



HYBRID ECOLOGY LTD

*joined up thinking*

# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal/Low Impact EcIA:

North Banks, Standon Road, Little Hadham  
SG11 2DE

On behalf of:  
Pelham Structures

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## Summary

Land at North Banks, Little Hadham was visited on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 in respect of a proposal for residential dwellings.

This report provides the results of a survey and makes recommendations for further survey, mitigation and enhancement as appropriate in the context of the proposal, referring to planning policy and best practice guidance where appropriate.

The report is required to inform design, and to provide the Local Planning Authority with certainty on impacts to designated sites, Priority Habitats and legally protected species.

### Designated sites

There are no constraints in relation to designated sites.

### Habitats and species

General: The site is well-maintained and tidy with limited scope for legally protected species. Boundary vegetation will be protected in accordance with arboricultural best practice throughout works.

Bats: The site contains three buildings; a house, annexe and workshop. B1, B2 and B3 have low bat roost suitability (i.e. scope for low numbers of common crevice dwelling species) and require one dusk survey in accordance with current best practice guidelines (BCT, 2023).

Nesting birds: There is a risk of nesting birds in boundary vegetation. As a general rule, all vegetation management will take place between October and February inclusive, which will avoid the main nesting season. If this is not possible, an ecologist will be asked to conduct a check for active nests before work takes place.

### Enhancement proposal

The site layout is not yet finalised. We recommend any development proposal incorporates tree and hedgerow planting. Habitat boxes for birds and bats should be integrated into houses. These measures will contribute to Government aims under Paragraph 174(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Local Plan policies which encourage all development to demonstrate biodiversity net-gain.

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Personnel

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Gemma Holmes; Consultant Ecologist at Hybrid Ecology Ltd. Gemma is a qualified ecologist with 16 years' experience in professional survey work and is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Gemma holds licences to survey for great crested newt and bats in the UK (Licence numbers 2015-19096-CLS-CLS and 2016-27305-CLS-CLS respectively).

### Brief

- 1.1 Pelham Structures instructed Hybrid Ecology to produce a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal/Low Impact EclA for Land at North Banks, Little Hadham (central grid reference TL 43702 22822). The proposal is likely to be residential but no layout is currently available. A location plan is provided in Figure 1 and the survey boundary is provided in Figure 2. The Location Plan provided by the client is provided in Appendix 1. Note that the survey boundary also takes into account land extending to the west, which is outside the development boundary.

### Aims

- 1.1 This report aims to advise the client/developer and relevant members of the project team as to the key ecological constraints and opportunities associated with this project and any necessary mitigation requirements to ensure legal obligations in respect of protected species, designated sites and habitats are met.

### Limitations

- 1.4 Whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. Wildlife is transient and mobile, and results of a survey can reasonably vary from one day to the next or across the seasons.
- 1.1 The protected species assessment provides a view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site based on the known distribution of species in the local area and the suitability of the habitat. However, it should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species/group.
- 1.4 In accordance with CIEEM Report Writing Guidelines (December 2017), this report is valid for 18 months, after which habitats are reasonably expected to have changed to warrant an updated survey. Beyond 18 months, this report should not be accepted in support of a planning application.

Figure 1. Location plan

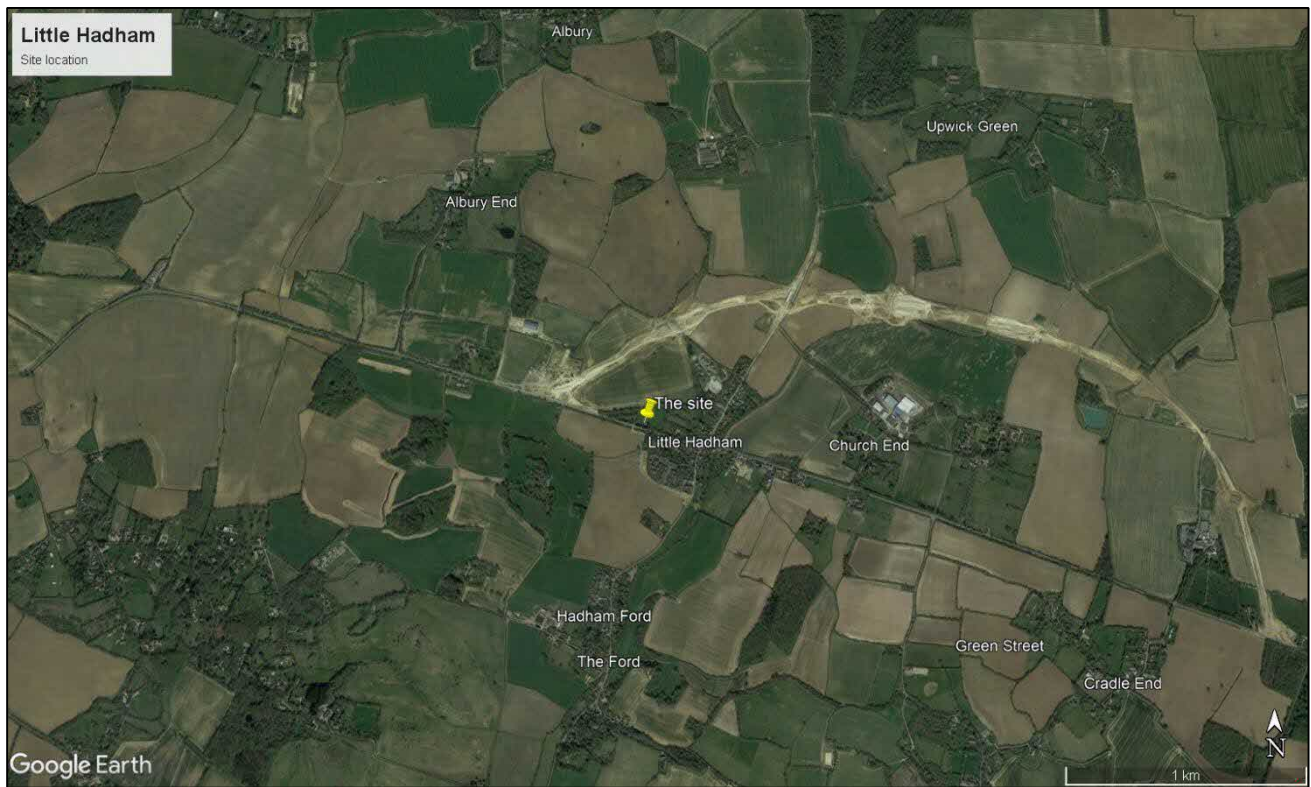


Figure 2. Survey boundary (approximate)



## 2.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy Framework (2021): Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Please note the below policies have been taken directly from the National Planning Policy Framework, which can be found here: [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/520712/nppf-2021.pdf)

Paragraph 174

- 1.4 Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- a) Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
  - c) Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
  - d) Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
  - e) Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans;

Paragraph 179

- 1.4 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.

Paragraph 180

- 1.4 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.

Paragraph 181

- 2.4 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 sites; 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.

Paragraph 182

- 1.4 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

## Legislation: Protection of Designated Sites, Habitats and Species

Please note this section is a summary of legislation only and should not be taken as a definitive interpretation of any wildlife law. UK wildlife legislation can be found here: [Legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

### Designated sites

#### RAMSAR

- 2.4 Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Wetlands are designated, protected and promoted in order to stem the progressive encroachment on and loss of wetlands, which are broadly defined to include marsh, fen, peatland and water.

#### Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

- 2.4 Special Areas of Conservation are sites designated by Member States under the EC Habitats Directive. The aim is to establish a network of important high quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving habitats and species considered to be most in need of conservation at an international level.

#### Special Protection Areas (SPA)

- 2.4 Special Protection Areas are designated under the EC Birds Directive, to conserve the habitat of certain rare or vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory birds. Any significant pollution or disturbance to or deterioration of these sites has to be avoided.

#### National Nature Reserves (NNR)

- 1.4 National Nature Reserves are statutory reserves established for the nation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. NNRs may be owned by relevant national body (e.g. Natural England in England) or established by agreement; a few are owned and managed by non-statutory bodies. NNRs cover a selection of the most important sites for nature conservation in the UK.

#### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 2.10 Sites of Special Scientific Interest are areas notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, as being of 'special interest for nature conservation'. They represent the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in Great Britain supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. Notification as a SSSI is primarily a legal mechanism organised by Natural England and selected according to specific criteria.

#### Local Nature Reserves (LNR)

- 2.11 Land owned, leased or managed by Local Authorities and designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. A site of some nature conservation value managed for educational objectives – no need for SSSI status. Some reserves are managed by a non-statutory body.



## Local Wildlife Site / Wildlife Sites

- 2.11 Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) are non-statutory sites designated at a county level as being of conservation importance and often recognised in Local authority development plans. The aim of this identification is to protect such sites from land management changes, which may lessen their nature conservation interest, and to encourage sensitive management to maintain and enhance their importance. Although LoWS have no statutory protection they are a material consideration in the planning process.

## Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Site (RIGS)

- 2.11 Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites are non-statutory earth science sites. The RIGS networks are locally based voluntary groups drawing on both professional and interest groups identifying sites using a methodical and rational approach. RIGS are analogous to non-statutory biological sites – they are not a second tier but sites of regional or local importance in their own right.

## Legally protected species

- 2.10 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019, EU Exit) affords protection to various species/species groups including bats (all species), great crested newt, otter and dormouse.
- 2.11 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the main source of legal protection for wildlife in England and was strengthened by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Species protection is provided under Schedules 1, 5, 6 and 8 to species including bat, great crested newt, water vole, otter and nesting birds. Badgers are protected separately under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992).

## Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in England (or Priority habitats/species)

- 2.10 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance certain habitats and species. The species that have been designated to be of “principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity” are those that are most threatened, in greatest decline, or where the UK holds a significant proportion of the world’s total population. They mainly derive from lists originally drawn up for the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). Similarly, the list of habitats of principal importance in England also derive from the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

## 2.0 Methodology: Desktop Study

### Mapping exercise

- 1.4 Aerial imagery (Google Earth Pro, 2023) was used to examine the landscape context of the site in relation to significant ecological assets such as woodland, established hedgerows, grassland and any naturalised features that would allow wildlife use and dispersal.
- 1.4 Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) mapping was used to:
  - Determine the proximity to international, national and locally designated sites and whether the site lies within the Zone of Influence/Impact Risk Zone, as appropriate.
  - Identify any areas of land mapped by Natural England as Priority Habitat within 250 metres of the site.
  - Identify any European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licenses granted by Natural England for great crested newt or bats within a 2km radius of the site that could be relevant to this development.

### Biological Records Search

- 1.4 A biological records search for legally protected and priority species was ordered from Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre (HERC) on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The search also included designated sites and Priority Habitats.

## 4.0 Methodology: Habitats and Species

### Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.4 An ecological walkover survey was carried out on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 by ecologist Anthony Owers (BSc Hons). The survey included all land shown in Figure 2. The survey was undertaken broadly in accordance with the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC 2010).

### Protected/priority species scoping

- 2.4 The survey also included an assessment of the site's potential to support any legally protected species; or Species and Habitats of Principal Importance (Priority Species), as identified by Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).
- 2.4 Where best practice guidelines exist, these have been used to assess the likelihood that individual species will be present, for example Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2023) and Habitat Suitability Index for Great Crested Newt (Oldham et al, 2000).
- 4.4 In accordance with BCT, 2023, the buildings and trees on the site was subject to a Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW) for bats in accordance with Figure 3 and Figure 4. The aim was to assess the suitability of the site for bats, to assess whether further bat surveys will be needed and how those bat surveys should be carried out.
- 2.4 Buildings were inspected internally and externally including loft spaces, where applicable. The inspections comprised searches for any suitable voids or crevices and for any bat evidence such as droppings or insect remains.
- 4.4 The survey included a ground-level assessment of trees for features that bats could reasonably use – including cavities, bark lesions, woodpecker holes, fluting, hazard beams, along with any external evidence such as droppings (note droppings decay quickly on trees) and staining/rub marks on the stem/limb.
- 4.4 The landscape and any features within the site, such as hedgerows, were assessed for capability to support foraging/commuting behaviour.

### The Mitigation Hierarchy

- 4.4 All development is expected to meet the highest planning standards and follow the Mitigation Hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, compensate and enhance to ensure that significant natural environment impacts are avoided.

Avoid - Avoiding any loss of or damage to wildlife sites or to protected / Priority species – development must not damage or destroy important national and Local Wildlife Sites.

Mitigate - Impacts considered unavoidable should be mitigated at the site where the impact occurs, if at all possible.

Compensate - Any remaining significant biodiversity loss should be compensated for, as close to the area of loss as possible.

Enhance: Improve degraded ecosystems/return an area to original ecosystem including creating new habitat - habitat creation should be a standard feature of all new development, wherever it is.

#### Evaluation criteria

- 2.4 Ecological features (designated sites, habitats, and species) were evaluated where possible in relation to a geographical context (i.e. International, National, Regional, Metropolitan, County, District, Borough, Local and Site), in accordance with CIEEM Ecological Impact Assessment Guidelines (2016). Criteria include designations, quality of habitat in relation to the site context, ability to support notable assemblages of species, contribution to habitat connectivity, dispersal opportunities or providing intrinsic ecological value.

Figure 3. Guidelines for assessing potential suitability of development sites for bats (BCT, 2023)

**Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.**

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible <sup>a</sup>	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions <sup>b</sup> and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats <sup>c</sup> ).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.  Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>b</sup> and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.  Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>b</sup> and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.  High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.  Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

Figure 4. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on sites for bats

**Table 4.2. Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.**

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present

## 5.0 Results: Desktop Study

### Landscape context

- 1.4 The site lies in a rural location to the north-west of Little Hadham in Hertfordshire. Arable land dominates the surrounding landscape. The recently constructed A120 bypass is beyond the arable field to the north of the site. The River Ash is 330 metres to the east at its closest point. There are small areas of grassland extending to the north and east of the site.

### Designated sites/Priority Habitats

Relevant maps provided by HERC are provided in Appendix 2.

- 1.4 The site is not designated for any conservation reason. There is no connectivity to designated sites and no reason that small-scale development would impact land beyond the site boundaries.
- 1.4 Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) identifies the closest PH to be lowland deciduous woodland immediately to the north of the site. Boundary trees will be retained and protected; we understand there is no intention to develop any land beyond the existing domestic boundary.

### Natural England EPS licences

- 2.4 The closest EPS licence relates to bats and is approximately 450 metres to the south-east in Little Hadham. The details are provided below:

Site Check Report Report generated on Thu Oct 05 2023  
You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: TL44092260  
The following features have been found in your search area:

#### Granted European Protected Species Applications (England)

Case reference of granted application	EPSM2009-1295
Species group to which licence relates	Bat
Species on the licence	C-PIP;BLE
Site county of licence	Hertfordshire
Licence Start Date	20/10/2009
Licence End Date	31/08/2010
Does licence impact on a breeding N site	
Does licence allow damage of breeding site	
Does licence allow damage of a resting place	
Does licence allow destruction of N breeding site	N
Does licence allow destruction of a Y resting place	
Does licence impact on a hibernation site	Unknown
NERC agreement reference	Unknown

## 2.0 Results: Habitat Survey

A plan with annotated target notes is provided in Figure 5. Photographs from the site visit are provided in Figure 6. For full details on legally protected species, please refer to Section 7. Latin names appear in the text once.

- 1.4 The total area surveyed is approximately 0.5 hectares and includes buildings, a managed garden and boundary vegetation. The proposed development is confined to the eastern boundary. There is a gravel driveway off Standon Road on the southern boundary.

### Buildings

- 1.4 B1 (house) is a chalet bungalow with rooms built into the loft space (no loft void). Rendered walls with slate roof. Several gaps and slipped slates which could be used by wildlife, including crevice roosting bats.
- 1.4 B2 (annexe) has rendered walls and slate roof. Some gaps in slates. Timber frame with no loft space.
- 2.4 B3 (workshop) has a weatherboard with slate roof. Some gaps are present in slates and boards. False ceiling inside. We could not access loft space and interior walls are boarded – possible cavity.
- 1.4 B4 (storage shed): Metal roof, weatherboard walls. Interior walls partially boarded out with narrow cavity. However, lots of dense vegetation around exterior.

### Garden

- 2.4 The remainder of the development site is a maintained, tidy garden with amenity lawns and ornamental shrub planting (box hedges, choisya, spirea, etc). There is a raised ornamental pond to the south-west of B1. This contains fish and has negligible scope for breeding amphibians.

### Boundary trees

- 2.4 The main ecological interest is around the northern and southern boundaries which include lines of trees and outgrown hedgerows, which are unaffected. There is a good mix of species including oak *Quercus robur*, field maple *Acer campestre*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, elder *Sambucas nigra*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, etc. The eastern boundary hedge is a mix of laurel and cypress.

### Habitats evaluation:

The development site is of low ecological value containing common, widespread habitats. There are no veteran trees nor species-rich hedgerows. All garden areas are well maintained and tidy with negligible interest for wildlife. The tree-lined boundaries to the north and south offer arboricultural and ecological value, they are indicated as retained. It is recommended that retained boundary vegetation is protected in accordance with arboricultural best practice.

Figure 5. Annotated survey plan





**Figure 6. Photographs**



a) B1: House



b) B2: Annexe



c) B3: Workshop



d) Northern boundary vegetation.



e) Maintained garden.



a) Ornamental pond within garden of B1.

## 2.0 Results: Protected/Priority Species Scoping

This section includes data search results, habitat requirements for species/species groups and an assessment in the context of the proposal.

### Bats

Data search:

- 1.4 Records were returned for brown long-eared, soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle, noctule, Natterer's, Daubenton's, serotine, barbastelle. This is a good diversity of species, some rare. Most records originate from Piggott's Farm, Albury End which is approximately 1.2km to the north-west, beyond the new bypass. Connectivity in this direction is therefore limited.
- 1.4 One EPS licence exists c. 450 metres from the site and involved common pipistrelle and brown long eared bats.

Habitat requirements:

- 1.4 In buildings, bats are found inside loft voids, under hang tile cladding or weatherboards, inside soffit boxes and any sheltered, dry crevice. Bats typically hibernate in cellars, cavity walls and bunkers. In trees, bats are typically found in woodpecker holes, flaking bark, wounds and hazard beams. The largest roosts are found close to foraging resources such as woodland and water.

Assessment:

- 2.4 There are several buildings on the site,
  - B1: Chalet bungalow. Several slipped slate roof tiles noted. Low suitability for crevice-dwelling bat species.
  - B2: Annexe. Several slipped slate roof tiles noted. Low suitability for crevice-dwelling bat species.
  - B3: Workshop: Loft space present but inaccessible. Some gaps identified between/underneath weatherboards and roof tiles. Low suitability for crevice-dwelling and void-dwelling bat species.
  - B4: Storage shed. Negligible roost suitability.
- 1.4 There are no trees on/adjacent to the site with potential roost features. The boundary vegetation may help to attract low numbers of foraging bats, however there is habitat outside the site boundaries (including the River Ash) that is more suitable. Overall, the site has low suitability (BCT, 2023) as a potential flight path or foraging habitat as there is no continuous habitat for commuting bats and hedgerows terminate at the site. Small-scale residential development is unlikely to alter bat foraging behaviour in this location.

### Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	One dusk survey is required on B1, B2 and B3 between May and August inclusive to determine presence/likely absence of roosting bats.
Avoidance	Lighting should be controlled along around vegetation.
Mitigation	None
Compensation	None
Enhancement	The layout design should include areas of planting to improve habitat connectivity. At least one bat box will be incorporated into each house.

### Great crested newt (GCN)

#### Data search

- 2.4 There are several GCN records from a location approximately 1.6km to the south-east, known as Millfield Ponds.

#### Habitat requirements:

- 2.4 Breeding sites are mainly medium-sized ponds, though ditches and other waterbody types may also be used less frequently. Ponds with ample aquatic vegetation (which is used for egg-laying) seem to be favoured. Great crested newts do not require very high water quality, but are normally found in ponds with a circum-neutral pH. Broad habitat type varies greatly, the most frequent being pastoral and arable farmland, woodland, scrub, and grassland. There are also populations in coastal dunes and shingle structures.
- 2.4 Great crested newts can be found in rural, urban and post-industrial settings, with populations less able to thrive where there are high degrees of fragmentation. The connectivity of the landscape is important, since great crested newts often occur in metapopulations that encompass a cluster of several or many ponds.

#### Assessment:

- 1.4 The ornamental pond has negligible suitability for breeding great crested newt. The site is a well-maintained garden with limited interest for terrestrial great crested newt. All lawn areas are regularly mown. The development footprint is largely devoid of places that GCN could reasonably shelter or hibernate. There is one small pond within 250 metres, however given all of the reasons stated above it is reasonably unlikely that GCN would be present and affected by future development at this site.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	In the highly unlikely event that GCN is encountered on the site, the work will cease until ecological advice has been sought.
Compensation	None
Enhancement	A natural pond could be considered within the site boundary, where design allows.

Dormouse

Data search

2.10 No dormouse records were returned.

Habitat requirements:

2.11 The hazel dormouse requires wooded habitats, usually semi-natural woodland containing hazel coppice and oak, and a rich understorey cover through which to disperse safely between trees (English Nature 2006).

Assessment:

2.11 The development site comprises amenity grassland with established boundary vegetation. However, there is no ancient woodland, continuous bramble scrub nor any species-rich hedgerows to be affected. It is therefore possible to conclude likely absence.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	None
Compensation	None
Enhancement	None

## Otter and water vole

### Data search

- 2.11 One water vole record was returned from the River Ash near Much Hadham, approximately 3km from the site.

### Habitat requirements:

- 2.10 Both species require flowing water, deep enough to support foraging behaviour and with connectivity into the wider landscape.

### Assessment:

- 2.11 There is no suitable aquatic habitat on or adjacent to the site.

### Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	None
Compensation	None
Enhancement	None

## Reptiles

### Data search

- 2.10 Records were returned for grass snake, adder and slow worm, from a location close to Bishops Stortford. These records are all over 10 years old.

### Habitat requirements:

- 2.10 Common lizard, slow worm, grass snake and adder require mosaic habitats with features in which to bask, forage and shelter. These habitats need to have onward connectivity for dispersal. Suitable habitats include grassland with scrub edges or small woodland coppices (Edgar et al. 2010).

### Assessment:

- 2.10 The site is a maintained garden, lacking rough grassland/scrub, log piles, compost heaps and generally provides limited interest for basking, sheltering and hibernating reptiles. Whilst presence of slow worm and common lizard can never be ruled out in domestic garden settings, the site is unlikely to sustain a large population. Any reptile population is likely to be centred off-site in one of the adjoining paddocks.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	In the unlikely event that a reptile is encountered, every effort should be made to carefully capture the animal and transfer to an area safe from future development, ideally in long grass.
Compensation	None
Enhancement	The mowing regime could be relaxed in some areas of the site to create structure and basking/sheltering opportunities.

Legally protected plants/invertebrates

Data search

- 2.11 No records for legally protected plants or invertebrates have been returned for the site or the immediate surrounding area.

Assessment:

- 2.10 No notable flora nor scope for an important invertebrate population was identified on the site.

Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement

Further survey requirement	None
Avoidance	None
Mitigation	None
Compensation	None
Enhancement	The site layout should include shrubs of known benefit to pollinators.

Birds

Data search

- 2.11 Records were returned for Schedule 1 listed birds, including kingfisher, barn owl, fieldfare and redwing. Priority Species records include swift and swallow.

**Habitat requirements:**

7.22 Nesting birds can be found in scrub, trees and buildings between March and September inclusive (note some species, including pigeon, will nest all year round).

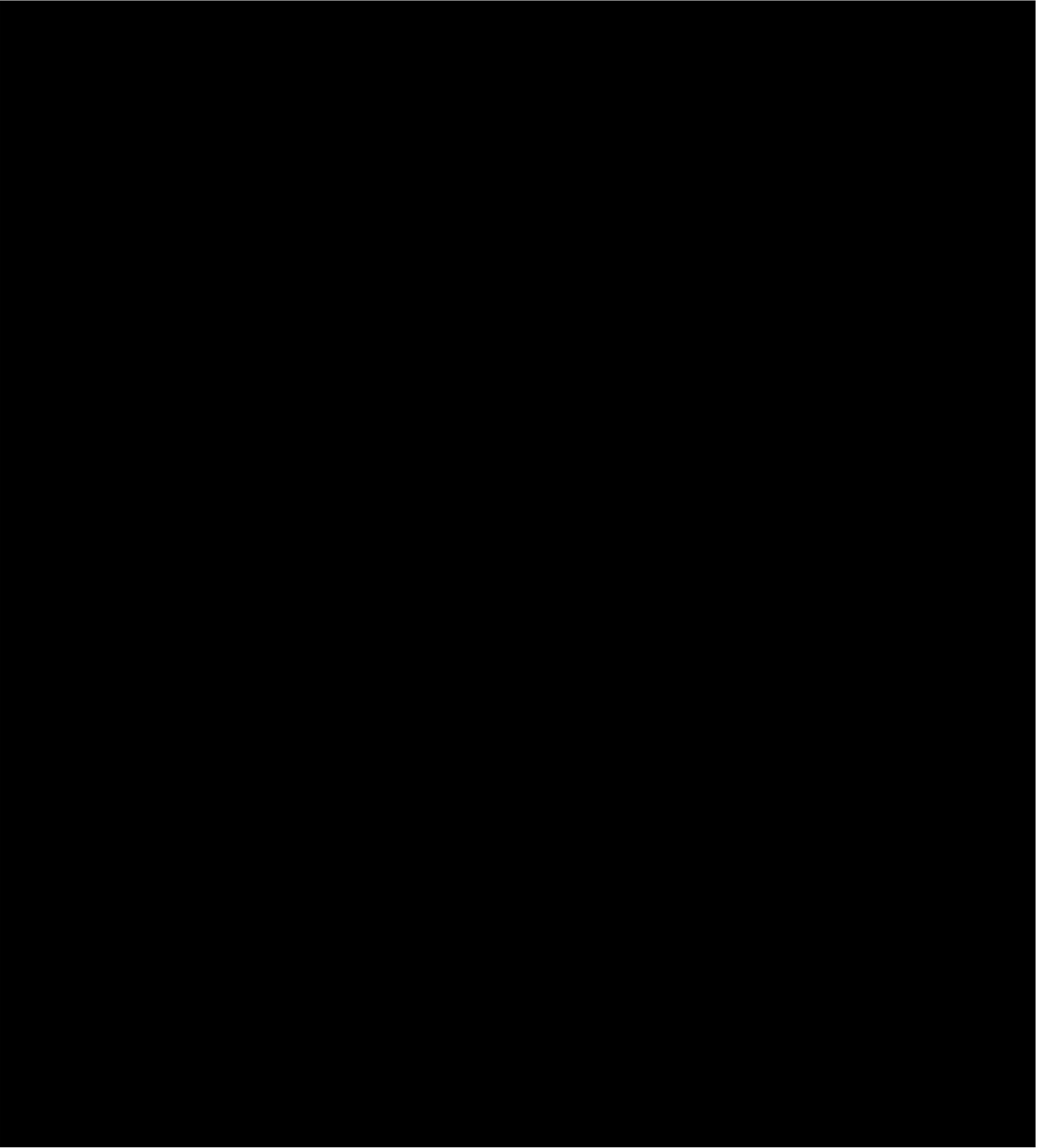
**Assessment:**

7.23 The site provides nesting habitat for generalist garden birds in boundary vegetation. We understand that all boundary trees and hedgerows will be retained.

**Requirements for further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement**

<b>Further survey requirement</b>	None
<b>Avoidance</b>	Carry out any required vegetation management work between October and February to avoid the nesting season. If this conflicts with the work programme, an ecologist will undertake a check for active nests the day before work is planned.
<b>Mitigation</b>	If active nests are found during site clearance, all works must cease in the area and the nest left undisturbed with a species-appropriate buffer (advised by project ecologist) until the young have fledged.
<b>Compensation</b>	None
<b>Enhancement</b>	There is scope to install a variety of bird boxes on the new houses. Open-fronted bird boxes could be installed in established boundary vegetation.





## 4.0 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

### Constraints:

- 2.4 Bats: It was not possible to rule out presence in B1, B2 and B3 with a daytime inspection alone. One dusk survey is recommended on each building, to be undertaken between May and August inclusive. If bats are identified during this survey, two further surveys will be needed to gather sufficient data to support an application to Natural England to disturb or destroy a bat roost under specific controls.
- 2.4 Retained boundary vegetation: It is recommended that all retained boundary trees are protected in accordance with arboricultural advice.
- 2.4 Nesting birds: Presence is likely in boundary vegetation. Any required vegetation management will be undertaken between October and February inclusive to avoid the main nesting season.

### Opportunities:

- 4.4 Biodiversity net-gain is now encouraged under Paragraph 174(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) and recommended in Local Plan policies. The following recommendations are reasonable and proportionate and would contribute to net-gain. They could be secured by condition, such as a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy or similar, where required:

Planting for pollinators: Shrubs suitable for attracting pollinators should be included in the landscape design. A list of suitable shrubs for pollinators are provided in Appendix 3.

Integrated bat roost features: One bat roost feature such as tube, tile or brick is recommended per house, ideally facing south and above eaves height.

Integrated bird nest boxes: One integrated bird nest feature is recommended per house, facing north or east and above eaves height.

Suitable habitat boxes are provided in Appendix 4.

Tree planting: It is recommended that the development includes small trees wherever possible. Tree planting should include fruit/berry bearing species such as hazel, apple, cherry, pear.

Hedgerow planting: It is recommended that a species-rich hedgerow is included in the site layout. This should provide connectivity into established vegetation, rather than being isolated. Species should be native and of local provenance. Recommended species include hawthorn, field maple, hazel, holly, guelder rose.

## 2.0 Conclusions

- 2.4 Hybrid Ecology was instructed to carry out an ecological assessment in relation to a proposed residential development in Little Hadham, Hertfordshire.
- 2.4 A mapping exercise and desk study were undertaken to determine constraints relating to designated sites, Priority Habitats and protected species. A survey was carried out in September 2023 to map habitats and identify any potential for/evidence of legally protected species. The survey also identified opportunities for ecological enhancement.
- 2.4 The buildings on site are potentially suitable for roosting bats, further survey is required to quantify this. The site is otherwise of low ecological value.
- 4.4 Provided all further survey, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures detailed in this report are complied with, it is considered that the proposal can be made acceptable with minimal impact to local biodiversity.

### Enhancement opportunities

- 2.4 The development proposal has scope to include biodiversity enhancements. They could include tree planting, hedgerow planting, habitat boxes and planting for pollinators. These measures will contribute to biodiversity net-gain in accordance with Paragraph 174(d) of the NPPF (2021). The design, maintenance and management could be secured by a condition.

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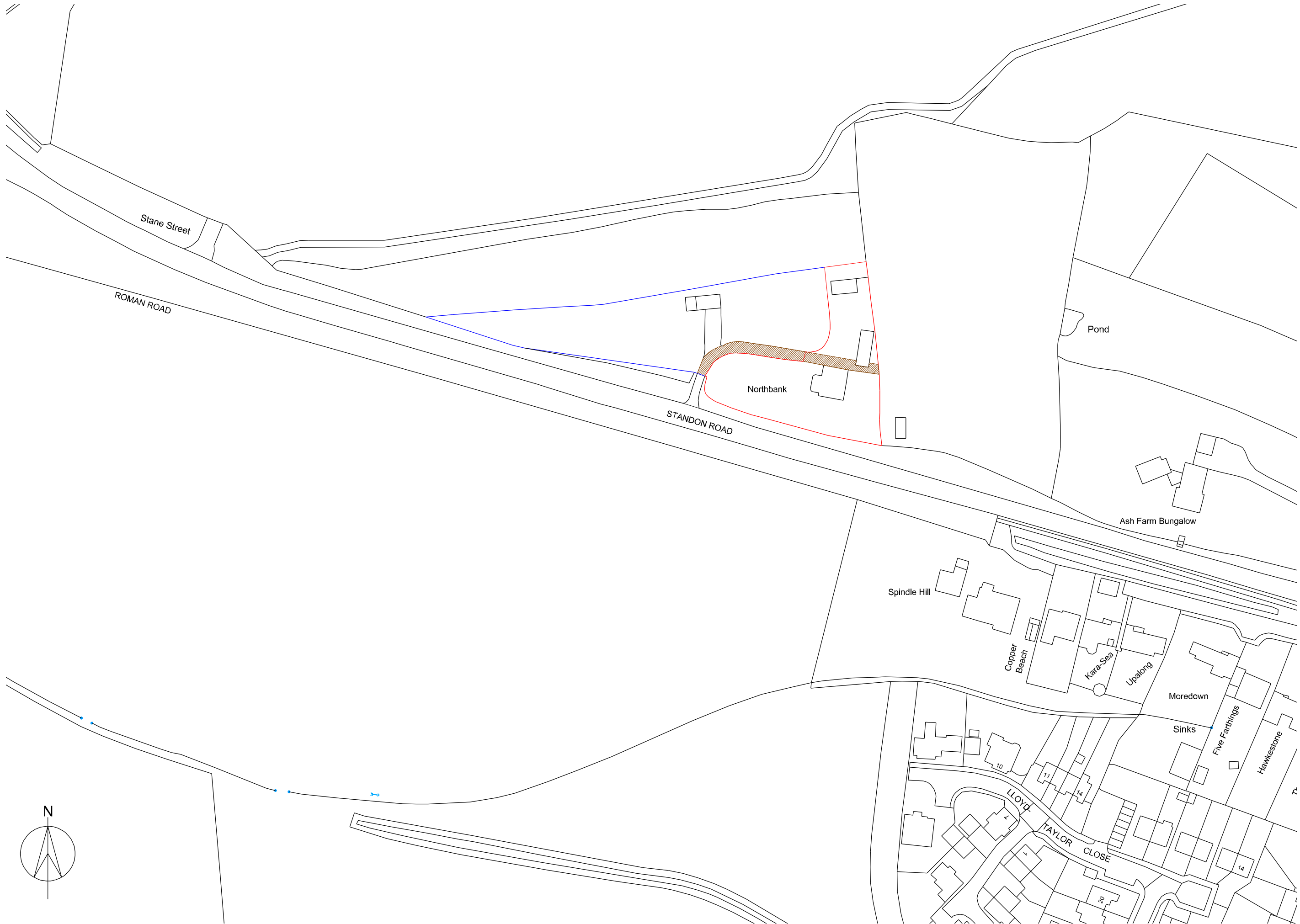
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## Appendix 1. Location plan



## Appendix 2. Mapping provided by HERC

# National Sites Map 1

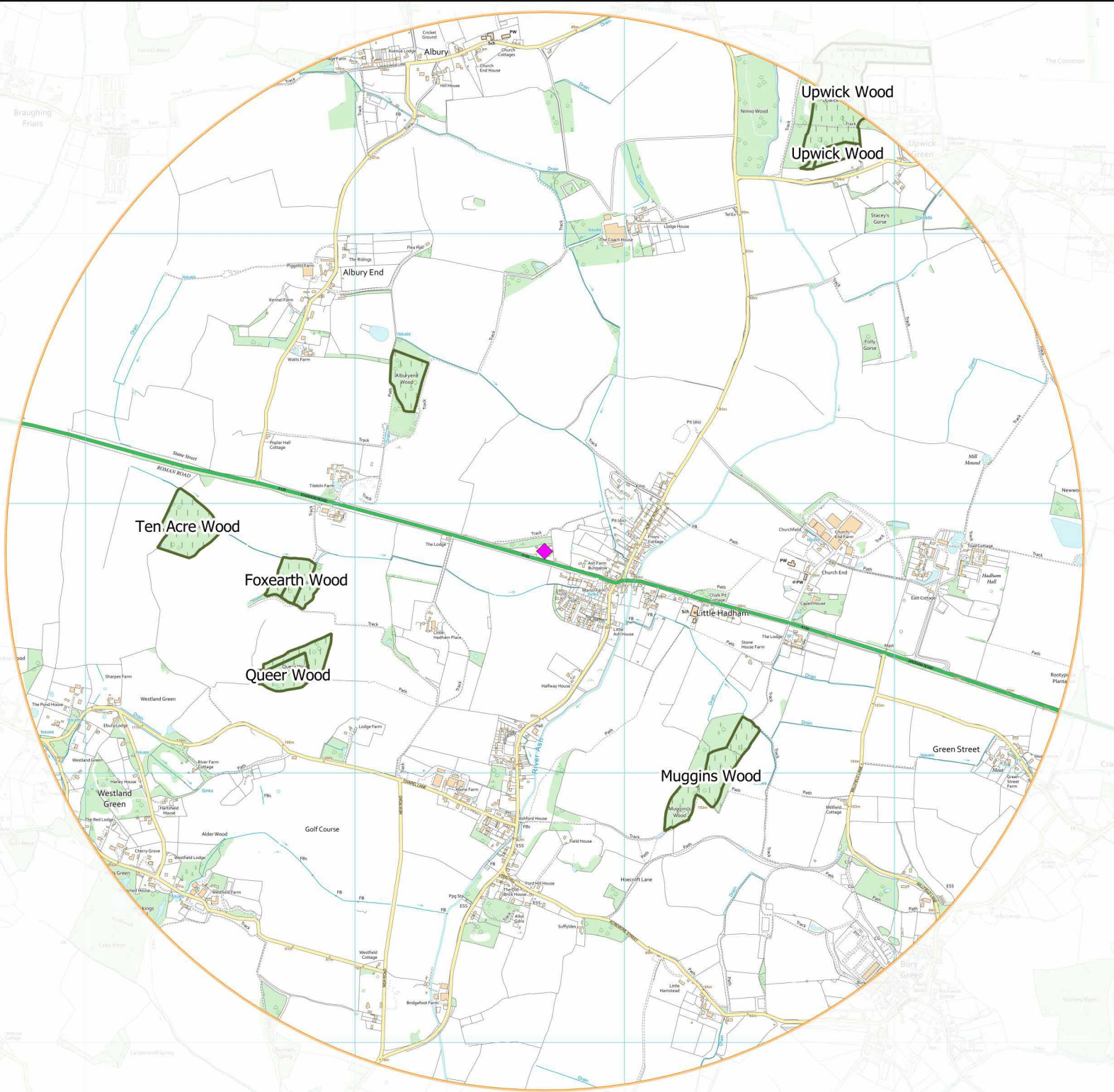
## Search Information

◆ Search point

▭ Search area

## National Sites

▭ Ancient Woodland Inventory



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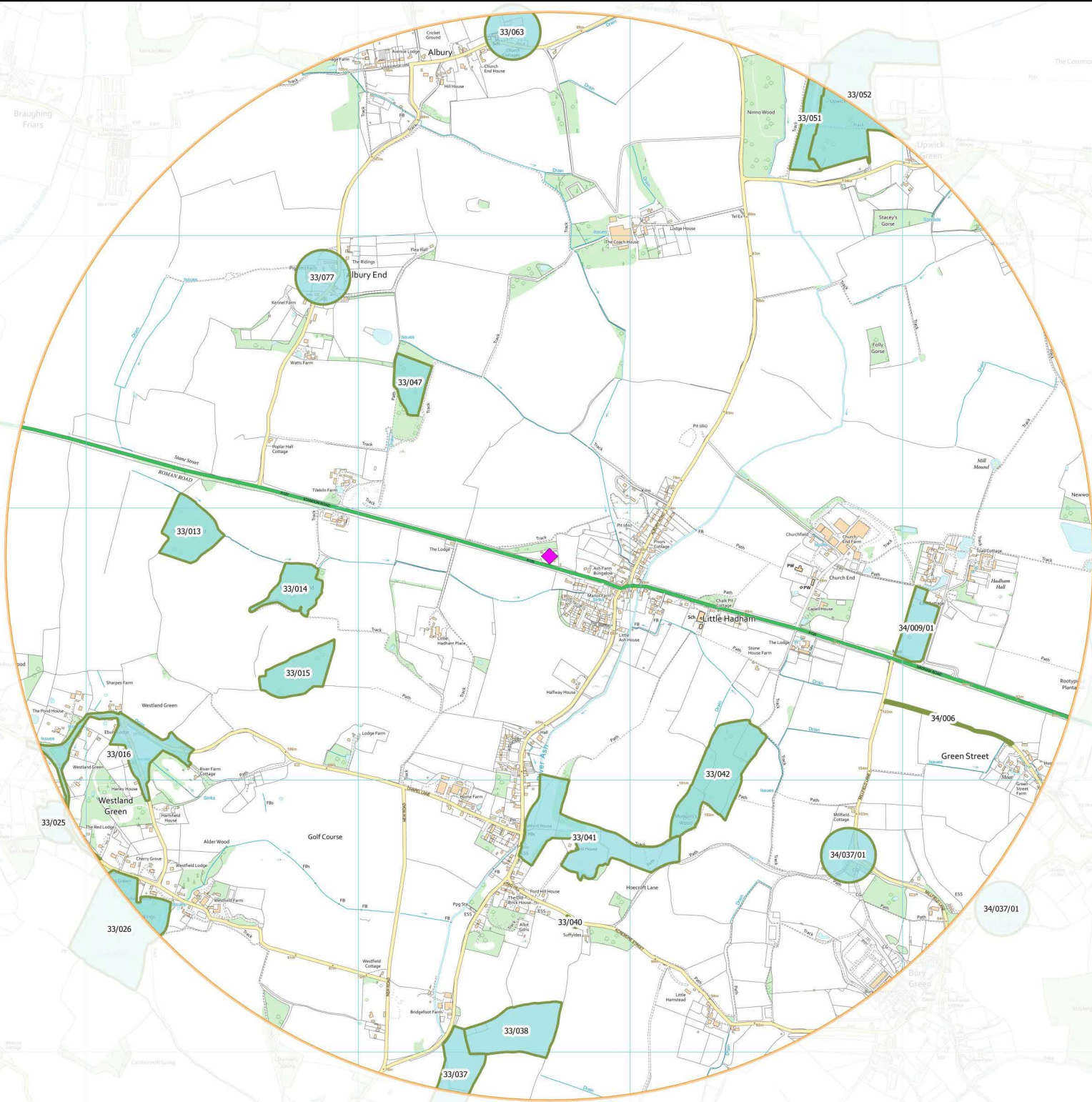
# Local Sites Map 1

## Search Information

- ◆ Search point
- ▭ Search area

## Local Sites

- ▭ Local Wildlife Sites



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10/10/2023

### Appendix 3. Planting for pollinators

#### Flowers for bees

Allium species

Bird's foot trefoil (Lotus corniculatus)

Clovers (Trifolium species, for example red clover and white clover)

Cornflower (Centaurea cyanus)

Cranesbill (Geranium species)

Crocus species

Devil's bit scabious (Succisa pratensis)

Heliotrope (Heliotropium cultivars)

Hemp agrimony (Eupatorium cannabinum)

Honesty (Lunaria annua)

Lavender (Lavandula species)

Love-in-a-mist (Nigella damascena)

Marjoram (Origanum species)

Michaelmas daisies (Aster species)

Types of single-flowered rose species (Rosa species)

Rosemary (Rosmarinus officinalis)

Rosebay willowherb (Chamaenerion angustifolium)

Scabious (Scabiosa species)

Snowdrops (Galanthus species)

Sunflower (Helianthus annuus)

Teasel (Dipsacus fullonum)

Thyme (Thymus species)

#### Flowers for butterflies

Alyssum (Lobularia maritima)

Aubretia (Aubrieta deltoidea)

Blackberry (Rubus fruticosus)

Bugle (Ajuga reptans)

Candytuft (Iberis amara)

Catmint (Nepeta x faassenii)

Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)

Globe thistle (Echinops species)

Heather (Calluna vulgaris)

Hebe species

Ice plant (Sedum spectabile) – not dark red cultivars

Knapweeds (Centaurea species)

Marigold (Calendula officinalis)

Mignonette (Reseda odorata)

Thistle (Cirsium species and Carduus species)

Verbena bonariensis

Verbena rigida

## Appendix 4. Habitat boxes appropriate for the site

“Habibat” integrated bird and bat box designs

<http://www.habibat.co.uk/integrated-products>

### Integrated Bat Boxes

Integrated Bat Boxes



**Habibat 3S Bat Box Range**



**Habibat Unfaced Bat box**



**Habibat 001 Bat Box  
Standard Facing**





Vivara Pro woodcrete open-fronted bird box



Vivara Pro sparrow terrace

All Vivara Pro boxes can be found here - [Search results \(wildcare.co.uk\)](https://www.wildcare.co.uk/search-results)