



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Hayne Farm Shop, Honiton

Client: Grainge Architects

Date: October 2022

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Date of survey: 15/08/2022

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Executive summary

It is proposed to relocate the existing Hayne Farm Shop in Honiton to an area of arable field adjacent to Combe Garden Centre, Hayne Lane, Honiton, EX14 3PD, NGR SY 13940 99614.

An extended UK Habitat Classification survey was undertaken on 15 August 2022 by Richard Green Ecology Ltd.

This report includes the findings of the survey, assesses likely ecological impacts and recommends further survey, along with outline ecological mitigation and enhancement measures, where possible at this stage, in accordance with national and local planning policy and BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development.

The site consisted of a section of a field of modified grassland, with areas of hardstanding and disturbed ground containing tall ruderals to the north-east. The northern boundary consisted of a species-rich hedgerow (more than 5 woody species per 30 m) with trees, and adjoining areas of dense scrub bordering Hayne Lane to the north. The western boundary consisted of a species-rich hedgerow with trees on a bank. The eastern boundary consisted of a wooden panel fence and hardstanding associated with the car park at Coombe Garden Centre.

The proposed farm shop and car park would result in a slight increase in hardstanding, and the loss of approximately 8200 m² of modified grassland and 340 m² of tall ruderals.

The proposed entrance to the site and creation of a visual splay would result in the removal of approximately 50 m of species-rich hedgerow and 325 m² of dense scrub.

The proposed development could lead to a small loss of habitats used by bats, birds, dormice, reptiles, great crested newts and badgers.

Further survey is recommended to more confidently assess the presence of hazel dormouse, great crested newt and reptiles on the site. Further assessment should be undertaken following completion of these surveys.

The provision of a new species-rich hedgerow along the northern boundary would compensate for the loss of species-rich hedgerow required for the access and visibility splay.

Native species-rich hedgerow and tree planting along the southern boundary and provision of integrated bat and bird boxes on the proposed buildings would enhance the site for bats and nesting birds.

Wildlife Checklist

Protected and priority species (Grid reference of the site: NGR SY 13940 99614)

Species - terrestrial, intertidal, marine	Walkover shows that suitable habitat present and reasonably likely that the species will be found? <u>Yes or No</u>	Detailed survey needed to clarify impacts and mitigation requirements?	Detailed survey carried out and included?	Species Present or Assumed to be present on the site <u>Indicate with P or A and name the species</u>	Impact on species?	Detailed Conservation Action Statement included? Sets out actions needed in relation to avoidance / mitigation / compensation / enhancement	EPS licence required?
Bats (roost)	No						
Bats (flight line / foraging habitat)	Yes – hedges, but not significantly affected	x					
Hazel dormouse	Yes - hedges	✓	x	Unknown at this stage	Unknown at this stage		
Otters	No suitable habitat						
Great crested newts	Yes – pond in adjacent field	✓	x	Unknown at this stage	Unknown at this stage		
Cirl buntings	No suitable habitat						
Schedule 1 birds	No suitable habitat						
Breeding birds	Yes - nesting habitat, e.g., hedges	x		Assumed	Disturbance/modification	✓	x
Reptiles	Yes - rank grass, hedge/woodland/scrub edge	✓	x	Unknown at this stage	Unknown at this stage		
Native crayfish	No suitable habitat						
Water voles	No suitable habitat						
Badgers	Yes - foraging habitat, e.g., field	✓	✓	No badger setts present on the site	No significant impact	✓	x
Section 41 species (other than those included above)	No suitable habitat						
Invasive species	No						
Other	No						

Designations / important habitats

Designation Terrestrial, intertidal, marine	Within the site or potential impact. <u>Yes or No</u>	Name of the site / habitat	Detailed Conservation Action Statement included in report?	Relevant organisation consulted & response included in the application?
Statutory designations				
European designations - Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR site or within Greater Horseshoe consultation zone	x			
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	x			
Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) (not before 2012)	x			
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	x			
Non statutory wildlife designations				
County or Local Wildlife Site (CWS\LWS)	x			
Ancient woodland	x			
Habitat of Principal Importance	✓	Hedgerows	No	N/A
Other	x			

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

It is proposed to relocate the existing Hayne Farm Shop in Honiton to an area of arable field adjacent to Combe Garden Centre, Hayne Lane, Honiton, EX14 3PD, NGR SY 13940 99614.

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1.2 Planning considerations

1.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework outlines the Government's commitment to protect and enhance sites of biodiversity value, and minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, including the principle of refusing planning permission if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.

1.2.2 East Devon District Local Plan

The East Devon District Local Plan 2013 to 2031 (adopted in 2016) contains the following relevant strategy and policies:

Strategy 47 – Nature Conservation and Geology

All development proposals will need to:

1. Conserve the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats.
2. Maximise opportunities for restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats.
3. Incorporate beneficial biodiversity conservation features.

Development proposals that would cause a direct or indirect adverse effect upon internationally and nationally designated sites will not be permitted unless:

- a) They cannot be located on alternative sites that would cause less or no harm.
- b) The public benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts on the features of the site and the wider network of natural habitats.
- c) Prevention, mitigation and compensation measures are provided.
- d) In respect of Internationally designated sites, the integrity of the site will be maintained.

2 Methods

2.1 Desk study

2.1.1 Designated sites

A search for sites designated for nature conservation and any notable habitats was undertaken on the DEFRA Magic website (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>). This resource includes statutory designated sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest, SSSIs) and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats. As impacts outside of the site are limited, only sites within 500 m of the site are noted.

2.1.2 Protected and notable species

Given the small extent and limited effects of the proposal, it is considered that any protected species outside the site would be unaffected. As a detailed survey has been undertaken and any protected species present or potentially present on the site would have been identified, it was not considered necessary to obtain any species records from a local records centre.

2.2 Field survey

2.2.1 Extended UK Habitats Classification Survey

An extended UK Habitat Classification Survey of the site was undertaken, combining recommendations made by the former Institute of Environmental Assessment (1995) and the UK Habitat Classification System. Habitats present are shown in Figure 1, using the primary habitat symbology based on the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) System. Note was taken of the more conspicuous flora, and any evidence of, or potential for the presence of protected and alien invasive species was recorded.

2.2.2 Timings and weather conditions

<i>Date</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Personnel</i>	<i>Weather conditions</i>
15/08/2022	Extended UK Habitats Classification survey	10:00 h – 11:30 h	James Storey	Oktas 7/8, 18°C, calm, occasional showers

2.2.3 Personnel

James Storey is experienced in undertaking UK Habitat Classification Surveys, is an accredited agent under Natural England scientific licence to disturb dormice [2016-20777-CLS-CLS], and is a qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

2.3 Evaluation

Habitat evaluations are based on guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). The level of value of specific ecological

receptors is assigned using a geographic frame of reference, i.e., international value being most important, then national, regional, county, district and lastly, local.

Value judgements are based on various characteristics that can be used to identify ecological resources or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)), or for undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological resource. In terms of the latter, 'quality' can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.

3 Survey results

3.1 *Desk study*

3.1.1 *Designated sites*

The site is not within any designated sites for wildlife interest and there are no statutory designated sites within 500 m of the site.

3.2 *Field survey*

3.2.1 *Habitats*

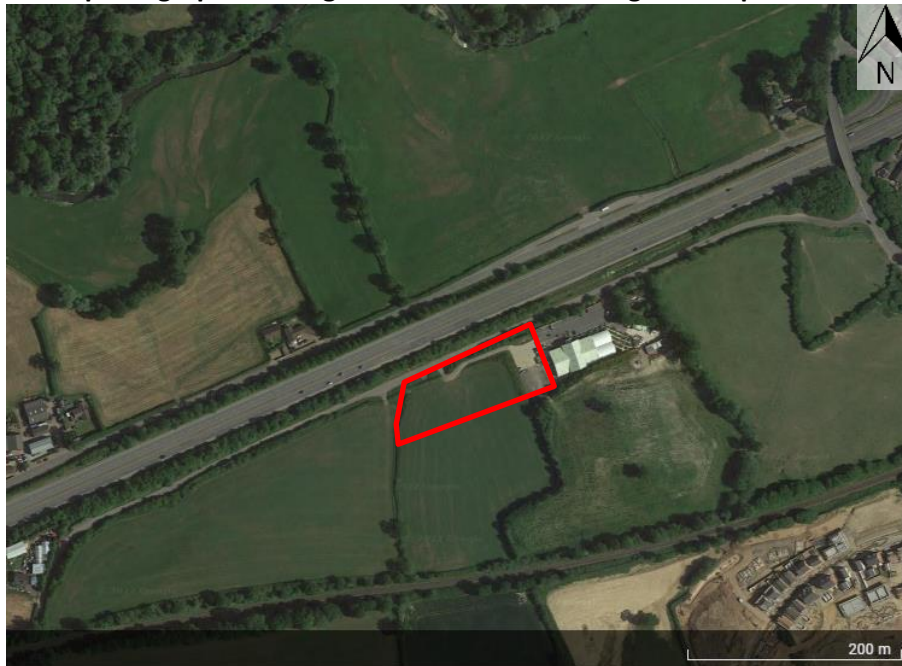
The site consisted of a section of a field of modified grassland, with areas of hardstanding and disturbed ground containing tall ruderals to the north-east. The northern boundary consisted of a species-rich hedgerow (more than 5 woody species per 30 m) with trees, and adjoining areas of dense scrub bordering Hayne Lane to the north. The western boundary consisted of a species-rich hedgerow with trees on a bank. The eastern boundary consisted of a wooden panel fence and hardstanding associated with the car park at Coombe Garden Centre.

Modified grassland, tall ruderals and dense scrub are common and widespread habitats and considered of no more than of local ecological value. Species-rich hedgerows are a Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (DBAP) habitat, a habitat of principle importance, and are considered of local-to-county ecological value.

The surrounding landscape consisted of agricultural fields, deciduous woodland and buildings, interspersed with hedgerows and mature trees. The site is situated almost immediately south of the A30 dual carriageway.

Refer to Annex B for a list of plant species recorded on the site.

Aerial photograph showing the site and surrounding landscape



3.3 Protected species

3.3.1 Bats

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

There were no trees with any obvious potential bat roosting features (PRFs) on the site.

The modified grassland offers very little value as a bat foraging habitat, but the hedgerows and trees within/around the site are part of a larger network providing potential foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

Given the small size of the site, and the availability of favourable bat foraging and commuting habitat in the wider area, i.e., species-rich native hedgerows and areas of woodland, the site is considered to be of no more than local value to bats.

3.3.2 Hazel dormouse

Hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

Dormice are known to be present throughout woodland, scrub and hedgerows in Devon, and the hedgerows and dense scrub on the site are considered to provide suitable habitat for dormice. Therefore, further survey for dormice is recommended.

3.3.3 *Nesting birds*

Nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

No bird nests were observed during the survey. However, birds are likely to nest within the trees, hedgerows and dense scrub within/around the site. Therefore, the site is considered to be of local value to nesting birds.

3.3.4 *Reptiles*

Common reptiles, such as slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and grass snake *Natrix helvetica* are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against killing and injury and are species of principle importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act, 2006).

The modified grassland does not provide favourable habitat for reptiles because it had a uniform short sward, with no significant thatch layer to provide cover for reptiles. However, the hedgerows, field margins, dense scrub and tall ruderals provide better value potential reptile habitat. Therefore, further survey for reptiles is recommended.

3.3.5 *Great crested newt*

Great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

The site is located within a great crested newt consultation zone and a pond (identified from maps but not surveyed) is present approximately 5 m south-east of the site surrounded by suitable terrestrial habitat in the form of hedgerows and tall ruderals. Therefore, further survey for great crested newts is recommended.

3.3.6 *Badger*

Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

No signs of badger, including setts or latrines, were found on the site. Whilst badgers may occasionally forage or commute over the site, the absence of any field signs suggests that the site is of negligible value to badgers.

4 **Assessment, recommendations and mitigation**

4.1 *Habitats*

4.1.1 *Impacts*

The proposed farm shop and car park would result in a slight increase in hardstanding, and the loss of approximately 8200 m² of modified grassland and 340 m² of tall ruderals.

The proposed entrance to the site and creation of a visual splay would result in the removal of approximately 50 m of species-rich hedgerow and 325 m² of dense scrub.

4.1.2 *Mitigation*

It is proposed to plant approximately 50 m of hedgerow along the northern boundary to compensate for the loss of species-rich hedgerow.

4.1.3 *Ecological enhancement*

Ecological enhancement is proposed in the form of tree planting along the southern boundary of the site. It is recommended that that this boundary be planted with a native species-rich hedgerow with trees and managed to create a wide and tall hedge to benefit wildlife.

4.2 **Bats**

4.2.1 *Impacts*

The proposed hedgerow severance and loss of scrub, modified grassland, and tall ruderals would result in a minor loss of potential bat foraging habitat. However, given the availability of suitable habitat in the surrounding area, in particular, a thick band of scrub to the north of the site that bats could continue to use for commuting, this is not considered to be significant and does not warrant bat activity survey.

Any lighting associated with development could adversely affect foraging and commuting bats within and surrounding the site.

4.2.2 *Mitigation*

Any lighting associated with development should be designed in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and Institute of Lighting Professional (ILP) guidance (BCT and ILP, 2018), avoiding any increase in light levels along the hedgerow boundaries and mature trees on site.

The mitigation measures mentioned in section 4.1.2 would compensate for the loss of habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

4.2.3 *Ecological enhancement*

Native species-rich hedgerow and tree planting along the southern boundary would provide additional foraging/commuting habitat and provision of bat boxes on the proposed buildings would provide additional roosting features for bats.

4.3 **Hazel dormouse**

4.3.1 *Impacts*

The proposed loss of dense scrub and hedgerow severance could adversely affect dormice, if present, through loss of habitat, disturbance and killing or injury of dormice.

4.3.2 *Further survey*

It is recommended to undertake a dormouse nest tube survey to more confidently assess dormouse presence in hedges and scrub around the site. In accordance with English Nature guidelines (The Dormouse Conservation Handbook, 2006), 50 tubes should be deployed in hedgerows and scrub around the site and checked monthly for any dormouse nests. Tubes should ideally be deployed between April and November and checked monthly. A minimum survey adequacy score of 20 is required by English Nature (2006).

Should dormice be confirmed as present within hedgerows and/or scrub, a European protected species mitigation licence from Natural England may be required. Potential mitigation could include on or off-site habitat provision to compensate for habitat loss.

4.4 ***Nesting birds***

4.4.1 *Impacts*

The proposed loss of dense scrub and hedgerow severance could result in the loss of bird nest sites.

4.4.2 *Mitigation*

It is recommended that the clearance of dense scrub and hedgerow be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, i.e., between October and February. If during the nesting season and nesting birds are present, the work must be delayed until the birds have fledged.

The mitigation measures mentioned in section 4.1.2 would compensate for the loss of nesting habitat for birds.

4.4.3 *Ecological enhancement*

Native species-rich hedgerow and tree planting along the southern boundary would provide additional nesting habitat for birds. Additionally, bird boxes could be incorporated into the proposed buildings.

4.5 ***Reptiles***

4.5.1 *Impacts*

The proposed loss of dense scrub, tall ruderals and hedgerow severance could adversely affect reptiles, if present, through loss of habitat, disturbance and killing or injury of reptiles.

4.5.2 *Further survey*

It is recommended that reptile survey be undertaken of these habitats, in accordance with Froglife (1999) survey guidelines. This should involve the deployment of approximately 50 artificial refugia (typically 0.5 x 0.5m sheets of bituminous roofing felt) and seven subsequent survey visits during appropriate weather conditions between April and September.

4.6 Great crested newt

4.6.1 Impacts

The proposed loss of dense scrub, tall ruderals and hedgerow severance could adversely affect great crested newts, if present, through loss of habitat, disturbance and killing or injury of newts.

4.6.2 Further survey

A habitat suitability assessment, in accordance with Oldham et al. (2000) should be made of the pond in the neighbouring field. If the pond is deemed suitable for breeding great crested newts, a DNA analysis of water samples from the pond should be undertaken in spring 2023, in accordance with Biggs et al. (2014). If great crested newt DNA is present in the pond, a population assessment should be made, in accordance with Froglife (The Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook, 2001).

Should great crested newts be present, a European protected species mitigation licence from Natural England may be required.

4.6.3 Mitigation

The mitigation measures mentioned in section 4.1.2 would compensate for the loss of terrestrial habitat for great crested newts and any other amphibians present.

4.7 Badger

4.7.1 Impacts

There is a very small risk that badgers could fall into excavations and get trapped during construction.

4.7.2 Mitigation

Any excavations over 1 m deep during construction should, as a precaution, be left with a sloping scaffold plank in them so that any badgers that fall into the excavations can escape. An alternative is to fully cover any excavations overnight.

5 Conclusions

The proposed development could lead to a small loss of habitats used by bats, birds, dormice, reptiles, great crested newts and badgers.

Further survey is recommended to more confidently assess the presence of hazel dormouse, great crested newts and reptiles on the site. Further assessment should be undertaken following completion of these surveys.

The provision of a new species-rich hedgerow along the northern boundary would compensate for the loss of species-rich hedgerow required for the access and visibility splay.

Tree planting along the southern boundary and provision of integrated bat and bird boxes on the proposed buildings would enhance the site for bats and nesting birds.

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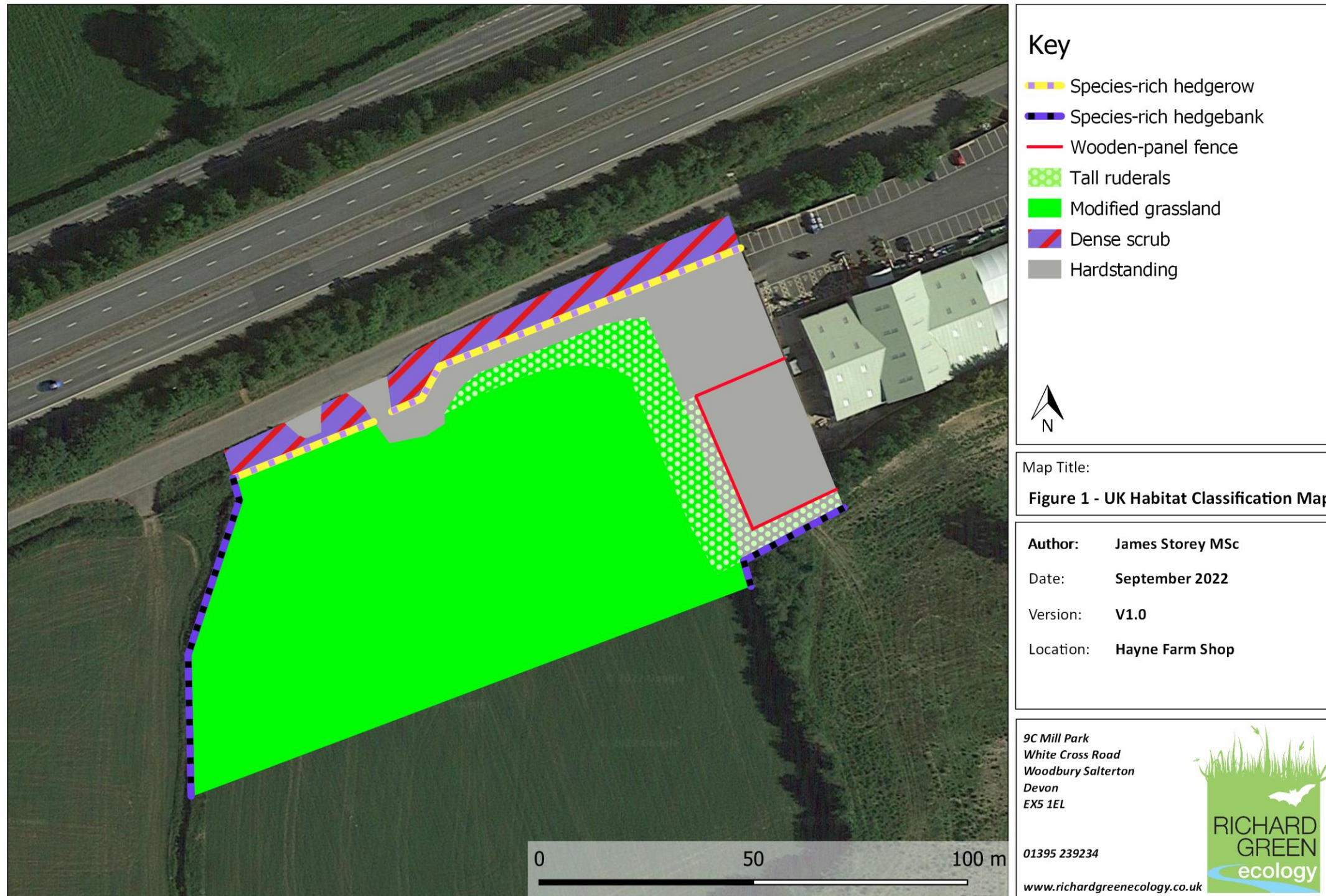
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Figures

Figure 1 - Phase 1 habitat map



Appendices

A Photographs

Plate 1 – Tall ruderals located to the north-east of the site



Plate 2 – Species-rich hedgerow on a bank on the western boundary



Plate 3 – Species-rich hedgerow along northern boundary on the field side



Plate 4 – Dense scrub along the northern boundary adjacent to Hayne Lane



Plate 5 – Dense scrub and species-rich hedgerow along the northern boundary adjacent to Hayne Lane



Plate 6 – Tall ruderals located to the north-east of the site



Plate 7 – Species-rich hedgerow along the northern boundary



Plate 8 – Modified grassland on the site



B Plant species list

Modified grassland, ruderals, and margins		
Common name	Scientific name	DAFOR
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	O
Bristly oxtongue	<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	O
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	F
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	F
Lesser burdock	<i>Arctium minor</i>	O
Common hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	F
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	F
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	O
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	O
Great willowherb	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	O
Broadleaf plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	F
Lords and ladies	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	O
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	A
Perforate St John's-wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	O
Red clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	A
Smooth hawk's-beard	<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	O
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	A
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	A

Hedgerows and scrub		
Common name	Scientific name	DAFOR
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	O
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	F
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	A
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	O
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	O
Lesser burdock	<i>Arctium minor</i>	O
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	F
Common gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	F
Common hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	A
Common hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	O
Common ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	A
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	O
Dog-rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	F
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	O
Elm	<i>Ulmus sp.</i>	O
Field maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	F
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	O

Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	O
Oxeye daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	O
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	O
Wild privet	<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>	F
Willow	<i>Salix sp.</i>	A
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	O