

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

SITE LOCATION

Bushloe House, Wigston,
LE18 2DR

ISSUE DATE

28 November 2023

OUR REFERENCE

230821 1501 PEA V1 ISSUE

PREPARED FOR

Macc Group

PRINCIPAL AUTHOR

Laura Carter



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Summary	
Site surveyed	Land off Bushloe House, Wigston, LE18 2DR National Grid reference SP 6006g 98770
Purpose and brief	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Commissioned by Macc Group
Development proposals	The Proposed Development is to provide an 80 bed care home (Use Class C2) over three storeys, with facilities in the roof space 30 parking spaces for the care home (including two disabled) along with 21 apartments (Use Class C2) - 10 apartments in converted Bushloe House over three floors and 11 apartments in new extension over three floors with 23 parking spaces for the apartments (including two disabled)
Methods	Desk study UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey of the Site Assessment of likely significant effects as far as can be reasonably known.
Confirmed ecological constraints	None
Potential ecological constraints	Bats Nesting Birds Hedgehogs
Recommendations/ Further survey works required	Bat Method Statement Production of a wildlife-sensitive lighting scheme
Opportunities for ecological enhancement	Bird boxes Native species planting



1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1.1 The Principal Author of this report is Laura Carter BSc (*Hons*), (Senior Ecologist). The Principal Author has over five years of professional experience in ecological consultancy and has worked on projects ranging in scale including commercial and residential sites. The Principal Author currently holds a Class 1 survey licence from Natural England for bats (*Chiroptera* spp.) and is a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), she is therefore subject to CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct.
- 1.1.2 The detail provided within this report is a true and accurate reflection of both the Site conditions at the time the survey was completed, as well as the professional opinion of the Principal Author.
- 1.1.3 The Reviewer of this report is Alastair Craighead MSc, (Ecological Consultant). The Reviewer has two years of professional experience in ecological consultancy and has worked on projects ranging in scale including commercial and residential sites. The Principal Author has achieved Level 3 in the Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) by the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) and is a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). He is therefore subject to CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct.

1.2 Purpose and Brief

- 1.2.1 Macc Group (the Client) commissioned Wharton Natural Infrastructure Consultants Ltd (Wharton) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of an area of land known as Bushloe House, Wigston, LE18 2DR (see land within the red line boundary in Appendices 1 and 2), known herein as 'the Site').
- 1.2.2 The purpose of the PEA (as per CIEEM guidance (CIEEM, 2018) is to inform the design of the Proposed Development. The key objectives of a PEA are to:
- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the Proposed Development;
 - Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the '*Mitigation Hierarchy*';
 - Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA); and,
 - Identify the opportunities offered by the Proposed Development to deliver ecological enhancement.

1.3 Description of Site and Local Area

- 1.3.1 The Site is located to the north of Station Road in Wigston. It is centred approximately at National Grid reference SP 6006g 98770.
- 1.3.2 The Site comprised several buildings, hardstanding, modified grassland with scattered trees, bramble scrub and line of trees. The Site is surrounded by residential properties on all boundaries and is screened from the road by mature trees.
- 1.3.3 The Site is relatively isolated from an ecological perspective due to access roads throughout the local area and fragmented semi-natural habitat with poor ecological connectivity to/from the Site.

1.4 The Proposed Development

- 1.4.1 The Proposed Development is to provide an 80 bed care home (Use Class C2) over three storeys, with facilities in the roof space 30 parking spaces for the care home (including two disabled) along with 21 apartments (Use Class C2) - 10 apartments in converted Bushloe House over three floors and 11 apartments in new extension over three floors with 23 parking spaces for the apartments (including two disabled)

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1.4.2 The proposals detailed above will be referred to throughout this report as the 'Proposed Development' and can be seen in Appendix 3.



2. Relevant Planning Policy & Legislation

2.1 Relevant Legislation

2.1.1 National and international legislation relevant to the Proposed Development is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Legislation Relevant to the Proposed Development

Legislation*	Relevance to the Proposed Development
<p>The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (HMSO, 2017) <i>Amended by¹</i> The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (HMSO, 2019)</p>	<p>Affords protection to species listed under Schedules 2 and 5 and gives provision for the allocation and protection of European protected sites.</p>
<p>The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HMSO, 1981)</p>	<p>Affords protection to species listed under Schedule 5 of the Act and gives provision for the allocation of statutory wildlife sites.</p>
<p>The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (HMSO, 2006)</p>	<p>Places a duty on planning authorities to consider habitats and species of principal importance in planning applications.</p>
<p>The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (HMSO, 1992)</p>	<p>Offences under the Act include damaging, destroying or obstructing access to a badger sett, disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett, and killing or injuring a badger.</p>

*Full legislative text should be referred to as table text is a summary only.

1 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 provides safeguards for European Protected Sites and Species (as listed in the Habitats Directive). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas now the UK has left the European Union.



2.2 Relevant Planning Policy

2.2.1 Planning policies which are relevant to the Proposed Development are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Planning Policy Relevant to the Proposed Development

Planning Policy	Relevance to the Proposed Development
National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2023)	Section 180a and 180c (respectively) of the NPPF state: <i>"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".</i>

*Full policy text should be referred to as table text is a summary only.

2.2.2 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (The Borough of Oadby and Wigston , 2019) has been reviewed, and an excerpt of the relevant ecological policies is provided in Appendix 4.



3. Methods & Methodology

3.1 Desk Study & Consultation

3.1.1 A desk study was carried out to gather background ecological data, and the following resources were used for the data search:

- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Interactive (DEFRA, 2023) map was used to determine the presence of granted European Protected Species Mitigation licences at and within 1km of the Site.
- Google Earth Pro (Google Earth Pro, 2023) aerial and historic imagery were used to assess the ecological connectivity at the Site as well as its historic use to assess suitability of habitats locally for foraging and commuting wildlife.
- Biological records have been obtained from Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC, 2023) from within a 1km radius of the central grid reference provided in paragraph 1.3.1, for statutory wildlife sites, non-statutory wildlife sites and legally protected and notable species.

3.2 Field Survey

3.2.1 A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) (comprising the methods detailed below) were carried out on 06 August 2023 by the Principal Author.

3.2.2 Weather conditions at the time of survey were clear and dry.

UKHab Survey

3.2.3 A UKHab Survey (Butcher, Carey, Edmonds, Norton, & Treweek, 2020) was carried out at the Site. UKHab provides a comprehensive habitat classification system for the UK and enables details in relation to the presence of notable (such as Habitats of Principal Importance) or protected habitats (such as Annex I habitats) to be obtained.

3.2.4 The UK Habitat Classification Version 1.1 was used for assessment of the Site, using the *Professional Edition Hierarchy*. Habitats were classified to Level 5 unless otherwise stated.

3.2.5 Based on the characteristics of the Site, the habitats it supports (as assessed from remote aerial imagery during the desk study), and other information from the desk study such as biological records, an assessment was made of the suitability of the Site to support protected or notable species. Those species for which the Site was deemed to be unsuitable or where impacts are unlikely to occur due to the Site location, a lack of nearby suitable habitat and/or a lack of biological records were scoped out. These species are listed in section 4.5.

3.2.6 Habitats at the Site were identified and mapped; they are illustrated on the UK Habitat Classification Plan in Appendix 2. Where appropriate, target notes have been used to identify areas on the plan that require further detail, and this has been included in the report.

3.2.7 Plant names (common and scientific) within this report follow 'New Flora of the British Isles' (Stace, 2010).

Preliminary Roost Assessment

3.2.8 The PRA of the building and trees at the Site for roosting bats followed current best practice guidance (Collins, 2016).

3.2.9 The building and trees were inspected by the Principal Author (who holds a Natural England Class 2 bat licence) for field evidence of bats including: droppings, individual bats (live or dead), feeding remains, scratch marks, urine staining, grease marks and clean cobweb-free gaps around potential



entrance points and crevice roost sites.

- 3.2.10 The trees were assessed based on the presence, number and type of Potential Roost Features (PRFs) including woodpecker holes, lifting bark, cracks, crevices, knot holes and wounds. Trees were assessed from ground level only.
- 3.2.11 The building and trees were classified according to the criteria set out in Table 3 in accordance with standard guidance (Collins, 2016). With respect to roost type, the assessments in this report are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed.

Table 3. Bat Roost Suitability Descriptions (based on Collins, 2016)

Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
Confirmed Presence	Presence of roosting bats within the building or tree confirmed by the survey
High	A building or tree 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 and surrounding habitat.
Moderate	A building or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
Low	A building or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a larger number of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Negligible	Trees or buildings that appear unsuitable for roosting bats due to a clear lack of roosting spaces and/or absence of suitable access points, such as voids, small crevices etc, cracked limbs, rot holes, woodpecker holes, limb tear outs etc.

3.3 Limitations and Caveats

- 3.3.1 This report is based solely on the Site conditions on the 06 August 2023 and provides a 'snapshot' of Site conditions at this time only.
- 3.3.2 There were no significant limitations at the time of the survey.

3.4 Evaluation of Ecological Features

- 3.4.1 The likelihood of the occurrence of any protected and/or invasive species at the Site relies on assessment of habitat suitability for the species at the Site as well as an evaluation, in parallel, of desk study data and published guidance/literature which is referenced accordingly:
- 3.4.2 The CIEEM EclA guidelines (CIEEM, 2018) state that *"the importance of an ecological feature should be considered within a defined geographical context"*. The suggested frames of reference within the

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CIEEM EcIA guidelines have been adapted appropriate to the location of the Site and the nature of the Proposed Development. These frames of reference in this case are:

- International and European
- National (England)
- Regional (East Midlands)
- County (Leicestershire)
- Local (Wigston)



4. Ecological Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

4.1 Zone of Influence

- 4.1.1 The Zone of Influence (Zol) for the Proposed Development is the area within which significant ecological impacts could occur to ecological features.
- 4.1.2 The Zol differs for each ecological feature, and the Zol has been clearly stated in the baseline assessment of each ecological feature below.
- 4.1.3 The Zol has been stated for every ecological feature except those where there is clearly a lack of suitable habitat at or adjacent to the Site, and therefore no pathways by which impacts could occur to the feature.
- 4.1.4 Where a Zol has been provided for a species that has subsequently been scoped out of further assessment, the Zol relates to the area considered as part of the initial scoping assessment for that ecological feature (i.e., the area within which potential impacts to the feature have been considered).

4.2 Statutory Wildlife Sites

Zol

- 4.2.1 The Zol for statutory wildlife sites is considered to be 500m from the Site boundary. This is due to the relative ecological isolation of the Site from the wider area and limited impacts from the occupational phase of the Site to the local area (such as for recreational purposes).

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

- 4.2.2 No statutory wildlife sites lie within 500m of the Site.
- 4.2.3 No direct or indirect impacts to statutory wildlife sites are considered likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 4.2.4 No further survey or assessment regarding statutory wildlife sites is required and no significant effects to statutory wildlife sites are likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

4.3 Non-statutory Wildlife Sites

Zol

- 4.3.1 The Zol for non-statutory wildlife sites is considered to be 500m from the Site boundary. This is due to the relative ecological isolation of the Site from the wider area and limited impacts from the occupational phase of the Site to the local area (such as for recreational purposes).

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

- 4.3.1 There is one non-statutory wildlife sites within 500m of the Site. This is a candidate Local Wildlife Site (LWS) known as Wigston and Bushlow High School Ash located c.376m south-west of the Site.
- 4.3.2 No direct or indirect impacts to non-statutory wildlife sites are considered likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development due to the poor connectivity between the Site and this LWS.
- 4.3.3 No further survey or assessment regarding non statutory wildlife sites is required and no significant effects to non-statutory wildlife sites are likely to arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

4.4 Habitats

- 4.4.1 A plan of the habitats detailed below is provided in Appendix 2.
- 4.4.2 The assessment of importance within section 4.4 relates solely to the botanical importance of habitats at the Site. It does not take use or possible use by protected species into account as this is



addressed within section 4.5

Zol

- 4.4.3 The Zol for habitats in relation to the Proposed Development is the habitats within the Site boundary only. This is because adjacent habitats are of limited ecological importance and impacts to adjacent habitats as a result of the Proposed Development are unlikely to occur.

Urban – Developed land sealed surface and buildings – u1b5 & u1b6

- 4.4.4 There were several buildings with driveways, paths and parking facilities present throughout the Site. Some of the existing buildings will be demolished to facilitate the Proposed Development.
- 4.4.5 The Grade II listed portion of the main building along with some of the parking facilities will be retained.
- 4.4.6 The urban habitat is not considered to be ecologically important.

Modified Grassland – g4

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

- 4.4.7 Modified grassland was the dominant vegetated habitat at the Site. The habitat was largely comprised of lawn areas around ornamental landscaping. The botanical species present included vigorous/competitive species with some ruderal species present within the sward.
- 4.4.8 Perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*) were the dominant grass species present at the Site with occasional cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Forb species included common nettle, mouse ear chickweed (*Cerastium fontanum*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.), daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).
- 4.4.9 Scattered trees are present within the modified grassland that are outlined to be retained throughout the Proposed Development. These provided good structural and ecological diversity to the Site.
- 4.4.10 The modified grassland is not considered to be ecologically important due to the small extent of the habitat at the Site, the limited botanical diversity and the nutrient enrichment of the soils.
- 4.4.11 The majority of the modified grassland is likely to be retained as a result of the Proposed Development.

Bramble Scrub – h3d

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

- 4.4.12 An area of scrub was present in the disused areas of the Site, it was dominated by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).
- 4.4.13 The bramble scrub is not considered to be ecologically important due to its relatively low botanical diversity (which is not considered likely to be significantly different in the spring/summer months).
- 4.4.14 The scrub will be removed to facilitate the Proposed Development; however, this is not considered to be ecologically significant.

Line of trees – w1g6

- 4.4.15 The line of trees habitat at the Site was present along the eastern and western boundaries and largely comprised Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*).
- 4.4.16 The tree line along the southern boundary was considered to be ecologically important at the Local level due to its species composition and structure.



4.4.17 The lines of trees will be retained through the Proposed Development.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

4.4.18 A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment has been undertaken and is provided in a separate report.

4.5 Species Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

4.5.1 Biological records have been provided by Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC, 2023). The data are licensed for use by Wharton and the Client for a 12-month period and are not owned by Wharton or the Client as ownership of the data remains with the data provider.

4.5.2 The Site was assessed for its suitability to support the following species during the Site survey:

- Badger (*Meles meles*);
- Bats;
- Great Crested Newt GCN (*Triturus cristatus*) and other amphibians;
- Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*);
- Invertebrates;
- Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*);
- Reptiles;
- Wild birds; and,
- Protected plants.

4.5.3 The following species/species groups have been scoped out of further assessment. No significant effects (adverse or otherwise) to this species are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development, and no legislative breach in respect of the species legal protection is anticipated.

- Otter (*Lutra lutra*);
- Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*);
- White-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*);
- Freshwater fish; and
- Marine flora & fauna.

Badger

Zol

4.5.4 The Zol for badger is considered to be the Site and 30m outside of the Site boundary only. No important habitats for badger are considered to be affected outside of the Site boundary by the Proposed Development.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

4.5.5 The biological records search returned one record of badger from within 1km of the Site, this comprised badger droppings found in 2014 c.982m southwest of the Site.

4.5.6 No evidence of badger was identified at the Site, and it is unlikely on the basis of adjacent habitat that badger will migrate into the Site.

4.5.7 The risk of a breach of legislation in respect of badger from the Proposed Development is considered to be negligible.



Bats

Zol

- 4.5.8 The Zol for bats is considered to be the Site only. No important habitats for bats are considered to be affected outside of the Site boundary by the Proposed Development.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects - Roosting Habitat

- 4.5.9 The biological records search returned four historic records of roosting bats from within 1km of the Site. These comprised the roosts of unidentified bats, *Pipistrellus* sp. and common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*). The closest record was of a bat roost of an unknown species recorded c.987m northeast of the Site at St. Wistans Church in 2006.
- 4.5.10 No European Protected Species Licensing Applications with regards to roosting bats were provided on MAGIC map (DEFRA, 2023) from within 1km of the Site.
- 4.5.11 The Site comprised a Grade II listed building that was built in 1850 and a two-storey wing extension from the 1970s. Within the wider grounds there are further outbuildings, comprising a mix of older single-storey office accommodation, garages and a shed, together with greenhouses and extensive parking facilities.
- 4.5.12 The Grade II listed building had moderate suitability for roosting bats. This is due to multiple slipped tiles on several roof elevations which have potential to support crevice roosting bats, and which may provide access to internal loft voids. The internal loft voids were insulated with wooden sarking providing stable internal temperature conditions. Potential roost features within the loft voids were limited to crevices between the roof tiles and the wooden sarking.
- 4.5.13 The 1970's extension and multiple outbuildings including, garages, sheds and the glasshouse all have negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 4.5.14 No evidence of roosting bats was identified in any of the buildings at the Site.
- 4.5.15 Trees at the Site were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats at the time of the survey, no suitability for or evidence of roosting bats was identified during the PRA of trees at the Site.
- 4.5.16 The Site has potential to support roosting bats owing to the suitability of roosting features within the Grade II listed section of the main building. The main building is currently outlined to be retained throughout the Proposed Development but internally renovated. It is understood that no renovations are to be undertaken to the roof or the internal loft voids of the main building, and provided these features remain unmodified, the risk of a breach of legislation in respect of roosting bats can be precluded by undertaking precautionary measures as outlined in a Bat Method Statement. Recommendations are provided in Section 5.2.
- 4.5.17 Should renovations work impact potential roost features or access points, further surveys would need to be undertaken to establish presence/ likely absence of roosting bats at the main building. The requirements for further survey are detailed in Section 5.3.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects - Commuting and Foraging Habitat

- 4.5.18 The biological records search returned seven records of commuting and foraging bats from within 1km of the Site. Species comprise unidentified bats and common pipistrelle. The closest record was of an unidentified bat recorded c.322m northeast of the Site in 2015.
- 4.5.19 The habitats at the Site have negligible suitability for foraging bats. Connectivity to/from the Site is poor and botanical species diversity (which would suggest an abundance of invertebrate prey) is low throughout the Site. Suitable foraging habitat is present c.200m north of the Site at Aylestone Lane Park, though no habitat connectivity exists between the Site and the habitats within the



Aylestone Lane Park.

- 4.5.20 The Site is not likely to be ecologically important for foraging or commuting bats, and no significant effects (adverse or otherwise) to commuting or foraging bats are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development.

GCN and Other Amphibians

Zol

- 4.5.21 The Zol for GCN is the Site and ponds within 250m of the Site; this is due to the isolated nature of the Site in the local area and poor associated ecological connectivity.

- 4.5.22 The Zol for other amphibians is the Site only.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

- 4.5.23 The biological records search returned four records of amphibians from within 1km of the Site. Species comprise common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*). The closest record was of common frog and common toad both recorded c.635m northeast of the Site in 2005.

- 4.5.24 No European Protected Species Licensing Applications with regards to GCN were provided on MAGIC map (DEFRA, 2023) from within 1km of the Site.

- 4.5.25 The Site supports no suitable habitat for amphibians and no ponds have been identified within 250m of the Site (DEFRA, 2023) (Google Earth Pro, 2023). It is therefore unlikely that amphibians, including GCN, will be adversely affected by the Proposed Development, and the Site is not likely to be ecologically important for amphibians.

Hedgehog

Zol

- 4.5.26 The Zol for hedgehog is considered to be the Site only as this is the only likely area where impacts to hedgehog may occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

- 4.5.27 The biological records search returned 23 records of hedgehog from within 1km of the Site. The closest record was from 2020 c.135m northeast of the Site.

- 4.5.28 The Site supports some suitable foraging and shelter habitat for hedgehog. However, it is unlikely that important populations of hedgehog are present at the Site due to the relative isolation of the Site from the wider area by residential gardens (including close board fences) and access roads. The Site is therefore unlikely to be ecologically important for hedgehog.

- 4.5.29 The Proposed Development has the potential to adversely affect individual hedgehog that may use the Site via direct impacts from machinery or becoming trapped in excavations. This effect is unlikely to be significant, however precautionary measures have been recommended to reduce the likelihood of potential impacts occurring to a negligible level.

Invertebrates

Zol

- 4.5.30 The Zol for invertebrates is considered to be the Site only as this is the only likely area where impacts to invertebrates may occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

- 4.5.31 The biological records search returned nine records of protected or notable invertebrates from within 1km from the Site. Species comprise grey dagger (*Acrionicta psi*), cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*) and rosy rustic (*Hydraecia micacea*), and wall butterfly (*Lasiommata megera*). The closest record



was of wall butterfly recorded c.590m southeast of the Site in 2013.

4.5.32 The Site supports low botanical species diversity, and whilst common invertebrate species likely use the plant species present at the Site as food, larval and egg-laying plants, the likelihood of red data book species or other notable species being present at the Site is negligible.

4.5.33 The Site is therefore unlikely to be important for invertebrates.

Reptiles

Zol

4.5.34 The Zol for reptiles is considered to be the Site only as this is the only likely area where impacts to reptiles may occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

4.5.35 The biological records search returned two records of reptile from within 1km of the Site. Both records were of a grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), with the closest record from 2018 c.108m southeast of the Site.

4.5.36 The Site supports no suitable habitat for reptiles, its regular disturbance by management and isolated urban location suggests that the presence of reptiles at the Site is highly unlikely. It is therefore highly unlikely that the Site is ecologically important for reptiles.

Wild birds

Zol

4.5.37 The Zol for wild birds is the Site only, as this is the only area where impacts to wild birds may occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

4.5.38 The biological records search returned over 120 records of protected and notable bird species from within 1km of the Site. Species recorded since 2000 include barn owl (*Tyto alba*), black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*), fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), red kite (*Milvus milvus*), redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*), cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), spotted flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). The closest record was of swift recorded c.167m west of the Site in 2016.

4.5.39 The Site supports suitable nesting habitat for wild birds via the bramble scrub and associated trees. The grassland at the Site has low suitability for nesting birds owing to the exposed nature of the Site and high risk of predation from other urban species such as fox (*Vulpes vulpes*).

4.5.40 The Site is unlikely to support important populations of wintering, breeding or migratory bird species due to the type of habitats present, their location in a highly disturbed urban environment, and the relatively small size of the Site.

4.5.41 There is a risk of a breach of Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (HMSO, 1981) in relation to damage to/destruction of bird nests and their eggs if scrub vegetation removal is undertaken during the nesting bird season. Mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce the risk of a breach of legislation to a negligible level.

4.5.42 It is unlikely that the Proposed Development will result in significant adverse ecological effects to wild birds, however the potential for a breach in legislation will require mitigation which is detailed within this report.

Protected plants



Zol

- 4.5.43 The Zol for protected plants is the Site only, as this is the only area where impacts to protected plants may occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

Baseline and Assessment of Impacts and Effects

The biological records search returned 26 records of protected or notable plant species from within 1km of the Site. Species include bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*), buck's-horn plantain (*Plantago coronopus*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), corncockle (*Agrostemma githago*), greater celandine (*Chelidonium majus*), lesser chickweed (*Stellaria pallida*), little mouse-ear (*Cerastium semidecandrum*), rye brome (*Bromus secalinus*) and small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*). The closest record was of greater celandine recorded c.314m east of the Site in 2017.

- 4.5.44 Due to the nutrient enriched nature of the Site, its management, the Site is not likely to support protected or notable plant species. No protected or notable plant species were observed at the Site during the field survey.

Invasive Species

- 4.5.45 The biological records search returned 35 records of invasive species from within 1km of the Site. Species comprise hybrid bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta* x *hispanica* = *H. x massartiana*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*), montbretia (*Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora*), Nuttall's waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*), variegated yellow archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum*), wall cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), Himalayan cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster simonsii*), orange balsam (*Impatiens capensis*), Portugal laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*) and white stonecrop (*Sedum album*). The closest record was of wall cotoneaster recorded c.432m southeast of the Site in 2020.
- 4.5.46 The only invasive species noted on the Site was buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*) This was frequent throughout the disused areas of the Site within the bramble scrub. While not a Schedule 9 (HMSO, 1981) invasive species and there are no legal implications of its presence on Site, buddleia can have invasive tendencies and can outcompete less vigorous species, and it is recommended that its presence be controlled where possible.
- 4.5.47 When removing buddleia, the entire plant and its root system must be excavated along with the surrounding soils to make sure all plant matter and seeds are removed. The whole plant and the soil must then be sent to a licensed landfill as controlled waste.



5. Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

5.1 Key Constraints to Design

5.1.1 There are no key constraints to the Proposed Development providing the measures listed below are undertaken.

5.2 Other Mitigation Requirements

Trees

5.2.1 The retained trees should be protected appropriately throughout the construction phase in accordance with BS5837 (BSI, 2012). An arboricultural consultant should be consulted regarding the protection of the trees to be retained on Site, during the construction phase of the development to ensure they remain in good health post-development.

5.2.2 Any trees that must be removed as part of the Proposed Development should be replaced like-for-like with native species as part of a landscaping scheme. Whilst the sycamore and silver birch trees are not ecologically important, they do provide an element of structural diversity and maturity to the Site which would not be readily replaced with planting of smaller/younger trees.

Bat Method Statement

5.2.3 Provided no renovation works are undertaken at the roofs and the internal loft voids of the main building and potential roost features and access points are left intact, impacts to roosting bats can be precluded by taking precautionary working measures as outlined in a Bat Method Statement.

5.2.4 Precautionary measures outlined in the Bat Method Statement should include, but not be limited to, details on timing of works, works to be undertaken under supervision and methods to reduce and avoid the impacts of lighting, noise and vibration.

5.2.5 Should renovation work impact potential roost features or access points, further surveys would need to be undertaken to establish presence/ likely absence of roosting bats at the main building. The requirements of further survey are detailed in Section 5.3.

Hedgehog

5.2.6 It is possible that individual hedgehog may be impacted by Site clearance and excavation works (injury/death and trapping respectively). As a precautionary measure, should mixed scrub be required to be cleared at the Site, this must be checked for hedgehogs immediately prior to removal to reduce the likelihood of adverse effects to this species.

5.2.7 Any open excavations which cannot feasibly be infilled overnight must also be covered with a solid sheet material (i.e., plywood) to prevent fauna from falling into excavations and becoming trapped. Should this not be possible, a shallow slope must be dug into the excavation prior to it being left overnight to allow an escape route for any fauna that may fall in. All excavations must be checked for fauna in the morning prior to work commencing.

Wild Birds

5.2.8 No further surveys for breeding, migratory or wintering birds are required at the Site.

5.2.9 Birds and their nests are legally protected (HMSO, 1981), and many species are listed as Species of Principal Importance (HMSO, 2006). Priority bird species are also afforded protection in planning through national (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2023) and local planning policy.

5.2.10 If the removal of the mixed scrub and associated trees is required on Site to facilitate the Proposed Development, it should avoid the nesting bird season (March to September inclusive) or be



checked by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to clearance to check for nesting birds if undertaken during the nesting season.

5.2.11 The netting of any suitable bird nesting habitat should be prohibited (CIEEM & RSPB, 2019).

5.3 Further Surveys Required

Roosting Bats

5.3.1 Should renovation work impact potential roost features and access points at the roof and loft voids of the main building, further surveys would need to be undertaken to establish presence/ likely absence of roosting bats.

5.3.2 The Grade II section of the main building was assessed as having moderate suitability to support roosting bats and would, therefore, require a minimum of two presence/likely absence bat surveys undertaken between April and October, with at least one survey undertaken between May and August. Additional visits would be required if a roost or roosts were found within the building.

5.3.3 Static detectors may also be placed with loft voids at the Site to passively determine the use of the Site by roosting bats on a longer-term basis for more robust assessment.

5.3.4 Based on recently published interim guidance (BCT, 2022), the bat presence/likely absence surveys would need to be undertaken with the use of Night Vision Aids (NVAs) (i.e., night vision, infrared or thermal imaging cameras) to increase precision during the survey.

5.4 Opportunities for Enhancement

5.4.1 The Proposed Development should also include bird boxes. All of which must be positioned on north-facing aspects, out of direct sunlight (to avoid overheating eggs and chicks) and at a height of c.4m (to avoid predation by domestic cats). The provision of the specific bird boxes listed below will deliver additional nesting opportunities for the aforementioned species listed as Species of Principal Importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (HMSO, 2006) such as sparrow and spotted flycatcher, which are local in the area. These should include:

- General nesting boxes; one bird box with a 25mm entrance hole and one bird box with a 32mm entrance hole, both of which can be placed either on buildings or suitable trees around the Site;
- Sparrow terrace nest boxes, which must be placed on any new building at the Site; and,
- Open-fronted nest boxes which must be placed in well concealed locations within the existing scrub (if retained) to prevent egg and chick predation.

5.4.2 The landscaping design for the Proposed Development should include the planting of a wide-range of native species, including nectar and pollen-rich species, to attract invertebrate prey for a variety of animals in the local area, which will enhance the Sites biodiversity. These can be chosen from the RHS: Perfect for Pollinators List (RHS, 2019).



6. Conclusion

- 6.1.1 No further surveys for protected species are considered to be necessary in respect of the Proposed Development and subsequent planning application provided the roof structure of the Grade II listed building is retained as is and a bat method statement is produced to reduce any residual impacts on retained roosting features to a negligible level.
- 6.1.2 Whilst the Site is unlikely to be important for foraging or commuting bats, any new lighting (permanent or temporary) as part of the Proposed Development must be kept to a minimum and directed away from the peripheries of the Site to preclude the likelihood of disturbance to bats that may utilise the Site occasionally. A wildlife sensitive lighting scheme should be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance (ILP, 2023).
- 6.1.3 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment will be provided separately.
- 6.1.4 Avoidance and good practice construction measures for hedgehogs and nesting birds are necessary to prevent harm to these species and potential breach of legislation.
- 6.1.5 Enhancement measures have been provided for birds as well as planting recommendations.



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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

VERSION: V1 DATE: November 2023
REF NO: 230821 1501 PEA V1 ISSUE



Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan (Google Earth Pro, 2023)



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal








VERSION: V1 DATE: November 2023

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Appendix 2 – UK Habitat Classification Plan



-  Red Line Boundary
-  Bramble scrub
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Modified grassland
-  Vegetated garden
-  Line of trees
-  Individual Tree



Date: 28/11/2023
 Client: Macc group
 Project: Bushloe House
 Title: Baseline BNG

Map file reference	Plan No.
231128 1501 BBNG V1	E001

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

VERSION: V1 DATE: November 2023

REF NO: 230821 1501 PEA V1 ISSUE



Appendix 3 – The Proposed Development Layout



Elements included



Landscape Implementation:
 Hard Landscaping to be completed as soon as possible and practical following completion of the main construction phase.
 Soft Landscape implementation shall be undertaken by the end of the next available planting season following completion of the main construction phase, hard landscaping and during the following periods/conditions:

- Deciduous trees and bare root shrubs/hedging: Late October to late March.
- Container grown plants: At any time that the ground is not frozen or excessively dry.
- Seeding/Turfing: At any time that the ground is not frozen or excessively dry. Ideally Spring or Autumn.

All soft Landscaping to be monitored and watered as necessary until fully established, usually the first summer and spring/autumn dry periods after planting.

Client:
MACCO LIVING

Project: Proposed Care Home Development - Station Road, Wigston
 Drawing: Landscape Layout

Scale: 1:200 @ A1 (All dimensions must be checked on site)

Drawing: 2309MAC-WIG-2
 Date: 24/11/23
 Version: C
 Drawn by: AJC

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PLANNING





Appendix 4 - Local Planning Policy Excerpts (The Borough of Oadby and Wigston , 2019)

Policy 37 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Council will look to support development proposals that proactively seek a net gain and:

- Conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity through minimising loss of valued features in the landscape, such as, hedgerows, woodland, trees, ponds and wetland.

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- Conserve and protect irreplaceable woodland, such as ancient woodland or veteran trees.
- Mitigate for any loss of valuable assets through applying measures for reinstatement, replacement or on / off site compensatory work that will enhance or recreate those habitats in circumstances when loss of the original habitat is unavoidable through development; and,
- Explore opportunities to restore, enhance, create or connect with established natural habitats as an integral feature of the proposed scheme.

Where development will have known detrimental impacts or cause lasting harm to the natural habitats in that location, the Council will compensate for that loss through effective conditions in the planning decision or by seeking developer contributions to contribute towards off-site mitigation measures.

Working in collaboration with developers, as well as local and national agencies with ecological and geological expertise, the Council will identify, conserve, protect and enhance natural assets, so that habitats and species can thrive and help to create rich biodiversity within the Borough for future generations to enjoy.

The Council will also protect trees with Tree Preservation Orders associated to them. All proposals must also take account of the guidance set out in the Council's Tree Strategy.



Appendix 5 - Site Photographs



Figure 1. Eastern elevation of the main building



Figure 2. Southern elevation of the main building



Figure 3. An Internal loft void within the main building



Figure 4. Single-storey outbuilding

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

VERSION: V1 DATE: November 2023
REF NO: 230821 1501 PEA V1 ISSUE



Figure 5. Scots pine dominated tree line at the western boundary



Figure 6. Scots pine dominated tree line at the eastern boundary



Figure 7. Modified grassland habitat on Site



Figure 8. Car parking and the northern boundary of the Site

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