within this area. There are opportunities to landscape the site and plant new hedgerow and trees so that there is a Net Gain for Biodiversity.



Photo 1: The site looking east



Photo 2: Footings of old shed in centre of site, photo looking south

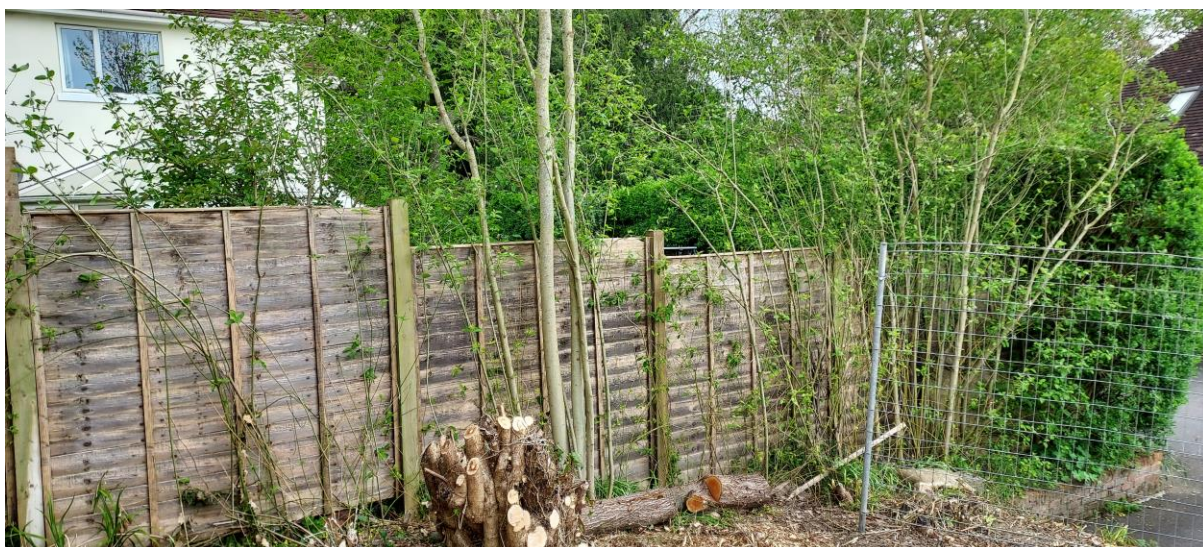


Photo 3: Northern boundary



Photo 4: Defunct hedgerow along southern boundary



Photo 5: Laurel hedgerow on adjacent property to the west

Bats

- 4.9 There are no suitable bat roosting features on site. The new proposals will include new features for roosting bats.
- 4.10 The site has little value for foraging or commuting bats in its current condition. New hedgerow and tree planting would enhance the site for bats by creating more diverse habitat.
- 4.11 It is important that the new building does not impact bats due to lighting as there is the potential for lighting to impact the adjacent wildlife corridor to the east. No additional external lighting will be used unless absolute necessary.

Birds

- 4.12 The remaining habitat on site is unsuitable for nesting birds and there were no signs of nests. The new proposals will have bird nesting features installed in the fabric of the building.

Reptiles

- 4.13 The habitat where the new dwelling is proposed is unsuitable for reptiles and therefore it is unlikely that reptiles will be harmed due to the proposals.

Great Crested Newts

- 4.14 The data search showed no records of great crested newt within 2km of the site. Aerial photographs and maps show no ponds within 500m of the site. There were no active ponds present on site. The likelihood of Great Crested Newts being impacted by the proposals is low to negligible.

Dormice

- 4.15 There were no signs of Dormice on site and although there is some defunct hedgerow, there is limited connectivity into the wider countryside for Dormice. The wildlife corridor to the east connects to the woodland to the north and to habitat more optimal for dormice to the east and therefore planting native hedgerow on site could create some suitable habitat for this species.

Badgers

- 4.16 No signs of badgers were recorded on site or nearby.

Otters and Water Voles

- 4.17 No signs of either species were recorded, the site is located far enough away from the nearby waterway for the proposals to impact these species.

Stag Beetles

- 4.18 The old stumps of shrubs and trees would appear to be too freshly cut to be optimal for this species however this cannot be ruled out and therefore the remainder of the

vegetation will be cleared under ecological supervision. A new habitat for stag beetles will be created on site so that any beetle larvae can be moved here.

5.0 Mitigation and Enhancements

- 5.1 An outline mitigation plan is set out in **Appendix E**.

Solent Protected Sites and Recreational Impact

- 5.2 A contribution will be required to mitigate the impacts associated with residential development on European sites. Contributions for off-site mitigation associated with residential development proposals will be required in the form of a payment per dwelling to be paid to the Solent Recreation Mitigation Partnership.

Bats

- 5.3 Any new external lighting must be avoided wherever possible. A maximum of one down lighter will be used. This will have no upward light spill and will be an LED. Internal luminaires can be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill. Only luminaires with an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control should be used – See ILP Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light. Luminaires should always be mounted on the horizontal, ie no upward tilt. Any external security lighting should be set on motion-sensors and short (1min) timers. As a last resort, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. Lighting will be in accordance with Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK.
- 5.4 New features for crevice roosting bats will be incorporated into the new building. Two integrated bat crevice features will be included on the southern elevation.

Birds and bees

- 5.5 Two integrated swift boxes will be included on the northern elevation.
- 5.6 Two integrated bee bricks will be built into the western elevation.

Construction, pollution prevention and drainage

- 5.7 It is important that the proposals follow appropriate pollution prevention guidelines (PPG 6) and drainage guidelines (Defra guidelines for Sustainable Urban Drainage) to protect the surrounding habitats.

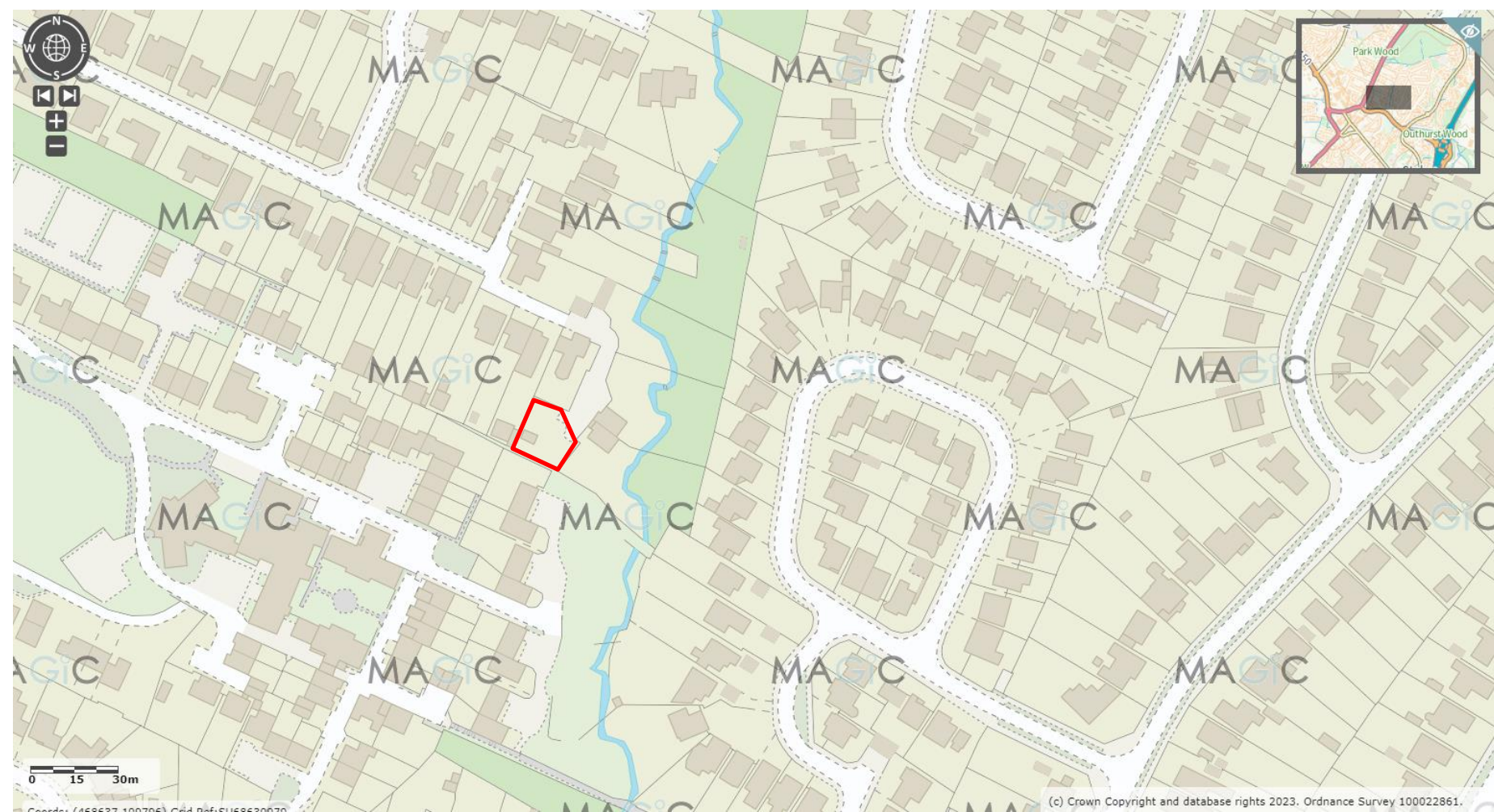
Stag Beetles

- 5.8 The site will be cleared, including the removal of any stumps, under ecological supervision and any stag beetle larvae will be moved to the stag beetle 'stumpery' in the north-west corner.
- 5.9 A Stag Beetle stumpery will be created in the north-west corner hidden at the boundary amongst new hedgerow planting. This log pyramid or stumpery will provide rotting wood underground which is great for stag beetles. Bury 10 deciduous logs (at least 150mm diameter and at least 1m long) upright in the soil, approximately 50cm deep.

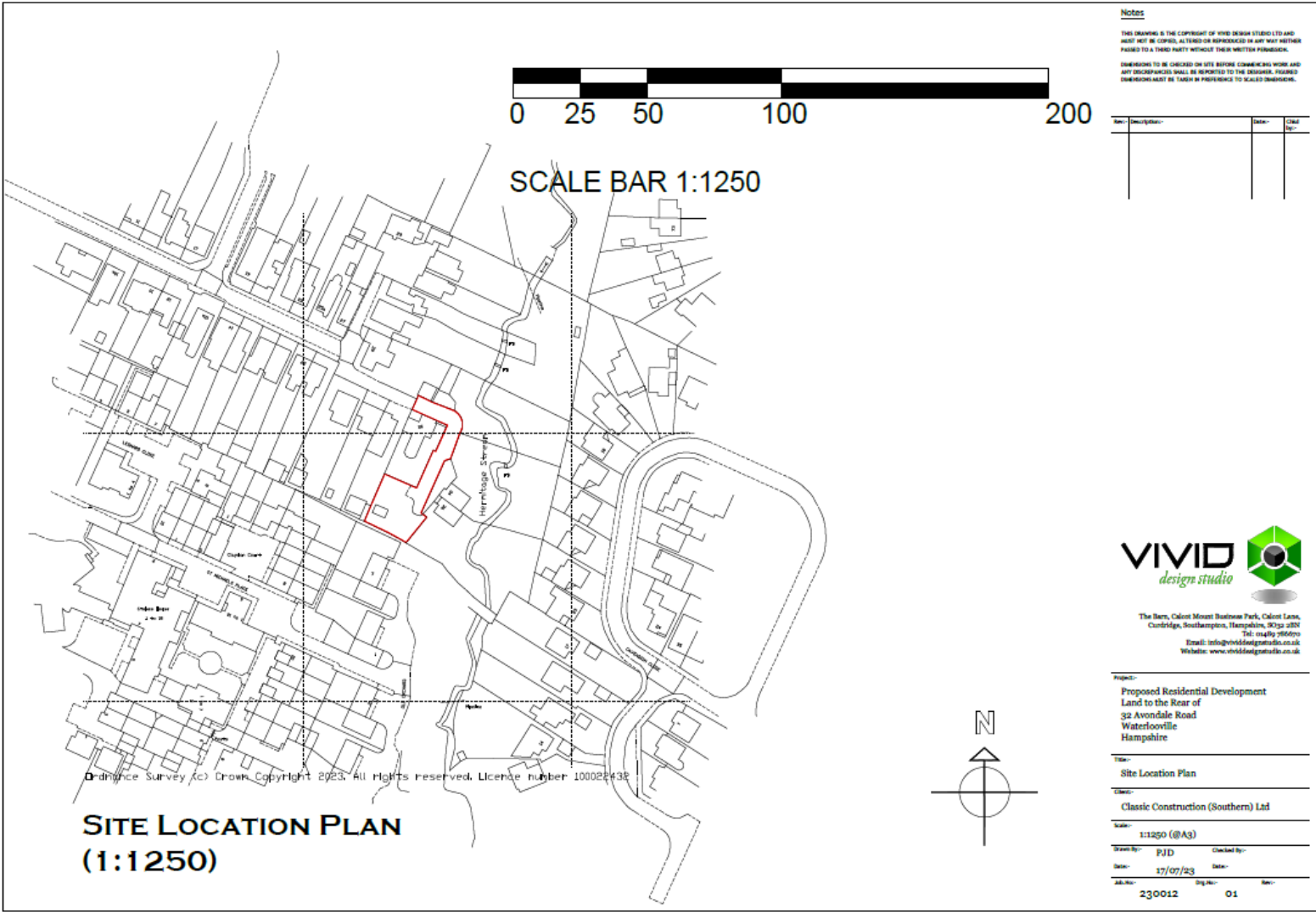
Landscaping

- 5.10 At least 20m of new native hedgerow will be planted at the boundary to the west and south.
- 5.11 At least 5 new native trees will be planted within the hedgerow or as stand alone trees within the garden, these can be orchard trees.

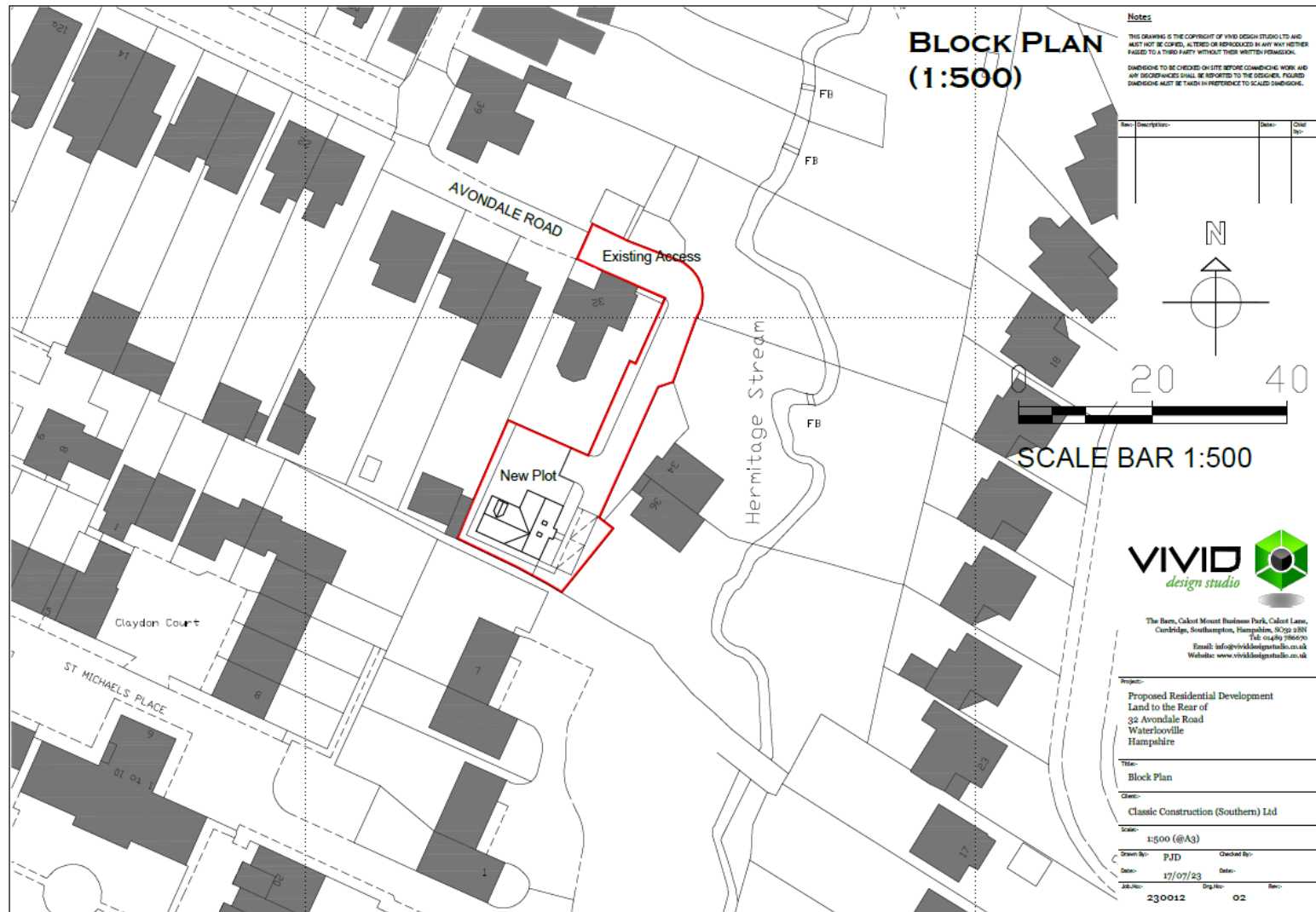
Appendix A: Site Location



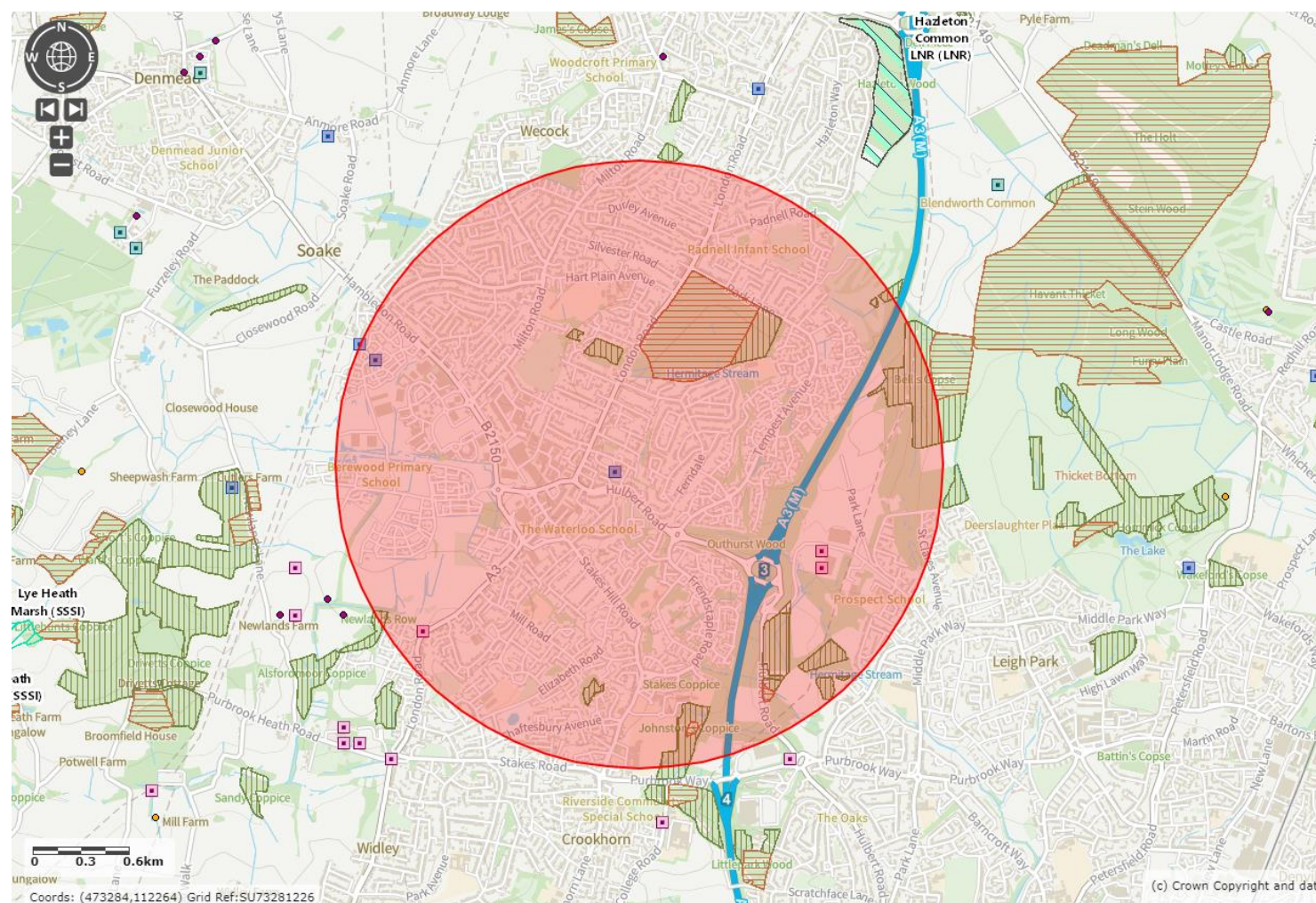
Appendix B: Existing Plans



Appendix C: Proposed Plans



Appendix D: European Protected Species Licence Data Within 2km



Appendix E: Mitigation and Enhancements

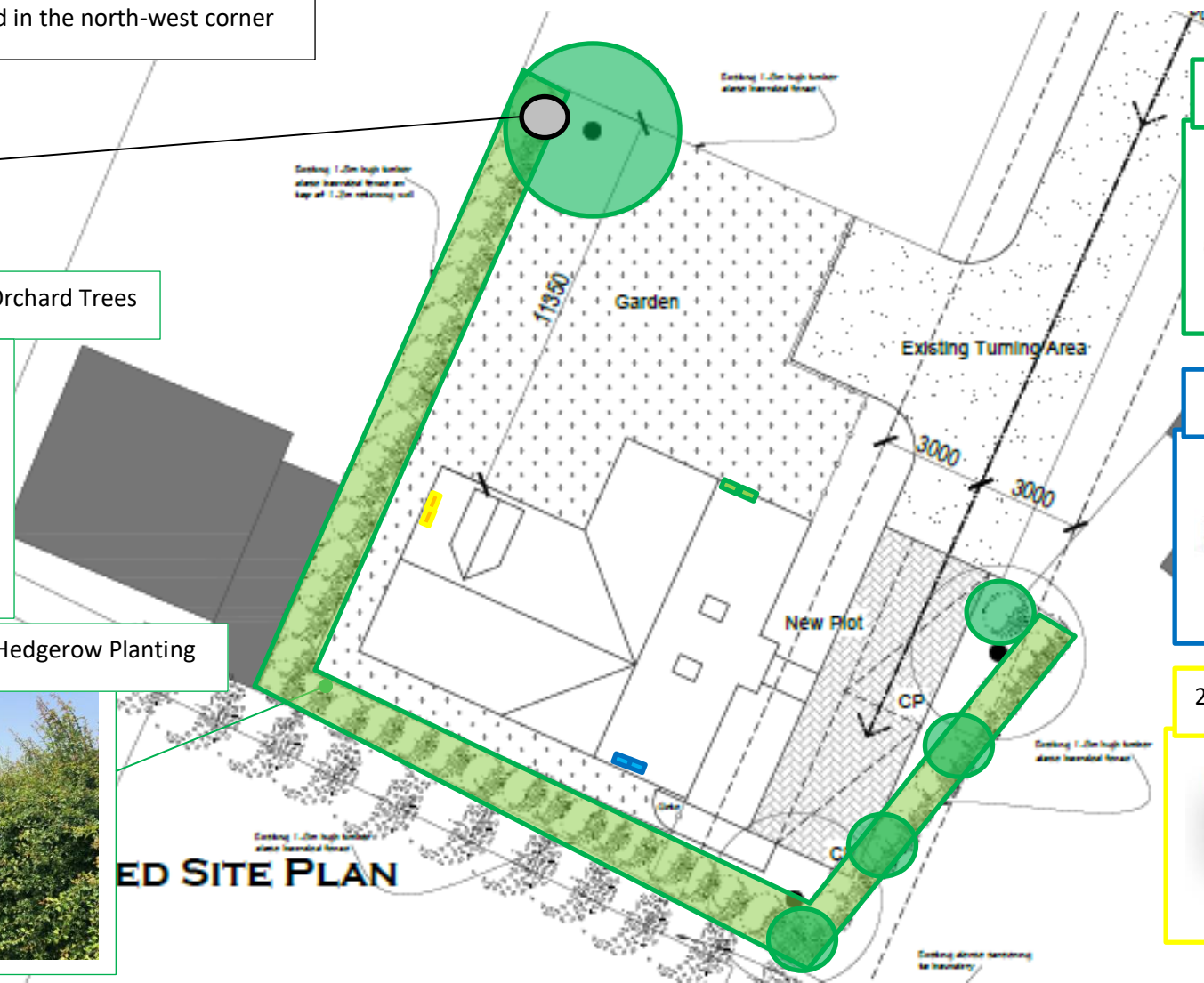
Stag beetle habitat created in the north-west corner



At least 5 New Native or Orchard Trees



At least 20m of New Native Hedgerow Planting



2 x integrated swift boxes



2 x integrated bat boxes



2 x integrated bee bricks



Appendix F: Protected Species Legislation

Amphibians

Natterjack toad, pool frog and great crested newt are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). They are also afforded additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Natterjack toad, common toad, great crested newt and northern pool frog are also Species of Principal Importance (SPIs).

Reptiles

Smooth snake and sand lizard are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). They are afforded additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow-worm are all protected from killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All UK reptile species are SPIs.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This includes damage and destruction of their nests whilst in use, or construction. Species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act, such as barn owl, are afforded protection from disturbance during the nesting season.

The following 50 bird species are SPIs: lesser redpoll, aquatic warbler, marsh warbler, skylark, white-fronted goose, tree pipit, scaup, bittern, dark-bellied brent goose, stone-curlew, nightjar, hen harrier, northern harrier, hawfinch, corncrake, cuckoo, Bewick's swan, lesser spotted woodpecker, corn bunting, circl bunting, yellowhammer, reed bunting, red grouse, herring gull, black-tailed godwit, linnet, twite, Savi's warbler, grasshopper warbler, woodlark, common scoter, yellow wagtail, spotted flycatcher, curlew, house sparrow, tree sparrow, grey partridge, wood warbler, willow tit, marsh tit, dunnoek, Balearic shearwater, bullfinch, roseate tern, turtle dove, starling, black grouse, song thrush, ring ouzel and lapwing.

Birds are also categorised according to their level of conservation concern indicated by their population status and stability. These are known as the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC4), Red, Amber and Green lists (Eaton et al, 2015). Where red and amber species are present, their conservation status should be considered in determining the likely impacts of proposed projects and plans.

The conservation status of birds recorded during the survey was assessed against the following criteria:

- EC Birds Directive 2009 Annex 1,
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended) Schedule 1, (Table 1, WCA1)
- Natural Environment and rural communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Section 41
- Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern in England (BoCC4)

Badger

Badger is protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a badger; to damage, destroy or block access to a badger sett; or to disturb badger in its sett. The Act also states the conditions for the Protection of Badgers licence requirements.

Bats

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), as detailed above. Bats are further protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to:

- Deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place which bat(s) use for shelter or protection.
- Disturb bat(s) while occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.
- Obstruct access to any structure or place which they use for shelter or protection.

Furthermore, seven bat species are SPIs, covered under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. These include western barbastelle, Bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe.

Hazel dormouse

Hazel dormouse is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). It is afforded additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), including obstruction to a place of shelter or rest.

Hazel dormouse is also a SPI.

Hedgerow

Under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 it is against the law to remove or destroy certain hedgerows without permission from the LPA, which are also the enforcement body for offences created by the Regulations. LPA permission is normally required before removing hedges that are at least 20 m in length, more than 30 years old and contain certain plant species. The authority will assess the importance of the hedgerow using criteria set out in the regulations. The regulations do not apply to hedgerows within the curtilage of, or marking a boundary of the curtilage of, a dwelling house.

Hedgerow is a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI).

Other mammals

West European hedgehog, brown hare, mountain hare, pine marten, harvest mouse, polecat and red squirrel are all SPIs.

The following mammals are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): wildcat, brown hare (Schedule 5A), mountain hare (Schedule 5A), pine marten and red squirrel.

Non-native invasive plant species

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is a list of non-native plant species for which Section 14 of the Act applies. It is an offence to plant, or otherwise cause to grow in the wild species listed under Schedule 9 of the act. These include, but are not limited to:

- Himalayan balsam
- Cotoneaster sp.
- Japanese knotweed
- Giant hogweed

Habitats of Principal Importance

Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 details 56 HPis, of which the following could be present in south-east England: Lowland calcareous grassland, Lowland dry acid grassland, Lowland meadows, Lowland Heathland, Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land, Lowland fens, Lowland raised bog, Reedbeds, Lowland beech and yew woodland, Lowland mixed deciduous woodland and Wet woodland.

Impacts to HPI are of material planning consideration.

Ancient woodland and veteran trees

The NPPF 2021 states that 'Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss'. In addition, Natural England's standing advice for ancient woodland indicates that a 15 m buffer is retained between ancient woodland and any works or development. Ancient woodlands, and ancient and veteran trees, may also be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

Details the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied, particularly to contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the decline of biodiversity. When assessing planning applications, LPAs should have regard to conserving and enhancing biodiversity by applying a number of principles, including:

- Avoiding impacts to biodiversity through appropriate site selection.
- Mitigating residual impacts.
- Encouraging the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Preventing the development of protected sites, such as SSSIs.
- Refusing permission where habitats that cannot be recreated, such as ancient woodland, would be lost.
- Encouraging good design that limits light pollution.
- Relevant paragraphs in the NPPF (2021) are detailed below.

Paragraph Number	Detail
174	"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...minimising impact on and providing net gains for biodiversity" Protection of sites of biological values Preventing new and existing development from adverse impacts to soil, air, water or noise Development should help improve local conditions
175	Maintenance and enhancement of networks of habitats and green infrastructure; plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale
179	"To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should: a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."
180	"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused; b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate."
181	The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites: a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation; b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites⁶⁴; and c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.
185	"Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: ... c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."

Environment Act (2021)

The Environment Act (2021) achieved Royal Assent in November 2021.

The Environment Act (2021) makes a provision for biodiversity net gain to be a condition of planning permission in England, however, it is not anticipated that a 10% biodiversity net gain will be mandatory until 2023. When it does become mandatory,

planning applications will need to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain can be met. A biodiversity net gain plan must be submitted and must include:

- a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat
- b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat,
- c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat,
- d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development,
- e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development.

It should be noted however, that the NPPF (2021) as set out below on does require a project to provide a measurable net gain for biodiversity.

Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000

Amends and strengthens the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It also details habitats and species for which conservation measures should be promoted.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 40 of the Act places a duty on local planning authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England whilst carrying out their normal functions. Section 41 comprises a list of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPIs) and Species of Principal Importance (SPIs) which should be considered.

The LPA will need to have particular regard to any relevant local nature recovery strategies, and any relevant species conservation strategy or protected site strategy prepared by Natural England.

Hedgerows Regulations 1997

Under these regulations it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly remove, or cause or permits another person to remove, a hedgerow. Important hedgerows are defined in Section 4 of the Regulations. This includes hedgerows that have existed for over 30 years or satisfies at least one criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

Under this act wild mammals are protected from the intentional unnecessary suffering by crushing and asphyxiation.

ODPM Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System (2005)

The Government's Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/05 (ODPM 2005) presents the legal requirement for planning authorities with regard to statutory designated sites. Planning approval should not be granted where impacts to statutory designated sites that are not connected to the site maintenance for nature conservation, or will have a significant effect on the site's conservation objectives and/or affect the site's integrity. Permission may be granted if the proposed development overrides public interest.

The presence of a protected species is a material planning consideration. The Circular clearly outlines that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted. Otherwise, all relevant considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision.