



# Rookery Farm, Monk Sherborne

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Prepared on behalf of The Manydown Company Ltd

September 2023

Rookery Farm, Monk Sherborne, Tadley

Ecology 8131

Version 02

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## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The client is proposing to redevelop the site at Rookery Farm, Monk Sherborne with development plans currently being drafted. Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in February 2023 to provide an updated ecological assessment of the site as the original assessment is now out of date.
- 1.2 The ecological appraisal comprised a desk study of existing ecological data in relation to the site, and an assessment of sites habitats and suitability to support protected species within the application site.
- 1.3 The site comprises six farm buildings composed of single skin metal frame and cladding, some with asbestos cladding in place, all with corrugated metal or cement roofs. Three of the buildings are open faced with no doors with the other three having large metal sliding doors. The remainder of the site is comprised of hard standing and bare ground, three parcels of modified grassland, and a parcel of ephemeral/ruderal vegetation growing over bare ground, spoil heaps and horse manure.
- 1.4 During the survey the buildings on site were assessed for their suitability to support bats. All buildings were deemed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats due to a combination of their design, construction materials and good condition. The site also offers limited foraging habitat for bats.
- 1.5 The habitats on site are of low botanical value as the site contains short sward modified grassland, a small parcel of ruderal/ephemeral with the remaining areas comprising hardstanding, bare ground, or the farm buildings, which are all single skin metal barns.
- 1.6 All buildings due to be demolished must be inspected for the presence of active bird nests by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to their demolition. Any active nests will be protected until they are no longer in use, at which point the building can be demolished. Details regarding this are provided in Section 5.0.
- 1.7 The development will provide ecological enhancements in line with national and local planning policy to secure net gains on the site. These enhancements include the retention of the existing hedgerows, the creation of wildlife buffers and native fruiting trees, as well as enhancing the retained areas of modified grassland. With these measures in place the development will provide 103.26% in habitat units and 100% hedgerow units. Further details are provided in Section 5.0.

## 2.0 Introduction

### Project Background

- 2.1 Pro Vision Ecology were commissioned in November 2022 to carry out an Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land at Rookery Farm, Monk Sherborne, in Hampshire. For the site location refer to Appendix A. This report will contribute to a forthcoming planning application to be submitted by the Client to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for planning.
- 2.2 This report describes the current ecological baseline of the site based on the findings of the ecological assessment and provides information for further survey requirements and potential mitigation on the site.

### Brief

- 2.3 To carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and baseline Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the land within the site boundaries, to inform the Client of any further survey work required and of the ecological implications of their proposals.

### Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.4 The key legislative provisions of relevance to this report with respect to the development proposals and their potential effects on ecological features are listed below:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
  - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
  - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- 2.5 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was the Governments response to the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity (The Rio Convention), with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity in the UK. The new UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework replaced the previous BAP and is the government's response to the new strategic plan on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although the UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework supersedes the UK BAP, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats still remain an important reference source for identifying habitats and species of principal importance within the UK. Within England, Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) lists species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.
- 2.6 The Government has set out its policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the planning system in the National Planning Policy Framework Section 15 (NPPF, 2021).
- 2.7 This report will contribute to a forthcoming planning application to be submitted by the Client to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council for planning consent to develop four residential dwellings.

### Policy EM4 – Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation

1. Development proposals will only be permitted if significant harm to biodiversity and/ or geodiversity resulting from a development can be avoided or, if that is not possible, adequately mitigated and where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- a) There will be no adverse impact on the conservation status of key species; and
- b) There will be no adverse impact on the integrity of designated and proposed European designated sites; and
- c) There will be no harm to nationally designated sites; and
- d) There will be no harm to locally designated sites including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); and
- e) There will be no loss or deterioration of a key habitat type, including irreplaceable habitats; and
- f) There will be no harm to the integrity of linkages between designated sites and key habitats.

The weight given to the protection of nature conservation interests will depend on the national or local significance and any designation or protection applying to the site, habitat or species concerned.

2. Where development proposals do not comply with the above they will only be permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that there is an overriding public need for the proposal which outweighs the need to safeguard biodiversity and/ or geodiversity and there is no satisfactory alternative with less or no harmful impacts. In such cases, as a last resort, compensatory measures will be secured to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and, where possible, provide a net gain.

3. Applications for development must include adequate and proportionate information to enable a proper assessment of the implications for biodiversity and geodiversity.

4. In order to secure opportunities for biodiversity improvement, relevant development proposals will be required to include proportionate measures to contribute, where possible, to a net gain in biodiversity, through creation, restoration, enhancement and management of habitats and features including measures that help to link key habitats. Approaches to secure improvements could be achieved through:

- a) A focus on identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and Biodiversity Priority Areas as identified in the councils Green Infrastructure Strategy (and subsequent updates) where appropriate; and through
- b) On-site and/ or off-site provision linked to new development in accordance with the council's adopted green space standards.

## 3.0 Methodologies

### Desk Study

- 3.1 The desk study methodology is based upon guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management (CIEEM, 2017). A data-gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain any available information relating to statutory and non-statutory nature conservation sites and protected species (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of information sources used for the Desk Study

Organisation / Source	Information Sought
Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC)	Records of the presence of key protected and notable species and non-statutory wildlife sites within one kilometre of the site.
MAGIC	Locations of and citations for all national statutory wildlife sites, including SSSI, within two kilometres and all international sites including SAC, SPA or Ramsar sites within five kilometres of the site. Records of EPSM licences and class licence returns within two kilometres.
Ordnance Survey Maps	Large scale habitat information and identification of off-site habitats which may require consideration (such as ponds) within 500m.

### Ecological Assessment

#### Habitats

- 3.2 A site visit was carried out on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 by ecologist Jake Purchase in sunny weather conditions, still and dry and an ambient temperature of 9°C. The survey employed techniques based on the UK Habitat Classification System.
- 3.3 The collection of botanical information focused on the dominant and/or key indicator species for each habitat, to allow allocation of habitats to hierarchy levels 3 and/or 4 and where relevant to identify any priority habitats which are present on site.
- 3.4 The conditions of the habitats on the site were assessed in line with the condition sheets supplied alongside DEFRA Metric 4.0.

#### Constraints

- 3.5 The survey was undertaken in February and outside the optimum time to conduct botanical work. Therefore, some species are likely to have been missed but a suitable assessment of the habitats has been possible for the purposes of this application.

### Protected species

- 3.6 The PEA included an assessment of the potential for habitats on or immediately adjacent to the site to support legally protected or conservation-notable species. The location and nature of any signs of the presence of protected species (such as droppings, footprints, burrows, etc.) were documented and mapped accordingly. Indicative survey methods for protected species are outlined below.

### Badgers (*Meles meles*)

- 3.7 The site and where possible 30 metres outside the site boundary was assessed for its suitability to support badgers. A direct search was undertaken for evidence of badgers. Evidence includes

Active or disused setts;

Diggings;

Latrines / dung pits;

Foraging ('snuffle holes');

Footprints; and

Badger hairs.

### Bats

- 3.8 Bats use features within buildings such as stone crevices or cracks in brickwork, ridge beams, gaps between roofing materials and the main building structure, and any potential access points. An internal and external inspection of the building was conducted by CL17 bat licence holder Louisa Jones MCIEEM (licence numbers available upon request) during the PEA. During the survey any evidence of bats such as droppings, urine staining, claw marks, feeding remains or bats themselves were recorded. An assessment of the potential of the building to support roosts was then made in line with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (2016) shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Assessment of buildings to support roosting bats

Potential	Criteria
Negligible	Negligible features on site likely to be used by bats
Low	Potential features present which may support low numbers of bats irregularly but no suitable features for regular use by large numbers of bats.
Medium	A building with one or more potential roost features that may be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and habitats present. Unlikely to support a roost of high conservation value.
High	A building with one or more potential roost sites that are suitable for use by a large number of bats on a regular basis.



- 3.9 The majority of bat species roost within trees. Therefore, an assessment of trees recorded on site was undertaken identifying any Potential Roost Features (PRFs). The assessment was undertaken from the ground looking for features which may support bats such as cavities, crevices, and peeling bark. The assessment was based on BCT guidelines (Collins, 2016) shown below in Table 3.

Table 3: Potential of trees to support bat roosts

Suitability	Criteria
Negligible	Negligible features on the tree
Low	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seed from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
Medium	A tree with one or more potential roost features that may be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and habitats present. But unlikely to support a roost of high conservation value.
High	A tree with one or more potential roost sites that are suitable for use by a large number of bats.

- 3.10 Bats use features in the landscape to navigate and also habitats may provide key foraging areas. Foraging and commuting habitat was assessed based on based on BCT guidelines (Collins, 2016) shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Assessment of foraging/commuting habitat

Suitability	Criteria
Negligible	Negligible features on site likely to be used by bats
Low	Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats.
Medium	Habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape and may be used by significant numbers of bats including annex II species.

#### Survey Limitations

- 3.11 Bats will often roost in places that are inaccessible to the surveyor, such as under tiles and crevices within structures. During the inspection of the building on site for bats, features that have the potential to support crevice dwelling species were also noted as it is not possible to definitively conclude that bats are absent from these areas.
- 3.12 Three of the six buildings on-site could not be accessed and therefore could not be surveyed internally. This is not considered a major limitation as all buildings on site are large, corrugated metal/asbestos clad barns that are highly unlikely to support bats, and the condition of the buildings have not changed since being assessed during the original ecological appraisal

conducted in September 2021, in which all six building internals were accessible, and were all categorised as having negligible potential to support roosting bats.

#### Birds

- 3.13 Any habitat features, for example, scrub and trees, which could potentially be used by nesting birds, were surveyed and any nesting activity was noted. The habitat was also assessed regarding its potential for bird activity.

#### Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*)

- 3.14 Ponds 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 was assessed. If present, areas of standing water present on-site were assessed in accordance with current Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment guidance (Oldham et al., 2000) for their potential to support breeding newts.

#### Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

- 3.15 An assessment of the suitability of the habitat to support hazel dormouse was undertaken in accordance with The dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright et al, 2006). Any small mammal feeding signs were checked and assessed, including:

- Examination of hazel nuts; and
- Evidence of nest building.

#### Invasive species

- 3.16 During the survey any invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were noted

#### Invertebrates

- 3.17 An assessment was undertaken to assess the potential of the habitats recorded on site to support diverse communities of invertebrates, or any Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species. The assessment was based on the presence of a number of habitat features which may support important invertebrate communities such as:

- An abundance of deadwood;
- Presence of diverse plant communities;
- Presence of varied woodland structure and sunny woodland edge;
- Presence of ponds or watercourses; and
- Presence of free draining soil exposures.

## Reptiles

- 3.18 Habitat features that could be suitable as hibernacula, foraging or basking areas were noted. Extant refugia were lifted and examined for evidence of reptiles, including sloughs (shed skins).

## 4.0 Results and Analysis

### Designated sites

#### Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.1 The data search returned no records of International Statutory Designated Sites within five kilometres of the site.
- 4.2 The data search returned no records of National Statutory Designated Sites within two kilometres of the site.

#### Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.3 The data search returned records of five non-statutory designated sites within one kilometre of Rookery farm.
- 4.4 The non-statutory sites were designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC):
  - Privett, Privett Green & Highpath Copses; An ancient woodland parcel that supports hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), located 0.8 kilometres to the north-west of the site.
  - Crooked Row Copse; An ancient woodland parcel located 0.8 kilometres to the west of the site.
  - Drunken Pightle Copse Complex; An ancient woodland parcel located 0.7 kilometres to the north-west of the site.
  - Kiln Green Wood; An ancient woodland parcel located 0.1 kilometres to the north-west of the site.
  - Copyhold; An ancient wet woodland parcel located 0.6 kilometres to the north of the site.
  - Monk Sherborne Wood; A woodland parcel with surviving elements of ancient semi-nature woodland, locate 0.4 kilometres to the north-east of the site.
- 4.5 These non-statutory sites are considered to lie outside the zone of influence of the development due to the scale of the works and distances involved. No further action is required.

## Ecological Assessment

### Introduction

- 4.6 The results of the PEA are presented below. A habitat survey map is shown in Appendix C. The map illustrates the location and extent of the sites surveyed, along with additional notable features.

### Habitats

#### Surrounding habitat

- 4.7 The site at Rookery Farm is located in an area of intensive agriculture, arable fields are adjacent to the site in the south and west, whilst horse fields are located immediately to the north. A residential property is located to the east of the site. The surrounding area is dominated by agricultural fields, with some woodland parcels located to the west and north east of the site.

#### Developed land; Sealed surface

- 4.8 The site entrance, and the road that runs through the site and around the buildings on site is all comprised of hard standing. This area has negligible ecological value.

#### Vacant/derelict land/bare ground

- 4.9 A strip of bare ground on either side of buildings B2 and B5 contain some plant life, including occasional elder (*Sambucus nigra*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and frequent dove's-foot crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*). This area has negligible ecological value.

#### Buildings

- 4.10 The farm comprises a number of agricultural buildings all of which are large single skinned metal barns with cement cladding and open face or large sliding metal doors, all six buildings appear to be in good condition. The buildings are currently in use for either storing machinery and grain or hay, or as a stable. These are discussed in more detail within Section 4.10.

#### Modified grassland

- 4.11 Three small parcels of short sward modified grassland are located across the site, one comprises a strip of grassland south of the site entrance that runs along the southern boundary, and then inbetween B2 and the hardstanding (Figures 1 & 2), another parcel forms a strip of grassland on the western face of B4, separating it from the hardstanding (Figure 3), and the third parcel is located immediately east of B6, and forms a part of a field that is being grazed by horses (Figure 4). The species make-up of the three parcels is similar, with the grass species being dominated by perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), with abundant Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and frequent cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*). Herb species include frequent dove's-foot crane's-bill, and

occasional ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), common dandelion, cow parsley (*anthriscus sylvestris*), common nettle and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). Purple dead nettle (*Lamium purpureum*), white dead nettle (*Lamium album*), bitter dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) and wild teasel (*Dipascus fullonum*) were all rarely found. Two young trees are present within the southern parcel, a goat willow (*Salix capraea*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).



Figure 1 and 2: Area of modified grassland in the south of the site, running along the front of B2.



Figure 3 and Figure 4: A strip of modified grassland along western face of B4, and a parcel of modified grassland east of B6 respectively

#### Ephemeral/ruderal vegetation

- 4.12 A section of the site in the north, west of B6 which contains vegetated spoil heaps, horse manure and various machinery and materials, has been colonised by vegetation (Figures 5 & 6). These areas are still partially bare ground but have also been colonised by dock (*Rumex* sp.), common nettle, bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), sparse perennial rye-grass, common dandelion and cow parsley with rare occurrences of white dead-nettle and cleavers (*Galium aparine*).



Figure 5 and Figure 6: Ephemeral/ruderal vegetation colonising an area of previously bare ground.

#### Protected and/or notable species

##### Badgers

- 4.13 The HBIC data search returned no records for badger within one kilometre of the site.
- 4.14 The site predominantly comprises hardstanding which does not provide any foraging opportunities for badgers. The modified grassland provides some potential foraging opportunities, but no evidence of badgers was recorded during the survey. No setts, or sign of badger activity were observed within 30m of the site boundary and there is limited habitat suitable for sett creation within 30m of the site, though due to access restrictions, the full 30m buffer around the site could not be fully surveyed.
- 4.15 Due to lack of suitable habitat on site, and the lack of suitable habitat in the immediate area around the site, badger are considered to be absent from the site and no further action regarding badger is required.

##### Bats

- 4.16 The HBIC data search returned 55 records within two kilometres of the site for the following bat species between 2013 and 2019:
- Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)
  - Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)
  - Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
  - Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrelle pygmaeus*)
  - Myotis bat species (*Myotis* sp.)
  - Long-eared species (*Plecotus* sp.)
  - Brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)

4.17 The DEFRA run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences. Five granted EPS licences in respect of bats within two kilometres of the site have been granted for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared and serotine roosts.




## Buildings

- 4.18 There are six buildings on the site which are all large barn type buildings used for the storage of hay and seed, agricultural machinery and as a stable. Descriptions and photos are provided below (see Table 5) with building locations shown in Appendix B.

Table 5: Building descriptions

Building reference	Photo	External description	Internal description
B1		<p>Large open fronted barn.</p> <p>Single skinned wall and roof.</p> <p>Corrugate metal walls on a metal frame, corrugated cement roof tiles.</p> <p>Mostly empty but some hay bales are stored there currently.</p>	<p>No roof void present.</p> <p>Bare corrugated roof sheets visible with no insulation present.</p> <p>Wooden and metal ridge and supporting beams are present.</p>
B2		<p>Large, corrugated metal and cement clad barn with metal door.</p> <p>Pitched roof with felt roof.</p> <p>Concrete support beams.</p> <p>Open fronted car port.</p>	<p>No access to main building internals.</p> <p>Car port roof is single skinned, no roof void.</p> <p>Concrete structural beams.</p>

Building reference	Photo	External description	Internal description
B3		<p>A large barn with a pitched roof constructed of corrugated cement.</p> <p>Cement cladding on walls.</p> <p>Large sliding metal door and metal panelled front.</p>	<p>No access.</p>
B4		<p>A large barn with a pitched roof constructed of corrugated cement.</p> <p>Metal frames with cement cladding on walls.</p> <p>Large sliding metal door.</p>	<p>No access.</p>
B5		<p>Large open fronted barn with a clay tiled pitched roof previously used to house cattle.</p> <p>Single skinned wall and roof.</p> <p>Corrugate cement roof tiles and external cement cladding.</p> <p>Cement frames and supporting structures.</p>	<p>No roof voids are present.</p> <p>Signs of historic nesting by birds, no active or recent nests found.</p> <p>Barn used to store grain, and assorted farm equipment.</p>

Building reference	Photo	External description	Internal description
B6		<p>A long rectangular open fronted barn.</p> <p>Corrugated cement roof, cement clad walls and metal frames.</p> <p>Single skinned wall and roof.</p>	<p>No roof voids are present.</p> <p>Two thirds of the internal space is being used as a stable for horses, the other third for storage of farm equipment and a 4x4.</p>

4.19 A summary highlighting bat potential and access points for each building assessed on site is shown below (see Table 6).

Table 6: Results of the phase I bat survey

Building reference	Potential access points	Potential Roosting locations	Evidence of bats	Bat potential
B1	Open face of barn	Gaps between support beam and corrugate roof.	None.	Negligible potential due to single skinned, metal and cement construction with large open face, allowing for wind and light, as well as an unstable temperature range.
B2	No obvious access points	No access into building. Gaps in between corrugated	None	Negligible potential due to single skinned, metal and cement

Building reference	Potential access points	Potential Roosting locations	Evidence of bats	Bat potential
		roof and support beams in the car port.		construction, a lack of access points at suitable height, unstable temperature range due to lack of insulation. Temperature range, light pollution and wind would also make the potential roosting locations found in the car port negligible.
B3	Gaps around door frame	No access into building.	None	Negligible potential due to single skinned, metal and cement construction, a lack of access points at suitable height, unstable temperature range due to lack of insulation and likelihood of a draft coming through the door.
B4	Gaps around door frame	No access into building.	None	Negligible potential due to single skinned, metal and cement construction, a lack of access points at suitable height, unstable temperature range due to lack of insulation and likelihood of a draft coming through the door.
B5	Open Barn door (No door present, large curtain in place of door that is in disrepair.)	Gaps between support beam and corrugate roof.	None	Negligible potential due to single skinned, metal and cement construction with large open face, allowing for wind and light, as well as an unstable temperature range.
B6	Open face of barn	Gaps between support beam and corrugate roof.	None	Negligible potential due to single skinned, metal and cement

Building reference	Potential access points	Potential Roosting locations	Evidence of bats	Bat potential
				construction with large open face, allowing for wind and light, as well as an unstable temperature range.

4.20 All buildings on site are assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats and no further action is required for these structures in regards to bats.

## Trees

- 4.21 There were no mature trees on site. The two semi-mature trees located in the southern parcel of modified grassland contained no PRFs and were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats.
- 4.22 The on-site vegetation present at Rookery Farm provides limited foraging opportunities for local bat populations with the hardstanding providing no foraging opportunities, and there are no hedgerows on the site that could provide commuting habitat. The surrounding habitats comprise predominantly intensively farmed fields and small parcels of woodland scattered across the wider landscape and there is connectivity to these parcels via hedgerows, particularly to the north and west.
- 4.23 The site is considered to be low quality for foraging and commuting bats and recommendations to maintain dark corridors across the site are provided in Section 5.0.

## Birds

- 4.24 HBIC provided records for the following bird species of conservation concern that may be present on the site: skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*), yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*). In addition to these records for the following Schedule 1 and/or Annex I species were returned which breed in the area: peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), red kite (*Milvus milvus*), black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*), and barn owl (*Tyto alba*).
- 4.25 During the survey the following species were recorded on the site or in the neighbouring fields; red kite, grey heron, wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*) and blackbird (*Turdus merula*). No active bird nests were recorded during the survey, however the buildings, particularly B2, B5 and B6 all provide suitable nesting habitat for bird species due to being open faced and containing ledges and flat surfaces at height that could be potentially used by birds. Further recommendations have therefore been made in Section 5.0 for the clearance of buildings.

## Great crested newts

- 4.26 The HBIC data search returned no records of great crested newt presence within one kilometre of the site. The DEFRA run website, MAGIC, was searched for a list of granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences within one kilometre of the site, no licenses were returned.
- 4.27 No evidence of amphibian presence was recorded during the survey and the site does not contain any suitable habitat for great crested newt.
- 4.28 Great crested newts are therefore considered absent within the site and will not be discussed further.

#### Hazel dormouse

- 4.29 The HBIC data search returned no records for hazel dormouse within one kilometre of the site and there are no records of granted EPSM licences.
- 4.30 No suitable habitat for hazel dormouse is present on site as there are no hedgerows, shrub or woodland habitat present on site.
- 4.31 Due to the lack of habitat suitable for hazel dormouse on site, hazel dormice will not be impacted by the proposed development.

#### Invertebrates

- 4.32 The HBIC data search provided no records of protected invertebrate species within one kilometre of the site.
- 4.33 No habitats of note which may support rare or important assemblages of invertebrates were recorded on the site.

#### Reptiles

- 4.34 The HBIC data search returned no records of reptiles within one kilometre of the site.
- 4.35 The habitats on site do not provide suitable habitat for reptiles, and the site is not connected to suitable habitat, with its immediate surroundings being either monocrop agriculture, grazed grassland or amenity grassland.
- 4.36 The site has negligible potential to support reptiles and they will not be discussed further in this report.

## 5.0 Impacts and Mitigation

### Impacts and Required Mitigation for the Proposed Development

#### Bats

- 5.1 The site provides limited potential for foraging and commuting bats. Where possible any future development should incorporate the following in line with current guidelines:
- not exceed 1-3 lux on boundary features and lighting will be hooded or cowled to avoid light spill on these features (ILP, 2018).
  - Any necessary lighting within the development will utilise security timers where possible and be LED lighting of a warm white spectrum (<2700 Kelvin) which will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550 nm.
  - Only lighting with an upward light ratio of 0% will be used.
- 5.2 The site can provide additional enhancement measures though the management and provision of native hedgerows. These measures are discussed further in relation to enhancements on the site.

#### Birds

- 5.3 The site provides suitable nesting habitat in the form of the six barns on site, particularly the three barns with open faces, as well as the site being surrounded by suitable foraging habitat in the forms of fields, trees and hedgerows.
- 5.4 It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use. Any building clearance works required should be scheduled to avoid peak bird nesting season (1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August, although this will vary between species and local conditions) to avoid contravention of protected species legislation; unless inspection by an ecologist concludes that there are no nesting birds present immediately prior to the commencement of works.
- 5.5 If the presence of nesting birds is confirmed, a 5-metre buffer will be implemented, and no works will be permitted within this buffer. Works will be able to proceed once the young birds have fledged the nest of their own accord.

### Enhancement Measures for the Proposed Development

#### Biodiversity Enhancement

- 5.6 In accordance with the Natural Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity. The Environment Act 2021 sets out the requirement for all development to achieve biodiversity net gain, with a mandatory 10% required from November 2023. A biodiversity metric has been completed for the site using DEFRA metric



4.0 based on the following inclusions within the development plans, based on the proposed plans (Appendix B). The biodiversity metric is available alongside this report.

The creation of a biodiversity enhancement area in the south and southwest of the site will incorporate native shrub and tree planting, forming a transition between the site and the wider landscape whilst providing habitat for wildlife. The public footpath (St James' Way) will be retained and flanked with wildflower grassland in between the shrub and tree planting. A total of 31 native trees will be planted within the enhancement area and adjoining western and southern site boundary hedgerows.

The creation of a rain garden in the centre of the site, providing further biodiversity enhancement and attenuating roof run-off.

The central courtyard, formed with gravel to aid in drainage, will incorporate low level hedging planted with native species, as well as wildflower verges and garden planting.

- 5.7 With these measures in place the biodiversity metric results in a net gain of 103.26% in habitat units and 100% in hedgerow units (Table 7).

Table 7: DEFRA Metric 4.0 results

On-site Baseline	Habitat units	0.52
	Hedgerow units	0.00
On-Site Post intervention	Habitat units	1.07
	Hedgerow units	0.12
Total net change	Habitat units	0.54
	Hedgerow units	0.12
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net change %	Habitat units	103.26%
	Hedgerow units	100%
Trading Rules	Satisfied	

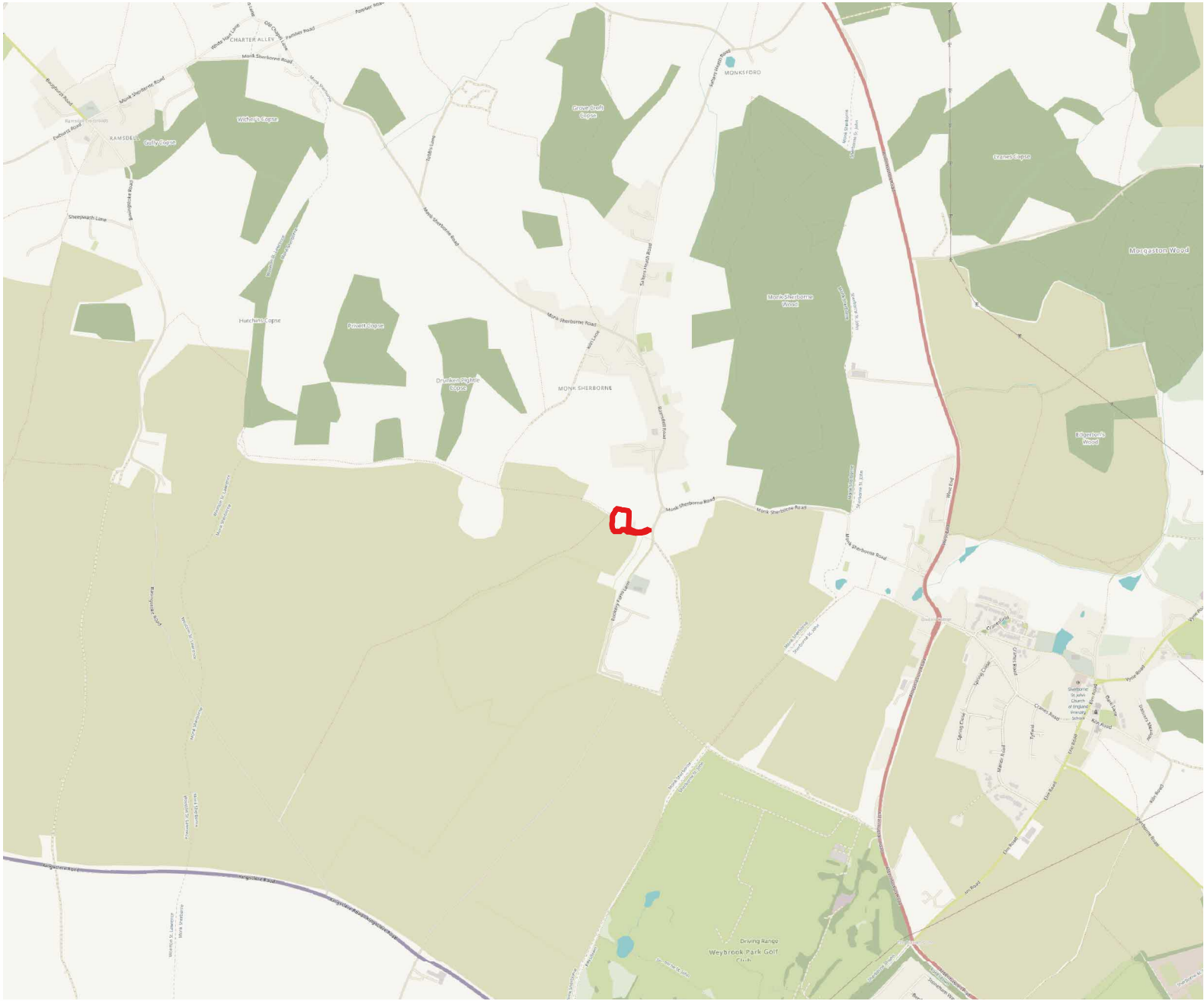
- 5.8 The trading rules are satisfied within the metric as the loss of low and medium distinctiveness habitats is being compensated for within the scheme. The scheme provides a surplus in low and medium distinctiveness habitats by 0.54 and 0.48 units respectively. The development will therefore result in a meaningful gain for local biodiversity.
- 5.9 The total net change in hedgerow units has been calculated as 100% by the metric as the site contains 0 baseline hedgerow units, any amount of hedgerow units created post development would equal 100% gain within the metric in this instance.
- 5.10 All habitat creation and management measures will need to be fully detailed and secured through a Habitat and Ecological Management Plan (HEMP) and shown within final landscape plans for the site.

## 6.0 References and Bibliography


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- ODPM (2005). Government Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System. London; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Site Location



Legend

 Red Line Boundary



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CLIENT:  
 Manydown Company Ltd

PROJECT:  
 Rookery Farm

DRAWING:  
 Site Location

DATE:  
 23/03/08

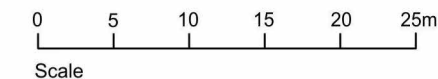
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 JOB NO: 8131  
 DWG NO:V1  
 REV:



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## Appendix B: Development Proposals





**Perimeter garden boundaries**  
Garden boundaries to be defined by post and rail fencing and native hedge planting, incorporating irregularly spaced native trees.

**Courtyard**  
Mixed native hedge and trees to subdivide courtyard, with wildflower verges, with simple areas of garden planting and low hedges adjoining dwellings. Yard to be surfaced in gravel.

**Rain garden**  
Rain garden to attenuate roof run-off.



**Native tree and shrub planting**  
Areas of mixed native tree and shrubs to create shelter and enclosure of the site and the courtyard in views from the south/south west, providing a transition between the site and landscape beyond and mixed habitat.

**Right of way**  
Public footpath (St. James's Way) accommodated on existing alignment (currently through farmyard) through wildflower grassland between areas of mixed native planting.

**Native hedge**  
Native hedge planting flanking drive to assimilate garden boundary.

**Perimeter garden boundaries**  
Garden boundaries to be defined by post and rail fencing and native hedge planting, incorporating irregularly spaced native trees.

**Field/site boundary**  
Boundary defined by timber post and rail fence and mixed native species hedgerow incorporating occasional native trees.

# PLAN 4

Rev.	Date	Note



CHARTERED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING CONSULTANTS  
The Smithy  
West Kingston  
Chippenham  
Wiltshire, SN14 7JE  
Tel: 01249 782666

**Project:** Rookery Farm, Monk Sherborne

**Drawing:** Proposed Landscape Strategy

**Scale:** 1:500 @ A3      **Date:** Sep 23







**Drawing no.:** 522/04      **Rev.:**

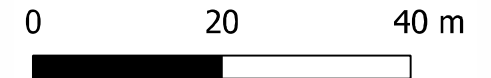
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## Appendix C: Habitat Survey Map











# Legend

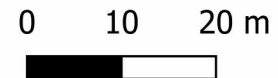
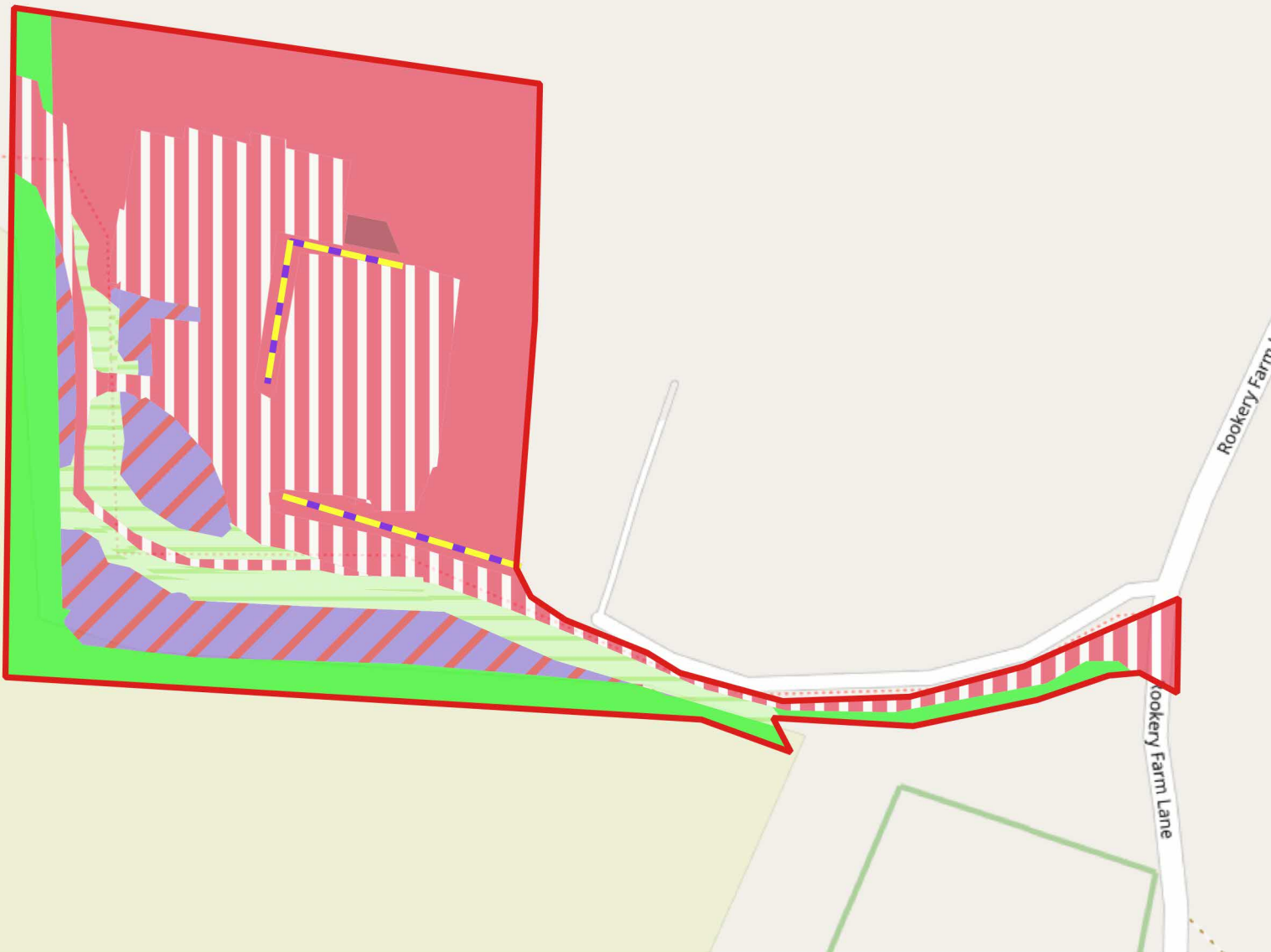
-  Buildings
-  Red Line Boundary
-  Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Modified grassland
-  Ruderal/Ephemeral



## Appendix D: Ecological Enhancement Plan

# Legend

-  Red Line Boundary
-  Native hedgerow
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Mixed scrub
-  Modified grassland
-  Other neutral grassland
-  Rain garden
-  Vegetated garden



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CLIENT:  
The Manydown Company Ltd

PROJECT:  
Rookery Farm

DRAWING:  
Ecological Enhancement  
Plan

DATE:  
14/09/2023

SCALE:1:800  
SIZE:A4  
JOB NO: 8131  
DWG NO: V1  
REV:



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## Appendix E: Relevant Legislation

### The Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose Habitats Directive into UK legislation. The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites and European Protected Species. European Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across Europe.

European Protected Species (EPS) are those listed under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations and include dormouse, great crested newt, otter and all species of bat. The regulations prohibit the deliberate capture, killing or disturbance of any EPS; it is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any of these species. In order to carry out a lawful operation (e.g. development work which has full planning permission) that may result in an offence under the Habitats Regulations, it is necessary to obtain a licence from Natural England. EPS Licences will only be granted after Natural England has been satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternative and that there will not be any adverse impacts on the favourable conservation status of the species.

### WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principle piece of legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Various amendments have occurred since the original enactment. The Wildlife and Countryside Act contains both habitat and species protection. Certain bird, animal and plant species are afforded protection under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. Measures for the protection of the countryside, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also included within the Act.

### THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 improved wildlife protection by amending the WCA. The main function of the NERC Act was to raise the profile of biodiversity amongst public authorities. Section 40 (S40 of the Act places a 'Biodiversity Duty' on all public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their normal functions.

### THE PROTECTION OF BADGERS ACT 1992

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidates previous legislation (including the Badgers Acts 1973 and 1991 Badgers (Further Protection) Act 1991). It makes it a serious offence to:

- kill, injure or take a badger;
- attempt to kill, injure or take a badger; or
- to damage or interfere with a sett.

The 1992 Act defines a badger sett as "any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger".