PHILLIPS ECOLOGY

EXTENDED PHASE 1 ECOLOGICAL AND BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

ALLEN GALLERY, 10-12 CHURCH STREET, ALTON, GU34 2BW

DRAFT REPORT

September 2023

Report conditions

Report title	Extended Phase 1 Ecological and Bat Roost Assessment – Allen Gallery, Alton		
Client	Hampshire Cultural Trust		
Report status	Draft		
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Executive Summary

This extended phase 1 ecological and bat roost assessment report has been prepared in order to support a planning application for the proposed alterations to the existing buildings at the Allen Gallery, Alton.

An extended phase 1 ecological assessment of the application site was undertaken on the 20th February 2023 by Katy Goddard of Phillips Ecology.

The survey area comprised the entirety of the site including the existing buildings and their immediate surroundings. A data search extended to a 1km radius for designated sites and notable habitats.

The site is considered to support opportunities for protected and priority species including: bats, breeding birds and hedgehog.

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed the presence of moderate and high suitability roosting features the buildings, mainly in the form of lifted roof and hanging tiles respectively. No evidence of bats was recorded during the survey.

In order to confirm the presence/absence of roosting bats, characterise any bat roosts, assess the extent that they may be affected by the proposed alteration works and develop a proportionate and appropriate mitigation strategy, further survey work in accordance with Natural England standing advice and the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition) was undertaken. The recommended survey effort for structures with moderate and high roost suitability is two and three presence/absence surveys, respectively.

Three presence/absence surveys comprising dusk emergence surveys were undertaken during June, July and September 2023.

The surveys have confirmed that the dwelling supports two common pipistrelle bat day roosts behind hanging tiles.

The proposed schedule of repair works to the Allen Gallery do not include works to the tile hangings. As such, impacts to the recorded bat roosts will be avoided. Overall, the surveys have confirmed that there is no reasonable likelihood that bats will be impacted by the proposed works.

With the implementation of precautionary construction avoidance measures, impacts on other protected species will be avoided.

Information regarding the length of time the findings from this report are valid for can be found in section 13.

Contents

1. Introduction 6
1.1 Report purpose 6
1.2 Description of proposal 6
1.3 Report context 6
1.4 Scope of assessment 6
1.5 Survey area 7
1.6 Limitations 7
2. Data search 8
2.1 Methodology 8
2.2 Limitations 8
2.3 Results 8
2.3.1 Statutory designated sites 8
2.3.2 Ancient woodlands 8
2.3.3 Priority habitats 8
2.3.4 Protected Species 8
3. Habitats 9
3.1 Methodology 9
3.2 Limitations 9
3.3 Existing records 9
3.4 Results 9
3.4.1 Amenity grassland (J1.2) 9
3.4.2 Introduced shrub (J1.4) 9
3.4.3 Boundaries (J2) 10
3.4.4 Buildings (J3.6) 10
3.4.5 Other – hardstanding (J5) 10
4. Protected and notable species assessment 11
5. Bats 12
5.1 Methodology 12
5.2 Survey equipment 12
5.3 Limitations 12
5.4 Assessment methodology 12
5.5 Results 13
5.5.1 Building description relevant to bats 13
5.5.2 Site grounds description relevant to bats 15
5.6 Assessment 15
6. Bat Emergence Surveys 16
6.1 Methodology 16
6.2 Surveyor/s 16
6.3 Survey area 16
6.4 Survey date 16
6.5 Survey equipment 16
6.6 Weather conditions 16
6.7 Results 17
6.7.1 The Beeches 17
Visit 1 – 27th June 2023 – Dusk Emergence Survey 17

Visit 2 – 03rd August 2023 – Dusk Emergence Survey 17
6.8 Assessment 17
7. Badgers 18
7.1 Methodology 18
7.2 Limitations 18
7.3 Results 18
7.4 Assessment 18
8. Dormice 18
8.1 Methodology 18
8.2 Limitations 18
8.3 Results 18
8.4 Assessment 19
9. Hedgehogs 19
9.1 Methodology 19
9.2 Limitations 19
9.3 Results 19
9.4 Assessment 19
10. Reptiles 19
10.1 Methodology 19
10.2 Limitations 19
10.3 Results 19
10.4 Assessment 20
11. Great Crested Newts 20
11.1 Methodology 20
11.2 Limitations 20
11.3 Results 20
11.4 Assessment 20
12. Breeding Birds 21
12.1 Methodology 21
12.2 Limitations 21
12.3 Results 21
12.4 Assessment 21
13. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts 22
13.1 Relevant legislation and policy 22
13.2 Designated sites 23
13.3 Habitats 23
13.4 Bats 23
13.5 Badgers 23
13.6 Hazel dormouse 23
13.7 Hedgehog 23
13.8 Reptiles 23
13.9 Great crested newts 24
13.10 Breeding birds 24
14. Requirement for further surveys 25
14.1 Designated sites 25
14.2 Habitats 25
14.3 Bats 25
14.4 Badgers 25
14.5 Hazel dormice 25

14.6 Hedgehog 25
14.7 Reptiles 26
14.8 Great crested newts 26
14.9 Breeding birds 26
15. Mitigation recommendations 27
15.1 Bats 27
15.2 Badgers 27
15.3 Hedgehogs 27
15.4 Reptiles 27
15.5 Breeding birds 27
16. Enhancements 28
17. Conclusion 29
18. References 30
Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan 28
Appendix 2 – Phase 1 Habitat Map 29

1. Introduction

1.1 Report purpose

This report has been prepared in order to present the extended phase 1 ecological assessment undertaken at Allen Gallery, Alton (central grid reference: SU 71823 39510).

1.2 Description of proposal

The proposals include both internal and external alterations to the existing buildings as follows:

Repairs

Localised tile replacements to the roof.

Removal of moss from roofs.

No works to the tile hangings.

Localised repointing and brick replacement to the front elevation and rear elevations.

Repairs to rendered elevations.

New works

Conversion or demolition and rebuild of the existing slate roofed single storey extension to the rear.

Replacement entrance and exit doors to the gallery.

Installation of new air source heat pump to rear of the existing slate roofed single storey extension to the rear.

Insulating the roof (internally from below).

Various other internal alterations.

1.3 Report context

Pritchard Architecture have prepared a planning application on behalf of their client Hampshire Cultural Trust (the Applicant) for the proposed works at Allen Gallery, Alton. Phillips Ecology have been instructed by the Applicant to undertake an ecological assessment to support this application, which will be submitted to East Hants District Council.

1.4 Scope of assessment

An extended phase 1 ecological assessment was carried out on the 20th February 2023. The survey comprised a field survey and desktop study in order to identify notable or

protected sites, habitats or species potentially affected by the proposal under consideration.

1.5 Survey area

The survey area comprised the entire red line boundary which comprised the existing structures and their immediate surrounds. A data search extended to a 2km radius for designated sites and notable habitats.

1.6 Limitations

Limitations which are specific to each phase of the assessment are given in the relevant sections, below.

2. Data search

2.1 Methodology

A desk-based assessment was undertaken by Phillips Ecology on the 6th March 2023 with Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). The MAGIC database was consulted for records of statutory designated sites and priority habitats for the development site and a 1km radius.

2.2 Limitations

The data search results are bound by the following statement contained within MAGICs general disclaimer: "The materials contained on this website are of a general, informational, nature. We have used reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the contents of the pages on this site but the information does not constitute advice and must not be relied on as such."

2.3 Results

2.3.1 *Statutory designated sites*

No statutory designated sites are located within a 1km radius of the application site.

2.3.2 *Ancient woodlands*

No compartments of non-statutory ancient woodland are located within a 1km radius of the application site.

2.3.3 *Priority habitats*

The data search revealed the following priority habitats within 2km of the application site:

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, 0.5km W

Deciduous woodland, closest 0.31km WNW

2.3.4 Protected Species

A single record of a granted protected species licence was identified within 1km of the application site, the details are as follows:

Hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* – 2016-24463-EPS-MIT – 1km SSW

3. Habitats

3.1 Methodology

A field survey was carried out on the 20th February 2023 by Katy Goddard of Phillips Ecology. During the survey, all broad habitat types were identified, and a list was compiled of characteristic plant species within each habitat type. These habitats are described below in accordance with Phase 1 habitat terminology.

3.2 Limitations

The habitat survey was carried out during February which is outside the optimal period for recording vascular plant species. Whilst certain species would not have been evident if present, it was possible to identify vegetation to effectively classify habitat types in accordance with Phase 1 habitat terminology and no limitations were encountered.

3.3 Existing records

The data search revealed that priority habitats associated with the local landscape within 1km of the site comprise coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland.

3.4 Results

The following Phase 1 habitat types were recorded within the application site. Please see Appendix 2 for the Phase 1 habitat map.

3.4.1 *Amenity grassland (J1.2)*

The garden contains a lawn of amenity grassland which is managed to a short uniform sward (Figure 1). Daisy *Bellis perennis* and ornamental *Crocus* species intersperse the sward.

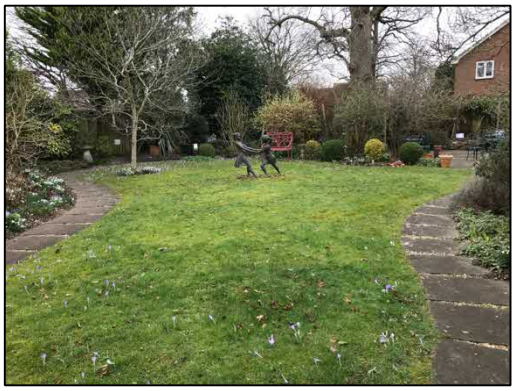


Figure 1 – amenity grassland in the rear garden

3.4.2 *Introduced shrub (J1.4)*

Borders and raised beds of ornamental planting are present on site, arranged around the edges of the garden (Figures 2 and 3). The recorded dominant ornamental and occasional native species include *Crocus,* snowdrop *Galanthus sp.,* lavender *Lavendula sp.,* honesty *Lunaria annua, Cyclamen sp., Helleborus sp.,* dog rose *Rosa canina,* lungwort *Pullmonaria officinalis,* lamb's ear *Stachys byzantine,* dwarf euonymus *Euonymus hederaceus* and butcher's broom *Ruscus aculeatus, Magnolia sp.,* wayfaring tree

Viburnum lantana and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea.*

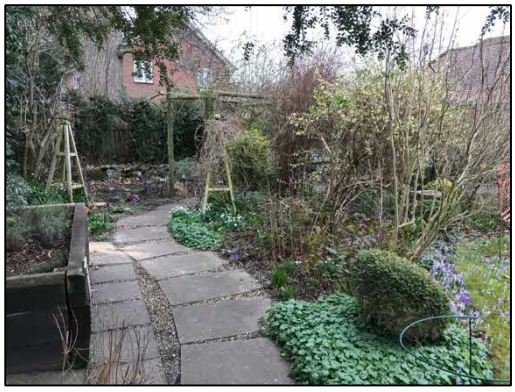


Figure 2 – border and raised bed with ornamental planting in the south-western section of the garden

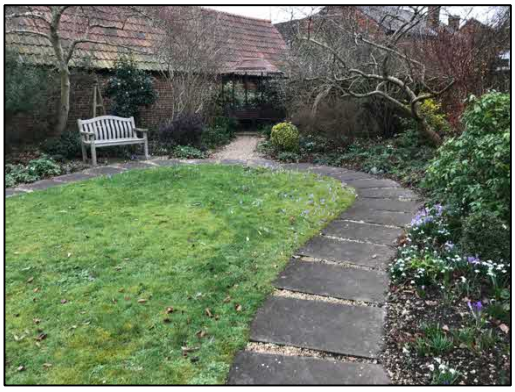


Figure 3 – borders with ornamental planting in the eastern section of the garden

3.4.3 *Boundaries (J2)*

The buildings form the north-eastern boundary between the site and Church Street. A brick wall (J2.5) borders the south-eastern and north-western edges of the garden, while a low wooden fence (J2.4) is present at the south-western edge of the site.

3.4.4 *Buildings (J3.6)*

The application site contains the attached structures which form the gallery and a garden store. These are described further in section 5.

3.4.5 *Other – hardstanding (J5)*

A paved courtyard garden space is present between the structures and the lawned garden area (Figure 4). A paved path surrounds the lawned area and opens into a patio in the western section of the garden (Figure 5).

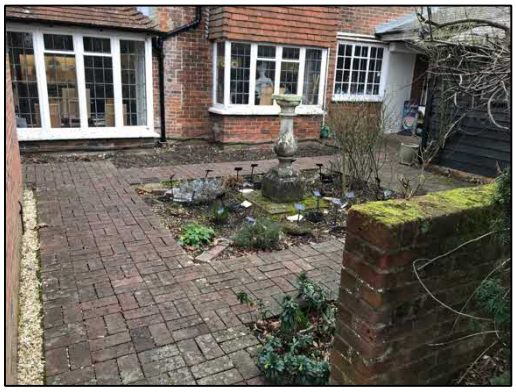


Figure 4 – courtyard garden area

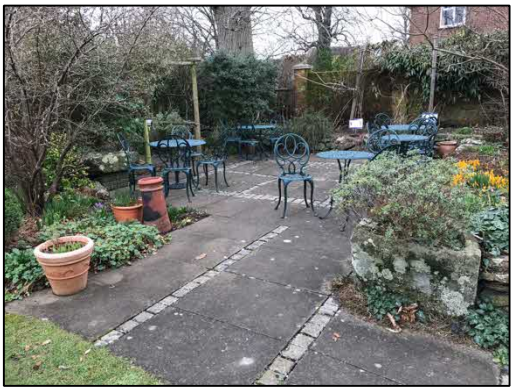


Figure 5 – patio area in the western section of the garden

4. Protected and notable species assessment

The scope of works, data search and habitat assessment have informed the scope of the protected and notable species assessment. On this basis, the following protected and priority species have been considered further within this report:

- Bats
- Badgers
- Dormice
- Hedgehogs
- Reptiles
- Amphibians
- Breeding birds

The surveyed site has been assessed for its potential to support the above- named protected species based upon the criteria in Table 1.

Table 1 *Protected species grading criteria*

Grading criteria	*Justification*
Negligible	Site is entirely unsuitable for species. Presence of species highly unlikely.
Low Potential	Minimal suitable habitat present or, if present, highly degraded/fragmented. Minimal linkage to suitable habitat beyond site. Presence of species unlikely.
Moderate	Presence of some suitable habitat features for species. Surveyed site within/close to known range or known occurrence but factors such as isolation/fragmentation may reduce potential. Presence of species is more likely than not.
High	Presence of optimal habitat features for species. Surveyed site within known range/close to known occurrence. Excellent connectivity to optimal habitat. No justification for discounting presence of species.
Confirmed presence	Species confirmed on site through direct sighting, presence of field signs (e.g. scat, hair, prints, nest, eggs, habitation etc.) or through desk-based assessment.

5. Bats

5.1 Methodology

The survey did not depart from the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition) which states that "A preliminary roost inspection survey is a detailed inspection of the exterior and interior of a structure to look for features that bats could use for entry/exit and roosting and to search for signs of bats".

The external features of the built structures which will be modified by the proposed works in such a way that bats or their roosts could be impacted (directly or indirectly) if present, were systematically inspected in detail to compile information on potential and actual bat access points and roosting places such as lifted or broken tiles, loose brickwork and open eaves. This included a thorough search for evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings, urine splashes and fur staining.

The interior of the building was inspected in order to identify potential or actual access points and roosting places and to record any evidence of bat activity or bats themselves.

5.2 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

High-powered torch	Ladders
Camera	Binoculars

5.3 Limitations

For safety reasons, the roof voids were viewed from the access hatches only. No other limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey. Despite this limitation it is still considered that a robust assessment of the buildings' suitability for supporting roosting bats has been undertaken and this limitation has been taken into consideration when assessing the suitability of the buildings for roosting bats.

5.4 Assessment methodology

The suitability of the buildings for supporting bat roosts will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 2 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 2 *Suitability assessment guidelines*

Suitability	*Description of Roosting Habitats*
Negligible	Structure has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats i.e. no suitable roosting features present.
Low	A structure which could be used opportunistically by individual bats i.e. one or more potential roost sites which do not provide sufficient space, shelter,

	protection, appropriate conditions (e.g. temperature, light, humidity) and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats.
Moderate	A structure which could be used by bats but is not likely to support a roost of high conservation status (e.g. maternity roost). This structure would support features which exhibit suitable size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat for roosting bats.
High	A structure which is obviously suitable for supporting larger numbers of bats, on a regular basis and for longer periods of time.

5.5 Results

5.5.1 *Building description relevant to bats*

The application site supports a gallery which comprises two adjoined structures with extensions. A shed is present within the garden but is not within the zone of impact.

The gallery building comprises two adjoined brick-built cottages (Figure 5). The easternmost structure comprises a two-storey brick-built structure which rises to a pitched and gable end design roof clad with clay roof and ridge tiles. The roof extends beyond the wall plate and the eaves are enclosed with wooden soffit boxes to the front and wooden fascia boards to the rear. The front north-eastern elevation comprises exposed brickwork. The bottom half of the south-eastern gable end is rendered and painted while the top half supports clay hanging tiles. Clay hanging tiles are also present on the north-western gable end, below which is where the adjoining structure extends from. The south-western elevation supports a two-storey flat roof extension clad with roofing felt, which supports a two-storey bay window clad with lead flashing and clay hanging tiles. A wooden-built extension also extends from the south-western elevation, comprising a lean-to shelter and toilet/storage block clad with slate roof tiles and wooden shiplap boarding (Figure 6).

The westernmost structure also comprises a single-storey brick-built structure which rises to a pitched and half-hipped design roof clad with clay roof, ridge and hip tiles. The roof supports several vented roof and ridge tiles. The roof extends beyond the wall plate and the eaves are enclosed with wooden soffit boxes. The front north-eastern elevation remains as exposed brickwork. The bottom half of the north-western elevation is rendered and painted while the top half supports clay hanging tiles (Figure 7). The south-eastern elevation is adjoined to the easternmost structure. A single-storey L-shaped extension extends from the south-western elevation (Figure 8). As with the main roof, the majority of the extension rises to a pitched and half-hipped design roof clad with clay roof, ridge and hip tiles. A flat roof section clad with lead flashing is also present. The south-western elevation also supports a single-storey bay window clad with clay roof tiles.

The windows of both structures are set in metal and wooden frames, closely adjoined to the surrounding brickwork. The north-eastern roof faces support moss and lichen growth.

Internally, both structures support a single roof void (Figures 9 and 10). The westernmost void space has been part converted into habitable space, with a small void remaining, accessed by two hatches. The voids support traditional timber beams, fibreglass

insulation and are unboarded. The roofs are lined with a plastic membrane and plastic fillers are present at the eaves. There are no voids present in the extensions.

Figure 5 – north-western elevations of the adjoined structures

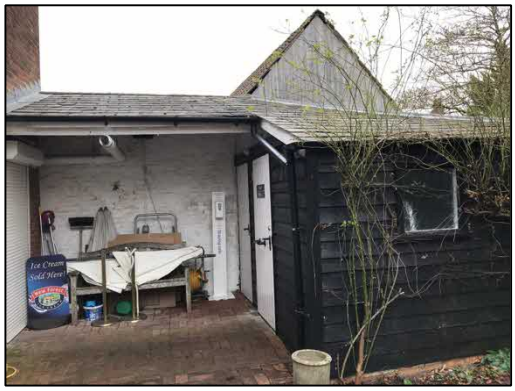
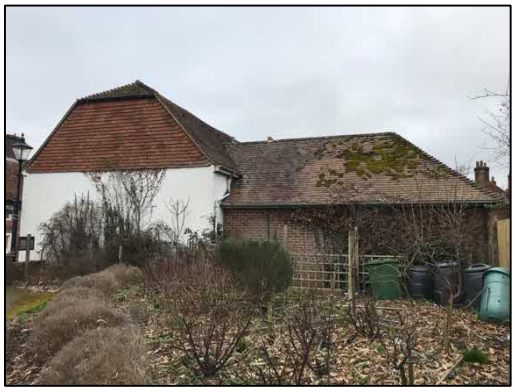


Figure 6 – lean-to and storage/toilet block extension



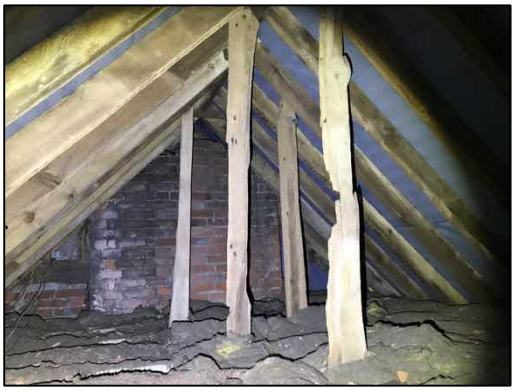


Figure 9 – internal view of the easternmost void

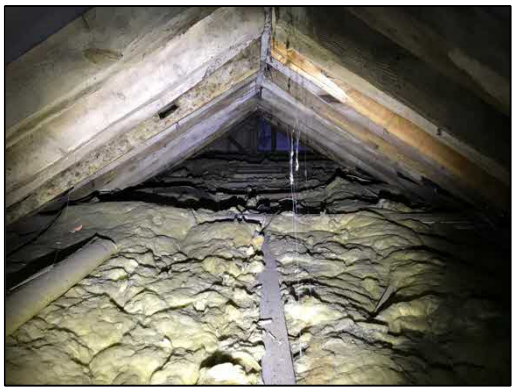


Figure 10 – internal view of the westernmost void

An account of suitable access/egress features and recorded evidence of bat activity inside the zone of impact is given in table 3.

Table 3 *Recorded features and activity*

	Suitability	*Evidence*
Exterior	The following suitable access/egress and roosting features were recorded externally during the survey: - Lifted hanging tiles (outside ZOI) - Hole at the edge of hanging tiles on the northern corner of the property (outside ZOI). - Lifted and broken roof tiles. - Gaps between soffit boxes and brickwork. - Missing mesh over some roof vent holes.	No evidence of roosting activity was recorded internally during the survey. On closer inspection, the gaps between the soffit boxes and brickwork were found to be filled with heavy cobwebbing.
Interior	The following suitable access/egress and roosting features were recorded internally during the survey. - Roosting space against and between beams.	No evidence of roosting activity was recorded internally during the survey.

5.5.2 *Site grounds description relevant to bats*

The site grounds comprise managed lawn, ornamental planting, and hardstanding. Beyond this, Alton is comprised of residential properties and their associated gardens, commercial development and services. The River Wey runs through the town to the south. Further afield the landscape is characterised by arable farmland, permanent pasture, woodland blocks and mature hedgerows. In this context, the habitats within the footprint of the proposal are considered unexceptional for foraging and commuting bats, however, given their location within a landscape which is also suitable for commuting and foraging bats, it is likely that bats will commute and forage through the site.

5.6 Assessment

When considered in view of the criteria set out in Table 2, the hanging tiles are considered to support high suitability for roosting bats while the features associated with the roof are considered to support moderate suitability for roosting bats. This assessment is based on the type and number of features identified and evidence recorded during the survey.

In the context of the wider landscape, the habitats within the footprint of the proposal are considered unexceptional for foraging and commuting bats. They are, nevertheless, suitable for commuting and foraging bats and it is likely that bats will commute and forage through the site as a compartment of their wider foraging range.

6. Bat Emergence Surveys

6.1 Methodology

The emergence surveys were undertaken in accordance Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition). Six surveyors were positioned in order to provide sufficient coverage of the suitable roost features when stationary. In addition, infra-red illuminators and a nightvision video cameras and thermal imaging cameras were used to improve visibility. All emergences, re-entries and general activity were recorded during the course of each survey. Recordings were later analysed using Sonobat bat call analysis software to confirm species identification.

6.2 Surveyor/s

The surveys were led by Duncan Gilmartin and Richard Codlin with suitably experienced bat surveyors Laura Baynes, Tommy Saunders, Jackie Kirby, Lucie Poole, Rebecca Phillips and Sarah Perryman.

6.3 Survey area

The survey area comprised all elevations of the structure. This enabled survey coverage of all suitable access/egress and roosting features which were recorded during the preliminary bat roost assessment and will be affected by the proposals.

6.4 Survey date

The date and timings of the emergence surveys are presented in Table 5. The emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and continued for at least 1.5 hours.

Table 5 *survey dates and timings*

Survey type	*Date*	*Start*	*Finish*	*Sunset/sunrise*
Emergence	27/06/2023	21:06	22:53	21:23
Emergence	03/08/2023	20:32	22:17	20:47

6.5 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- Pettersson D240X bat detector
- Anabat Walkabout
- Sony FDR-AX53 (nightshot mode)
- Canon XA11 (nightshot mode)
- Elekon Batlogger M detector
- Echometer Touch
- Infrared illuminators

6.6 Weather conditions

Weather conditions during the surveys are provided in Table 6:

Table 6 *emergence surveys weather conditions*

Survey	*Date*	*Precipitation*		*Temperature*		*Wind*		*Cloud Cover*	
		Start	*Finish*	*Start*	*Finish*	*Start*	*Finish*	*Start*	*Finish*
Emergence	27/06/2023	Nil	Nil	18.0℃	17.0℃	Bf 1	Bf 1	100%	100%
Emergence	03/08/2023	Nil	Nil	16.0℃	14.0℃	Bf 1	Bf 1	100%	100%

6.7 Results

6.7.1 *The Beeches*

Visit 1 – 27th June 2023 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the dusk emergence survey carried out on the 29th June 2023, no bats were recorded emerging from the building.

The first recorded bat comprised a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* which was recorded out of sight of the surveyors at 21:26. Following this, a single common pipistrelle was recorded foraging between the garden of the Allen Gallery and adjacent garden of the Vicarage at frequent intervals throughout the survey period. In addition, a noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bat was recorded as it foraged high over the site at 22:11, 22:25, 22:29, 22:46 and 22:51. A single serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* bat was recorded as it foraged through the garden at 22:43.

Visit 2 – 03rd August 2023 – Dusk Emergence Survey

During the dusk emergence survey carried out on the 03rd August 2023, two bats were recorded emerging from the building. These comprised two common pipistrelle bats which emerged from hanging tiles. The first bat emerged from a hanging tile on the bay window within the courtyard at 20:57. The second bat emerged from behind a hanging tile on the north-western gable end at 21:00.

Following the emergences, up to two common pipistrelle bats were recorded foraging between the garden of the Allen Gallery and adjacent garden of the Vicarage at frequent intervals throughout the survey period. At 21:49, a single noctule bat was recorded foraging high over the site.

6.8 Assessment

The bat emergence surveys have revealed that the Allen Gallery supports common pipistrelle bat day roosts behind hanging tiles on the north-western gable end and bay window within the courtyard.

Up to two common pipistrelle bats were recorded consistently foraging within the site grounds during the course of the surveys. Activity levels for this species were consistent across the two surveys and therefore it is considered that up to two common pipistrelle bats use the site for foraging as compartment of their wider sustenance zone.

7. Badgers

7.1 Methodology

The survey involved a detailed investigation of the site to identify evidence of badger residence, foraging or territorial activity. This includes badger setts, latrine sites, dung piles, well-used trails, prints and hairs. Particular emphasis was placed on locating badger setts, paths and signs of territorial activity such as dung piles and latrines.

7.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

7.3 Results

A mammal track was recorded running through the south-western fence, however, due to the size of the gap under the fence it is unlikely to have been used by badger. No evidence of mammal foraging activity or a badger sett was recorded on site.

7.4 Assessment

Badger setts are considered to be absent from the application site. There is considered to be low potential for badgers to utilise foraging opportunities within and surrounding the site.

8. Dormice

8.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the suitability of habitat on site to support hazel dormice. Key habitats are woodland, scrub and hedgerows, particularly where these offer dense vegetation within which to nest/hibernate and key resources such as hazel nuts, fruiting/nectar-rich plants (e.g. hawthorn, bramble) to provide a continuum of food resources throughout the active season and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* (for nesting material). Landscape-scale habitat linkages such as hedgerows are fundamental for dormouse presence where small scale or sub-optimal habitats are recorded within a site.

8.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

8.3 Results

The habitats which form the application site (managed grassland, ornamental planting and buildings/hardstanding) are considered to be wholly unsuitable for supporting dormice because they do not support resources required by dormice. While mature trees overhang the site from outside the redline boundary, these are isolated and not connected to suitable habitat.

8.4 **Assessment**

The site is considered to support negligible suitably for dormice.

9. Hedgehogs

9.1 **Methodology**

The site was assessed for its suitability to support hedgehogs based on the presence of favoured habitats such as woodland edges, hedgerows, grassland and suburban habitats.

Hedgehogs are most abundant within gardens, parks and amenity land close to or within human settlements. They are generally scarce in areas of coniferous woodland, marshes and moorland, probably because of a lack of suitable sites and materials for the construction of winter nests (Morris, 2006). Any evidence of hedgehog activity such as prints or droppings was recorded.

9.2 **Limitations**

Low detections rates are associated with evidence of hedgehog activity; therefore, absence of evidence does not confirm the absence of hedgehogs. For this reason, the assessment of the likely presence/absence of hedgehogs has largely been informed by the species' local distribution and the habitats within the site and local area.

9.3 **Results**

The garden has the potential to support foraging hedgehog although no direct evidence was noted.

9.4 **Assessment**

There is considered to be moderate potential for hedgehog to occur on site.

10. Reptiles

10.1 **Methodology**

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support reptile populations. Key habitat features include: tussocky/patchy grassland; scrub edge; linear watercourses; ponds; compost heaps; brash piles and rubble/soil heaps. Linkage to suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape will increase the potential for reptiles to occur, although populations can occur within isolated/fragmented habitats even within urban areas.

10.2 **Limitations**

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

10.3 **Results**

While shrubs are present in the garden, the managed condition of the grassland and ornamental planting reduces the overall suitability of the site. Two gardens border the site to the east, west and south, however, other than this the site is set within a block of

buildings, hardstanding and scattered trees surrounded by roads. Nevertheless, it is possible that transient reptiles may disperse through the site or use the site opportunistically given suitable habitat within the wider area. Without management, the site could establish habitat features which have greater suitability for reptiles.

10.4 Assessment

There is considered to be low potential for small numbers of reptiles to occur on site.

11. Great Crested Newts

11.1 Methodology

Great crested newts are only present in their breeding ponds during the spring and early summer – for the rest of the year, they will be dispersed across the surrounding area, generally in grassland, scrub, woodland and hedgerows, although they may be found in gardens and brownfield sites. They can travel some distance from their breeding ponds, and as a general rule, developments within 500m of such a pond may have the potential to have an impact on GCN, although to a certain extent, this does depend on any intervening habitat or barriers to dispersal.

An assessment was made of any waterbodies and terrestrial habitat within the site for their suitability to support populations of amphibians. Suitable waterbodies will generally be characterised by the presence of good quality water, diverse macrophyte cover and an absence of fish. For the European-protected great crested newt, each waterbody is normally assessed using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) system (Oldham et al., 2000) and assigned a grading score between zero (poor suitability) and 1 (excellent suitability).

11.2 Limitations

The HSI for great crested newts is a measure of habitat suitability. In general, ponds with high HSI scores are more likely to support great crested newts than those with low scores. However, in isolation, the system is not sufficiently precise to allow the conclusion that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not do so (Oldham et al., 2000).

11.3 Results

The desktop survey has revealed that three waterbodies are located within 500m of the application site. However, these appear to be components of the River Wey which flow through a series of formalised channels and culverts within the built up area of Alton. No standing water bodies were recorded within a 500m radius of the site.

11.4 Assessment

Given the lack of a network of ponds within 500m of the site, there is considered to be negligible potential for great crested newt to occur within the site.

12. Breeding Birds

12.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support breeding bird species. Nesting birds will utilise a broad range of habitats, including: built structures, trees, scrub, isolated shrubs, dense herbaceous vegetation (terrestrial and aquatic) and open grassland. All bird species and evidence of breeding activity (active or inactive) observed on site were recorded.

12.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

12.3 Results

The trees, shrubs and buildings present on site are considered to support nesting opportunities for breeding birds. An inactive bird nest was recorded in the void of the westernmost structure.

12.4 Assessment

The site is considered to support moderate potential for breeding birds.

13. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts

13.1 Relevant legislation and policy

Circular 06/2005 identifies that applicants should not be required to provide information on protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood that they will be present and affected by the proposed development. The site is considered to support habitats with suitability and potential for protected species and these may be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal triggers 'reasonable likelihood' under the Circular.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations) may apply should protected species be confirmed on site.

In the case that a European protected species (bats in this case) is found to be present and impacted by the proposal, the local planning authority will be required to engage with the Habitat Regulations. Permission will be granted unless:

a) the development is likely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations, and

b) is unlikely to be granted an EPS licence from Natural England to allow the development to proceed under a derogation from the law (under licence).

When considering whether Natural England would not be unlikely to grant a licence for the identified impact, the local planning authority must consider the three tests which are set out in the Habitat Regulations:

1. the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'; (Regulation 53(2)(e))

2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 53(9)(a)); and

3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 53(9)(b)).

Natural England will grant a licence if the development proposal is able to meet the three tests.

Case-law (Morge vs. Hampshire County Council) has clarified that planning authorities are able to grant permission for developments that would cause a breach of the Regulations is likely (i.e. in the case of this proposal, destruction of a bat roost), provided that sufficient information is provided to give the planning authority assurance that the relevant EPSM licence is not unlikely to be granted - i.e. planning authorities also have a duty to assess planning applications against these tests.

13.2 **Designated sites**

As no designated sites were identified by the desk study, no impacts on designated sites associated with the proposal are anticipated.

13.3 **Habitats**

The buildings, hardstanding and ornamental planting are the main habitats to be impacted by the proposals. As the vegetation to be removed is managed, easily replicable and of low botanical value, it is considered that there will be no impact to habitats of ecological importance such as priority habitats as a result of its loss.

13.4 **Bats**

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed that the areas of the building that will be affected by the proposed works support moderate roost suitability.

On the basis that areas of the building that will be affected by the proposed works support moderate suitability for roosting bats, there was considered to be a reasonable likelihood that bats would be present and affected by the proposed works which will impact the features detailed in Table 4.

However, no bats were recorded emerging from the areas of the building that will be affected by the proposed works during the emergence surveys carried out during June and August 2023. Two common pipistrelle bats did emerge from hanging tiles however these are located outside the zone of impact.

As such, there is considered to be no reasonable likelihood that bats will be present and affected by the proposed works.

The application site supports foraging bats and commuting bats leaving and returning to roost. Increasing lighting could impact this behaviour which would indirectly impact roosts.

13.5 **Badgers**

The site supports low suitability for badger. Therefore, impacts to badgers could occur during construction if trenches are left open. Impacts on badgers associated with loss or damage of setts or loss of foraging habitat are not anticipated.

13.6 **Hazel dormouse**

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support suitability for dormice. Therefore, no impacts on dormice are anticipated.

13.7 **Hedgehog**

Impacts on hedgehogs are likely to occur if trenches are left open.

13.8 **Reptiles**

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support potential for reptiles. However, precautionary avoidance measures are proposed for the construction phase given the potential for transient reptiles to pass through the site.

13.9 **Great crested newts**

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support suitability for GCN. Therefore, no impacts on GCN are anticipated.

13.10 **Breeding birds**

The development of the site will likely result in the loss of suitable breeding bird habitat. The removal of this habitat has the potential to damage or destroy active bird nests if carried out during the breeding bird season which is generally seen as extending from March to the end of August, although may extend longer depending on local conditions. Development will also likely result in a net loss of bird nesting opportunities.

14. Requirement for further surveys

Further surveys are required where there is a reasonable likelihood that a protected species will be present and impacted by the proposed development. An assessment into the requirement for further surveys is presented below. In summary, All further surveys considered necessary for bats have been undertaken.

It is important that planning decisions are informed by current ecological survey data. Due to this, there is a limited time frame that phase 1 and phase 2 surveys are valid before becoming outdated. This time frame can vary depending on any changes in project circumstances or plans but it is generally considered that phase 1 ecological surveys are valid for a period of 18 months (CIEEM, 2019). Projects that take place over periods longer than 18 months might be required to carry out further ecological surveys to ensure planning authorities have the necessary up-to-date information to make well informed, evidence-based decisions**.**

14.1 **Designated sites**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

14.2 **Habitats**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

14.3 **Bats**

In order to provide robust confirmation on the presence and status of bat roosts and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development as required by Circular 06/2005, further survey work in accordance with Natural England's standing advice and the BCT Good Practice Guidelines was required.

In accordance with these guidelines, further survey effort took the form of two presence/absence surveys undertaken during the bat active season. No further surveys in respect of roosting bats are considered necessary.

The affected areas of habitat are not of significant value as a foraging or commuting resource. Therefore, further survey is considered unnecessary for understanding impacts on foraging and commuting bats beyond the presence/absence surveys, subject to the proposed sensitive lighting scheme set out below.

14.4 **Badgers**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.5 **Hazel dormice**

As impacts on dormice are not anticipated, no further recommendations relating to dormice are considered necessary.

14.6 **Hedgehog**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.7 **Reptiles**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.8 **Great crested newts**

As impacts on GCN are not anticipated, no further recommendations relating to GCN are considered necessary.

14.9 **Breeding birds**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 15, no further surveys are considered necessary.

15. Mitigation recommendations

15.1 Bats

In order to limit any effects on foraging and commuting bats and bats emerging from or returning to roost, external lighting should be limited to only that which is absolutely necessary for safety purposes, both during the construction phase and once the proposals are complete. The following lighting measures are required:

Lighting to the gallery should be as low brightness as possible, kept at a low level and directed away from all structures and boundaries. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them.

All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT, 2018).

15.2 Badgers

In order to avoid harm to badgers during the construction works, any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any badgers which fall in to leave on their own accord.

15.3 Hedgehogs

In order to avoid harm to hedgehogs during construction works the following precautionary measures will be employed:

Any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any hedgehogs that fall in to leave of their own accord.

Any leaf litter or garden waste piles will be dismantled by hand in a sensitive and careful manner.

No bonfires will be made or lit on site.

15.4 Reptiles

Care should be taken that the development does not kill/injure reptiles. Key habitat features for reptiles include brash piles and rubble/soil heaps. Linkage to suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape will increase the potential for reptiles to occur, although populations can occur within isolated/fragmented habitats even within urban areas. Should any reptiles be encountered, they should be allowed to move away of their own accord. All waste shall be placed directly into a skip so that rubble piles and therefore potential hibernation areas are not created in areas which will subsequently be disturbed by site works.

15.5 Breeding birds

Care should be taken that development does not impact breeding birds. The bird nesting season is taken to be March to August, inclusive. Any removal of suitable nest habitat will either need to be undertaken outside of this period or else checked by an experienced ecologist to ensure that no nesting birds are present. If occupied nests are present, then

the nest must not be removed and works around the nest can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

16. Enhancements

The delivery of biodiversity enhancement on development sites is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where opportunities exist it is best practice to provide enhancement features which encourage greater biodiversity within development sites in accordance with the NPPF and Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under the NERC Act.

Opportunities for enhancement which are proportionate to the scale of the development include:

The provision of additional bird nesting opportunities. These could be external boxes located on the walls of the structures or on the trees or walls on site. A total of two open fronted bird boxes would be appropriate.

17. Conclusion

The extended phase 1 ecological assessment has confirmed that the site supports opportunities for a range of protected species including bats, hedgehogs, and breeding birds.

The preliminary roost assessment confirmed that the buildings support moderate and high suitability for roosting bats, however, only the moderate suitability features are located within the zone of impact. Therefore, further survey effort was recommended to confirm the presence/absence of roosts, characterise any bat roost/s, assess the extent bats may be affected by the proposed alteration works and devise an appropriate mitigation strategy to support the proposed works and address any breaches in the legislation.

In accordance with Natural England standing advice and BCT Good Practice Guidelines, two presence/absence surveys for the building were undertaken during June and August 2023. These have confirmed that the areas of the building that will be impacted by the proposed works do not support roosting bats. As such, no mitigation is considered necessary. Two common pipistrelle bat day roosts have been recorded behind hanging tiles outside the zone of impact.

Given the scale of the proposal, it is possible to deliver the scheme with a range of measures which avoid impacts on the other identified protected and priority species. These include sensitive timing of the works, careful vegetation removal and sensitive lighting.

Opportunities for ecological enhancement have been suggested for the site.

18. References

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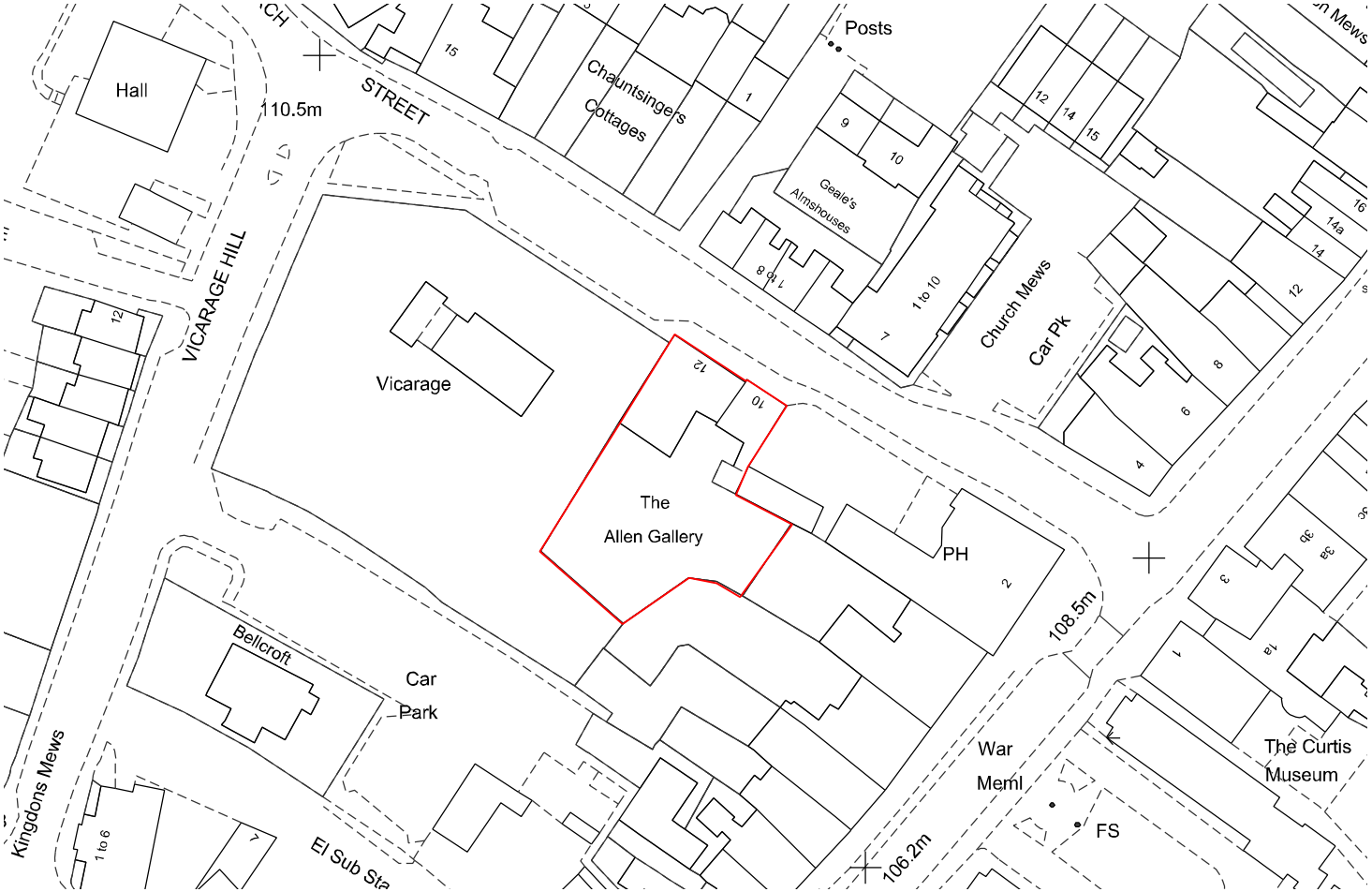
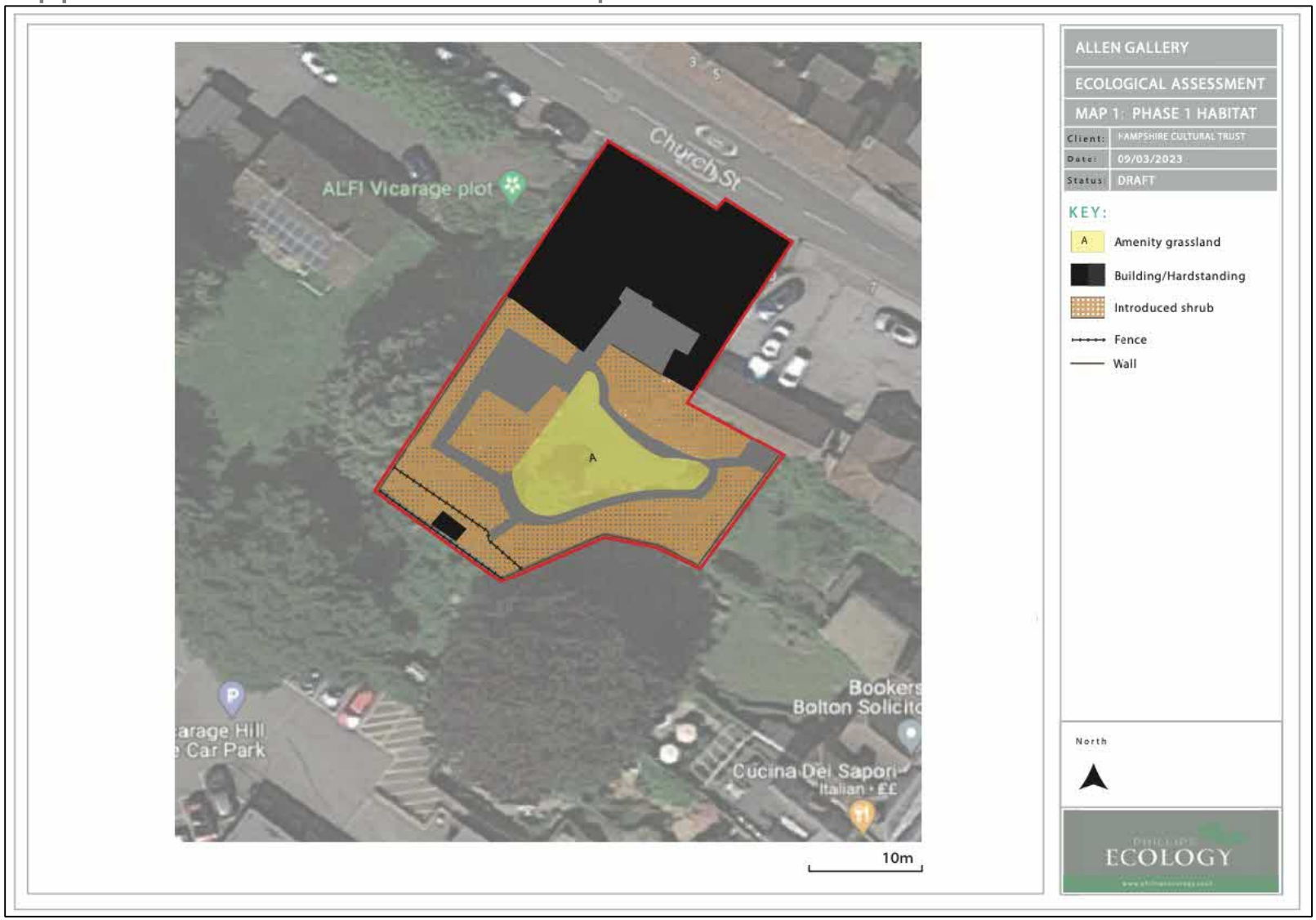
Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan



S0 WORK IN PROGRESS

Revisions: P1 Ecology Survey Quotes 07/02/2023		PROJECT: Allen Gallery and Gardens Project	DRAWING NO: A1122 - PRA - ZZ - 00 - DR - A - 10010	REV: P1	PRITCHARD ARCHITECTURE
	N	SHEET: Site Plan As Existing - Ecology Survey	SCALE: 1:500 0 5 10 15 20 25 M	DATE: Feb 23	Porters Lodge, College Road HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, PO1 3LJ email: studio@pritchardarchitecture.co.uk

Appendix 2 – Phase 1 Habitat Map



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