Burlington (previously Whitewater Stables) Bramshill Road Heckfield Hampshire **RG27 0LA**

Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Ref: R3630/a

Report Quality Control Information		
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP (JWEC) was commissioned by Lucy Barney to update a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at Burlington (previously Whitewater Stables) in Heckfield, Hampshire. The updated PEA was commissioned to support a planning application to be submitted to Hart District Council seeking consent for the erection of a replacement dwelling following the demolition of the existing dwelling and barns. This report updates a PEA issued by JWEC in October 2021 (Report ref.: R2863/a).
- 1.1.2 The survey methodology included a desk study (comprising a HBIC 1km data search), a field survey (using UKhab) and a preliminary roost assessment for bats.
- 1.1.3 The desk study found that: the application site falls within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) for the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and two Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones (IRZs); and is surrounded by floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat in the wider Burlington site.
- 1.1.4 The field survey identified the following UKHab habitats: w1g Other broadleaved woodland; u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land; u1b Developed land, sealed surface; u1e Built linear features; and u1b5 Buildings.
- 1.1.5 The preliminary roost assessment assigned the residential dwelling and equestrian buildings negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 1.1.6 Section 10 provides recommendations regarding biodiversity net gain, habitat protection measures, lighting for bats, precautionary mitigation for GCN, precautionary measures for nesting birds and ecological enhancements. It is expected that these recommendations can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1 John Wenman Ecological Consultancy LLP (JWEC) was commissioned by Lucy Barney to update a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at Burlington (previously Whitewater Stables) in Heckfield, Hampshire.
- 2.1.2 The updated PEA was commissioned to support a planning application to be submitted to Hart District Council seeking consent for the erection of a replacement residential dwelling following the demolition of the existing dwelling and barns (see proposed plans in Appendix 6).
- **2.1.3** This report updates a PEA issued by JWEC in October 2021 (Report ref.: R2863/a).

2.2 Site Location and Context

- 2.2.1 Burlington is an expansive equestrian site with a residential dwelling, outdoor menage, equestrian buildings and grazing pasture. The site is located on the southern side of Bramshill Road to the east of the village of Heckfield, in Hampshire (OS grid reference: SU 73907 60911).
- **2.2.2** The site is set in open countryside amongst several residential properties and a cluster of former agricultural buildings. The site is floodplain grazing marsh with a tributary of the River Whitewater running along its eastern boundary. Wiggins Copse ancient and semi-natural woodland is adjacent to the northwest of the site.
- **2.2.3** The application site covers 0.27ha of land at Burlington and includes the access track, residential dwelling, and equestrian buildings.

2.3 Objectives

- **2.3.1** The aim of this updated PEA is to understand the nature of the site and assess its ecological value. The key objectives are to:
 - identify any likely ecological constraints associated with the planning proposals;
 - establish appropriate mitigation measures in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy (i.e. avoid > minimise > remediate > compensate);
 - determine any additional surveys that may be required following on from this preliminary stage; and
 - recognise opportunities to deliver ecological enhancements in line with national and local planning policy.

3 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

3.1 Overview

- **3.1.1** The following legislation is considered relevant for the purpose of this preliminary ecological appraisal:
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act (W&CA) 1981 (as amended)
 - Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations ('Habitat') Regulations 2017 (as amended)
 - Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
 - Protection of Badgers Act 1992
 - Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996
- 3.1.2 These acts hold relevance to both protected and invasive species and the degree of protection varies depending on faunal/floral group or species. For example, some species of European importance receive full protection within the UK under the Habitat Regulations (e.g. bats), whereas others, may only be afforded protection through national legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (e.g. common lizard). For a detailed overview of species-specific legislation, please refer to Appendix 1.

3.2 European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing

- **3.2.1** The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for issuing European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences, which permit activities that would otherwise lead to an infringement of the Habitat Regulations 2017. An EPS mitigation licence can be issued if the following three tests have been met:
 - **Regulation 55(9)(a)** there is "*no satisfactory alternative*" to the derogation;
 - **Regulation 55(9)(b)** the derogation "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range"; and
 - **Regulation 55(2)(e)** the derogation is for the purposes of "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".

3.2.2 Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have a statutory duty under Regulation 7(3e) of the Habitat Regulations 2017 to regard requirements of the Habitats Directive in the exercise of their functions. Consequently, the LPA must consider and determine whether these three tests are likely to be satisfied by an application affecting EPS before granting planning permission.

4 PLANNING POLICY

4.1 National Planning Policy

- **4.1.1** The ODPM Circular 06/2005 provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation in England, stating that 'the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.'
- **4.1.2** The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in September 2023, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Section 15 of the NPPF sets out the approach local authorities should adopt to conserve and enhancing the natural environment when preparing planning policy and when considering planning applications. Paragraph 180 sets out the principles local authorities should apply when determining planning applications as follows:

180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be

encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

4.2 Local Planning Policy

- **4.2.1** Hart District Council Local Plan (2032) was adopted in April 2020 and this now forms part of the development plan for the Borough. *Policy NBE 4 Biodiversity* sets out the Council's approach to nature and biodiversity conservation when considering planning applications as follows:
 - a) It will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international, national or locally designated site including the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (S INCs) and National and Local Nature Reserves (NN Rs and LN Rs). The level of protection afforded to these sites is commensurate with their status within this hierarchy and gives appropriate weight to their importance and contribution to wider ecological networks;
 - b) It does not result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss;
 - c) Opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity are taken where possible, including the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations. All development proposals will be expected to avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible.

If significant harm 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, or, in the case of European Protected sites does not comply with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, then planning permission will be refused.

5 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

5.1 Desk Study

- 5.1.1 A desktop study was conducted by Meghan Porter an experienced ecologist and qualifying member of CIEEM after visiting the site. The study utilised data from the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) and online resources to acquire information on the nature of the site and its surroundings and highlight any potential ecological features.
- 5.1.2 HBIC was commissioned to undertake a search of pre-existing records of protected and/or notable species and non-statutorily designated wildlife sites held by them within a 1km radius around a central point inside the site. NatureSpace impact risk zone maps were consulted which accurately predict great crested newt (GCN) presence through the analysis of habitat suitability in the landscape.
- 5.1.3 The DEFRA Data Services Platform was used to obtain geospatial datasets for designated sites (i.e., RAMSAR, SPA, SAC, SSSI) and habitat inventories (i.e., Priority Habitat Inventory, Ancient Woodland Inventory) to be analysed in QGIS. The Multi-Agency Geographical Information Centre (MAGIC) website was examined for granted European Protected Species (EPS) licence applications. Furthermore, open access geospatial datasets and Google Earth satellite imagery were used to determine the extent and connectivity of habitats, how the site is linked to the surrounding landscape and whether the development could have wider scale impacts on biodiversity.
- **5.1.4** Google Earth satellite imagery was consulted to provide insight into historic and current land use; such information helps contextualise the continuity of habitats and determine the importance of existing ecological features.

5.2 Field Survey

5.2.1 A site walkover was undertaken on the 28th November 2023 by Vicky Potts MCIEEM and Meghan Porter – a qualifying member of CIEEM. The site was surveyed using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) system (UKHab Ltd. 2023) in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal 2nd Edition (CIEEM 2017). Particular attention was given to evidence of protected and priority species (NERC Act 2006 Section 41 species of principal importance) and the site's potential to support such species.

5.2.2 Photographs of habitats and ecological features were taken during the site walkover and mapped using QGIS software after the survey visit (Appendices 2 & 3). Plant species were recorded to aid habitat classification and are detailed in Appendix 4.

5.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 5.3.1 A survey of the interior and exterior of the residential dwelling and the equestrian buildings was undertaken on the 28th November 2023 by Vicky Potts registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Registration no.: 2016-27162-CLS-CLS) and Meghan Porter registered under Natural England Bat Survey Class Licence CL17 (Registration no.: 2023-11300-CL17-BAT).
- 5.3.2 The survey was undertaken with the aid of binoculars and a high power (1 million candle power) torch, systematically searching for signs of bat occupation and features that could offer potential roosting sites following standard survey guidelines (Collins 2023; Mitchell-Jones & McLeish 2004; Reason & Wray 2023).
- **5.3.3** The following may indicate the presence of a bat roost within a building:
 - Bat droppings (these can be found externally, especially in sheltered areas such as window sills, underneath roost entrances or internally within a roof space);
 - Piles of insect remains, e.g. moth wings (these may be indicative of regular feeding sites used by species such as the brown long eared bat);
 - Staining at roost entrances or within the roost (urine and oil from fur can leave stains on timbers when bats are gathered for long periods); and
 - Bats (live or dead).
- **5.3.4** Residential and equestrian buildings may offer potential roosting sites in a number of locations favoured locations include:
 - Under roof and ridge coverings, especially when loose or lifted tiles are present, or sections of mortar are missing;
 - At the gable ends access is typically gained at the roof apex via gaps in the soffits or under roof coverings;
 - At the eaves gaining access via gaps between the soffits and wall; and

• Within an enclosed roof space – brown long-eared bats for example will often cluster at the ridge beam.

5.4 Survey Constraints

- **5.4.1** Full access was available to the site and therefore there were no significant access constraints during the survey work.
- 5.4.2 All ecological survey work is subject to seasonal constraints because not all plant and animal species are visible throughout the year and therefore the report represents a snapshot of the site at the time of the survey only. The plant species list in Appendix 4 should not be considered a comprehensive list of species present.
- **5.4.3** It should be noted that it is not always possible to inspect all potential roost locations during a survey, particularly for crevice-dwelling bats which roost behind roof lining and inside wall cavities. Therefore, an absence of bat evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence of bat absence.

6 DESK STUDY FINDINGS

6.1 Designated Sites and Habitats

6.1.1 The desk study highlighted: one statutory designated international site within a 5km radius of the application site; two non-statutory designated national sites within a 2km radius; and 11 non-statutory designated sites within a 1km radius (see Tables 1a & 1b).

Site name	Designation	Description	Distance from
			nearest site boundary (m)
Thames Basin Heath	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Thames Heath SPA is classified under Article 4.1 of EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive). The site consists of tracts of heathland, scrub and woodland. The site supports important breeding populations of a number of birds of lowland heathland, especially nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i> and woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i> , both of which nest on the ground, often at the woodland/heathland edge, and Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i> , which often nests in gorse <i>Ulex</i> sp.	823 NE
Bramshill	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	This site covers an area of 671ha and is notified for a series of shallow acid ponds and associated mire, which support a rich assemblage of dragonfly and damselfly, and rotationally felled conifer plantation, which provides habitat for internationally important populations of nightjar, woodlark and Dartford warbler.	823 NE
Hazeley Heath	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	The site covers 177ha and features heathland that embraces a wide range of heathland plant communities including; heather <i>Calluna</i> <i>vulgaris</i> /bell heather <i>Erica cinerea</i> dry heath; Calluna /purple moor-grass <i>Molinia caerulea</i> /cross-leaved heath <i>Erica tetralix</i> 'humid' heath; and extensive dense monospecific stands of gorse <i>Ulex europaeus</i> . Wet heath and incipient bog plant communities occur around and below a spring line on the easterly-facing slopes of the common.	1185 S

Table 1a. Statutor	/ designated sites within the vici	nity of the site (Source: DEFRA).

Table 1h Non statutony	designated sites within the vicin	ity of the site (Source: UPIC)

Site name	Designation	Criteria	Distance from nearest site boundary (m)
River Whitewater	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The river covers an area of 12.52ha and supports stands of emergent and floating vegetation.	170 E
Wiggins Copse & Heckfield Place Park (East)	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 18.94ha and contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, agriculturally unimproved grasslands which are not of recent origin and supports one or more Hampshire notable species; opposite-leaved pondweed (<i>Groenlandia densa</i>) and royal fern (<i>Osmunda</i> <i>regalis</i>).	200 NW

Hatchgate Farm Meadows	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site includes agriculturally unimproved grasslands which are not of recent origin and supports one or more Hampshire notable species; blister sedge (<i>Carex vesicaria</i>).	305 E
Vinall's Copse	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 4.32ha, contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.	380 SE
B3011 Reading Road, Grouse Green	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 0.17ha and contains one or more Hampshire notable species; <i>Umbilicus rupestris</i> (CS, nHR) and <i>Fallopia</i> <i>dumetorum</i> (s41, CR, NS and IUCN Vulnerable).	430 SW
Great Danmoor Copse	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 27.38ha, contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodlands such as alder or willow woods and birch bog woods which support a good diversity of woodland and/or marsh species and contains one or more Hampshire notable species; climbing corydalis (<i>Ceratocapnos claviculata</i>) and wood horsetail (<i>Equisetum sylvaticum</i>).	460 SW
Park Farm Site 1	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 0.86ha and contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland.	500 N
Laundry Lane	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 0.46ha and contains one or more Hampshire notable species; copse bindweed (<i>Fallopia dumetorum</i>).	900 W
Moorlane Copse	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 2.88ha and contains areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland.	915 S
Netherclifts Copse	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 5.16ha and contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland.	965 SE
Cunningham's Copse	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)	The site covers an area of 7.28ha, contains areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, wet woodlands such as alder or willow woods and birch bog woods which support a good diversity of woodland and/or marsh species and contains one or more Hampshire notable species; climbing corydalis (<i>Ceratocapnos claviculata</i>).	980 W

6.1.2 The wider Burlington site is mapped as floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat (NERC Act 2006 Section 41 habitats of principle importance) but the application site itself does not feature this priority habitat.

6.2 Protected and Notable Species

6.2.1 The search of the HBIC database revealed a range of protected and/or notable species records dating from the 1990s onwards; no records were

found for the application site. Only recent records defined as fewer than ten years old are included in this report (see Tables 2a & 2b).

Common name	Scientific name	No. of records	Most recent record	Nearest record (m)	Precision (m)	Status
Terrestrial Mam	mals (excl. bats)					·
Eurasian badger	Meles meles	1	2019	915	1000	PBA 1992
Bats						
Daubentons	Myotis daubentonii	1	2015	617	10	Hab_4 HabReg_2 NERC_s41 WCA_5s94b/c
Noctule	Nyctalus noctula	7	2015	617	10	Hab_4 HabReg_2 NERC_s41 WCA_5s94b/c
Common pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pipistrellus	9	2015	617	10	Hab_4 HabReg_2 NERC_s41 WCA_5s94b/c
Soprano pipistrelle	Pipistrellus pygmaeus	10	2016	617	10	Hab_4 HabReg_2 NERC_s41 WCA_5s94b/c
Brown long- eared	Plecotus auritus	2	2015	731	10	Hab_4 HabReg_2 NERC_s41 WCA_5s94b/c
Birds						
Peregrine	Falco peregrinus	1	2019	0	100	WCA_s1p1
Brambling	Fringilla montifringilla	1	2018	136	1000	WCA_s1p1
Woodlark	Lullula arborea	1	2018	136	1000	WCA_s1p1 NERC_s41
Red Kite	Milvus milvus	4	2021	136	1000	WCA_s1p1
Redwing	Turdus iliacus	1	2021	136	1000	WCA_s1p1 BOCC Red
Lesser redpoll	Acanthis cabaret	1	2021	136	1000	NERC_s41 BOCC Red
Skylark	Alauda arvensis	2	2021	899	1000	NERC_s41 BOCC Red
Nightjar	Caprimulgus europaeus	3	2017	136	1000	NERC_s41
Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus	4	2021	899	1000	NERC_s41 BOCC Red
House sparrow	Passer domesticus	2	2021	899	1000	NERC_s41 BOCC Red
Bullfinch	Pyrrhula pyrrhula	3	2018	136	1000	NERC_s41
Turtle dove	Streptopelia turtur	2	2018	136	1000	NERC_s41 BOCC Red
Invertebrates						
Small heath	Coenonympha pamphilus	1	2013	899	1000	UK BAP Priority, NERC S41
White admiral	Limenitis camilla	1	2017	917	100	NERC S41

Table 2a. Recent protected and/or notable species records within the vicinity of the site (Source: HBIC).

Table 2b. Species status key.

Abbreviation	Legislation		
Hab_2np	Annex II of the Habitats Directive (non-priority species) - Endangered animal and		

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	plant species that are of Community interest (i.e. endangered, vulnerable, rare or
	endemic in the European Community) requiring the designation of special areas of
	conservation.
Hab_4	Annex IV of the Habitats Directive - Animal and plant species of Community interest
	(i.e. endangered, vulnerable, rare or endemic in the European Community) in need
	of strict protection. They are protected from killing, disturbance or the destruction of
	them or their habitat
HabReg_2	Schedule 2 of Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (European
	Protected Species animal) - It is an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately
	capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2.
NERC_s41	Priority Species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural
	Communities Act 2006.
WCA_1p1	Schedule 1 Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – birds
	protected from disturbance at their nests, or their dependent young.
WCA_5s91t	Schedule 5 Section 9 Part 1 (taking) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as
	amended) - Animals which are protected from being taken.
WCA_5s94b/c	Schedule 5 Section 9 Parts 4b/c of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as
	amended) - Animals which are protected from intentional disturbance while
	occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection / Animals which are
	protected from their access to any structure or place which they use for shelter or
	protection being obstructed.
PBA	Protection of Badgers Act 1992

- **6.2.2** The NatureSpace great crest newt (GCN) impact map depicts that the application site falls within a green risk zone; these are defined as comprising moderately suitable habitat where GCN may be present.
- **6.2.3** Two ponds that could potentially support breeding GCN were identified within a 500m radius of the application site: one pond at Burlington approximately 110m west; and second pond approximately 465m west.

6.3 Historic and Current Land Use

6.3.1 Google Earth Satellite imagery dating back to 1999 shows that there has not been a significant change in the land use within the application site boundary.

7 FIELD SURVEY FINDINGS

7.1 Overview

- **7.1.1** The application site covered 0.27ha of land at Burlington and included an access track, residential dwelling and equestrian buildings.
- 7.1.2 The following UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) habitats were observed during the site walkover: w1g Other broadleaved woodland; u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land; u1b Developed land, sealed surface; u1e Built linear features; and u1b5 Buildings.
- 7.1.3 The UKHab primary habitats and secondary codes are described below; associated photographs are displayed in Appendix 2 and the habitat survey is mapped in Appendix 3.

7.2 w1g Other broadleaved woodland

33 Line of trees/ 516 Active management

7.2.1 There was a line of trees to the rear of a stable block that had been recently coppiced, including ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), willow (*Salix* sp.) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with sparse ivy (*Hedera helix*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) ground cover (**Photograph 1**). There was also a line of young ash trees between a stable and hay barn with patchy bramble, ivy and dog rose (*Rosa canina*) (**Photograph 2**).

7.3 u1f Sparsely vegetated urban land

32 Scattered trees/ 81 Ruderal or ephemeral

7.3.1 The ground was sparsely vegetated between buildings with ephemeral species including buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), common mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.)
(Photograph 3). A group of recently pollarded trees was present between the hay barn and small storage barn (Photograph 4). There was also semimature ash and lime (*Tilia x europaea*) trees and a mature goat willow (*Salix caprea*) present behind buildings (Photograph 5).

7.4 u1b – Developed land, sealed surface

32 Scattered trees

7.4.1 Concrete hard standing was present around the buildings (Photographs 6).There was a coppiced sycamore tree next to the large barn and a semi-

mature oak (*Quercus robur*) tree present next to the stable block (**Photographs 7 & 8**).

7.5 u1e Built linear features

7.5.1 Concrete hard standing continued along the access track up to Bramshill Road to the north of the application site (Photograph 9).

7.6 u1b5 Buildings

7.6.1 There were various buildings on site: a large barn (B1); a large stable block (B2); a small stable and storage barn (B3); a hay barn (B4); a storage barn (B5) and a residential dwelling (B6). A description of the buildings are detailed in the Preliminary Roost Assessment in Section 8.

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8 PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 Photographs of the buildings are presented in Appendix 2; their location is illustrated on the survey plan in Appendix 3; and a plan of the external and internal survey findings with associated target notes is shown in Appendix
5. The survey findings from the exterior and interior of the buildings are described as follows:

8.2 Large Barn (B1)

8.2.1 The walls of the barn were of breeze-block construction, with windows present at the top of the walls and a large double barn door on the northern elevation (Photograph 10; Target note 1). The roof was made of corrugated asbestos sheeting and internally was open to the roof, with a floor to ridge height of approximately 6 metres (Photograph 11; Target note 2). There was a mezzanine level at the rear of the building, with evidence of a bird nest in the eaves and bird droppings visible below the rafters (Photographs 12 & 13; Target note 3 & 4).

8.3 Large Stable Block (B2)

8.3.1 The walls of the stable block were of breeze-block construction, with some damage present on the eastern side, and open doors on the northern and western elevation (Photograph 14). Raised metal vents were present at the ridge of the building, which were tight to the asbestos sheeting (Photograph 15; Target note 5 & 6). The roof was open internally, with a floor to ridge height of 3.5 metres, with the ridge heavily cobwebbed (Photograph 16; Target note 7). There were old wasp nests and a couple of old bird nests visible along the ridge of the building (Target note 8).

8.4 Small stable, hay barn and storage barns (B3-5)

8.4.1 All three barns were of similar size and condition, with open walls on the southern side of the buildings (Photographs 17 - 19). They were all open to the roof internally all featured a raised metal vent on the top of the ridge, which was tight to the corrugated asbestos sheet roof (Target notes 9 & 10). There was boarding present over old windows on the sides of walls of B4 with a gap present at the bottom of the boarding but the gap was open internally and was heavily cobwebbed (Photograph 20; Target note 11). There was ivy growth present on the southern side of B5, which grew up onto the roof (Photograph 21; Target note 12).

8.4.2 Internally, all three buildings were open to the roof, and there were water tanks on wooden planks above the rafters within the small stable and hay barn (Photograph 22 & 23). The rafters were heavily cobwebbed throughout all three barns (Photograph 24; Target note 13). There was vegetation growing over the walls in B3 and B4, and a large hole in the roof of B4 where a tree branch was visible (Photographs 25 & 26; Target notes 14 & 15).

8.5 Residential Building (B6)

- 8.5.1 The residential dwelling was a single storey building that had uPVC windows on its eastern and western elevations (Photograph 27 & 28). The roof was corrugated asbestos sheeting which was mossy (Photograph 29; Target note 16). The barge board along the eaves was tight to the wall (Photograph 30; Target note 17).
- 8.5.2 Internally a small roof void had an approximate floor to ridge height of 0.75 metres and extended the full length of the building. The ridge was heavily cobwebbed throughout, and the floor was un-boarded with joists and ceiling boards visible (Photograph 31; Target notes 18 & 19). The roof was unlined, with daylight visible beneath the corrugated asbestos and the eaves were open (Photograph 32; Target note 20). The southern gable end was of breezeblock construction, which was tight to the roof, and daylight was visible at the northern gable end, which was boarded, with fibreglass insulation present beneath the wall (Photograph 33; Target note 21).

9 DISCUSSION

9.1 Assessment of Existing Ecological Value

Designated sites

- 9.1.1 The desk study revealed that the application site is not statutorily or nonstatutorily designated for its wildlife interest and therefore is not currently recognised as being of international, national or county level conservation significance. However, the site does fall within the Bramshill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Hazeley Heath SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) and the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) Zone of Influence (ZoI).
- **9.1.2** The desk study data included 11 locally designated sites within a 1km radius of the application site; the closest is the River Whitewater Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) which is approximately 170 metres to the east of the site.

Habitats

9.1.3 The application site is characterised by various buildings (residential and equestrian), hard standing, sparsely vegetated land and tree-lines – urban habitats of very low to low distinctiveness. Although there are no priority habitats (NERC Act 2006 Section 41 habitats of principle importance) within the application site boundary, the desk study revealed that the wider site of Burlington is floodplain grazing marsh priority habitat.

Bats

- **9.1.4** The desk study data included local records of Daubenton's bat, noctule, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and brown long-eared bat. The trees present around the buildings do not have any potential roost features and do not resemble an important commuting/foraging resource for bats in the local area.
- 9.1.5 The equestrian buildings (B1-B5) on site offered no external or internal features with potential to support roosting bats. The buildings lacked sheltered crevices or roosting sites suitable for use by roosting bats and are therefore considered to have negligible bat roost potential. Although the residential dwelling (B6) had an internal roof void, there was no evidence of roosting bats and it was a sub-optimal size for typically void-dwelling

species; these findings indicate that this building also has negligible suitability for roosting bats.

Hazel dormice

9.1.6 Hazel dormice favour dense habitat connected to woodland that allows animals to move easily through habitats without coming to the ground (English Nature 2006). There were no contemporary records of hazel dormice in the search radius of the application site and no suitable on-site habitat. A search of MAGIC showed no dormice mitigation licences within 2km radius of the site and as such, no further consideration of hazel dormice is made within this report.

Great Crested Newt (and other amphibians)

- 9.1.7 The desk study data included no recent records of great crested newt (GCN) and a search of MAGIC for granted EPS licence application returned non within a 2km radius. The NatureSpace GCN impact map shows the application site falling within a green risk zone; these zones are defined as moderately suitable habitat where GCN may be present.
- **9.1.8** Two ponds that could potentially support breeding GCN were identified within a 500m radius of the application site: one pond at Burlington approximately 110m west; and second pond approximately 465m west.

Reptiles

No records of reptiles were present within the background data search and the urban habitats within the application site boundary are of negligible suitability for basking or commuting reptiles. Beyond the application site boundary at Burlington, the current management of the grassland, i.e. permanent grazing, in the immediate surrounding area offer only opportunistic basking or commuting habitats for reptiles. As such, no further consideration of reptiles is made within this report.

Nesting birds

9.1.9 The tree lines around the buildings are likely to provide some limited nesting and foraging opportunities for common and widespread bird species. It is unlikely that the application site supports assemblages of species of conservation importance. The equestrian buildings had some evidence of

nesting birds, in the form of bird droppings below rafters and old nests, none of which were in use at the time of the survey.

Badgers (and other mammals)

9.1.10 There are no records of badger setts and individuals within the search radius and there was no evidence of badger activity on site (i.e. sett entrances). The urban habitats within the survey site are unlikely to support badgers, however there is woodland and grassland present within the wider Burlington site, which offers foraging habitat for badgers and is well-connected to suitable surrounding rural landscape. However, badgers are considered highly unlikely to be present in the application site and as such, no further consideration of this species is made within this report.

Invertebrates

9.1.11 The habitats within the survey site boundary are considered unlikely to support invertebrate assemblages of conservation importance. As such, no further consideration of invertebrates is made within this report.

9.2 Impact of Proposals

Summary of proposals

9.2.1 The planning proposals involve the erection of a replacement dwelling following the demolition of the existing dwelling and barns (see proposed plans in Appendix 6).

9.2.2 Designated sites and habitats

- **9.2.3** There will be no increase in residential units on the site so there will be no additional recreational pressure on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. Furthermore, the planning proposals do not fall into any categories specified in the IRZ for the SSSI and are not of a nature i.e. involve no physical changes to the site, that would directly affect any of the statutorily or non-statutorily designated sites.
- 9.2.4 Although the proposals will affect habitats of very low to low distinctiveness, biodiversity net gain will be calculated to demonstrate that the planning proposals can achieve at least a 10% net gain for biodiversity (refer to recommendations in Section 10). The semi-mature goat willow and trees neighbouring the site boundary will be retained; protection measures should

be adopted to prevent damage from construction activities (refer to recommendations in **Section 10**).

Bats

- 9.2.5 The demolition of the outbuildings on site and removal of the young trees around the buildings will not have an impact on bats or their roosts and therefore the removal of these buildings and trees would not require a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence to proceed lawfully.
- **9.2.6** The proposals will not have an adverse impact on the availability of foraging or commuting habitat for bats locally. Furthermore, there is unlikely to be a significant increase in artificial lighting on site and therefore the risk that illumination will cause disturbance to bats is low; however, external lighting should be designed to minimise adverse impacts to nocturnal wildlife (refer to recommendations in **Section 10**).

Great Crested Newt (and other amphibians)

9.2.7 The Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment Tool was used to assess the risk of the proposals adversely affecting GCN. Based on the assumption that both ponds located within a 500m radius of the application site support breeding GCN, the Tool indicates that the loss of or damage to 0.1-0.5ha of land is highly unlikely to result in an offence (see **Table 3** below), particularly if non-licensed avoidance measures are adopted during construction (refer to recommendations in **Section 10**).

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.1
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.005
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.1
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

Guidance on risk assessment result categories

"Green: offence highly unlikely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. Therefore, no licence would be required. However, bearing in mind that this is a generic assessment, you should carefully examine your specific plans to ensure this is a sound conclusion, and take precautions (see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**) to avoid offences if appropriate. It is likely that any residual offences would have negligible impact on conservation status, and enforcement of such breaches is unlikely to be in the public interest.

Nesting birds

9.2.8 Precautionary measures must be adopted for the removal of trees and demolition of the buildings to avoid damaging and/or destroying bird nests and ensuring work is undertaken lawfully (refer to recommendations in Section 10).

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Habitats

- 10.1.1 A biodiversity net gain (BNG) strategy should be developed to guide the scheme at the design stage. The appropriate tool (i.e. DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric) should be used to calculate the losses and gains in biodiversity unit value resulting from the proposed development. A technical report should demonstrate how the proposed design can achieve at least 10% net gain for biodiversity (N.B in situations where the proposed scheme cannot achieve a net gain on site, a mechanism will be identified for delivering a net gain in biodiversity off site).
- **10.1.2** The semi-mature goat willow and trees neighbouring the site should be protected during construction to avoid damage to root systems, particularly those adjacent to the access track. The following protection measures are recommended:
 - Erection of Heras fencing in advance of site clearance, enclosing tree Root Protection Areas (RPAs);
 - Prohibition of construction activities, material storage, use of vehicles, fires etc. within the fenced RPAs to prevent damage to tree roots and compaction of the soil; and
 - Compliance with up-to-date pollution prevention guidelines and environmental protection legislation to mitigation any impacts of ground disturbance, surface water flow, dust and chemicals.

10.2 Bats

- **10.2.1** During construction, external lighting should be kept to a minimum and if security lighting is required, this should be controlled by passive infra-red motion sensors with no light spillage onto trees neighbouring the site.
- **10.2.2** In the long-term, dark corridors should be retained on site along existing boundaries thereby maintaining foraging and commuting corridors for bats across the site, i.e. trees neighbouring the site. Exterior lighting on the replacement dwelling should be avoided, particularly facing onto trees neighbouring the site, but where essential the lighting should make use of low UV lamps, e.g. warm white LED lamps, and be controlled using passive infrared sensors so that lighting operates only when necessary.

10.3 Great Crested Newt

- **10.3.1** To avoid the very small risk of contravening legislation and harming individual great crested newts (GCN) during the works, the following precautionary avoidance measures will be adopted during the construction phase:
 - During construction, any open excavations and trenches should be backfilled before nightfall or alternatively, escape ramps should be installed to allow individual GCN (and other small animals) to escape if they become trapped;
 - Any building materials or materials excavated during the development that need to be stored on site prior to use/disposal should be positioned on hard standing and raised off the ground on pallets or in skips to avoid them providing temporary resting places or hibernation sites for individual GCN; and
 - In the unlikely event that GCN is encountered during the construction phase, the works will stop immediately and a licensed ecologist will be called onto site to attend to the GCN and liaise with Natural England on how to proceed; work will continue only once written advice has been received.

10.4 Nesting Birds

10.4.1 Any proposed removal of the trees and the demolition of the outbuildings should be timed to avoid the peak bird nesting (March to August inclusive) or after a check to confirm that birds are not nesting currently within the buildings or development area. If nesting birds are discovered during the course of the works, work should stop immediately and should continue only once the bird nesting has finished, i.e. young have fledged and left the nest.

10.5 Ecological Enhancement

10.5.1 The development proposals could provide opportunities for the enhancement of the site's biodiversity value and to deliver a net gain in biodiversity. The inclusion of the following recommendations would be of ecological benefit and be in line with the Nation Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

- The aim of the landscaping should be to increase the structural diversity and species diversity of the site. The proposed new garden and boundaries should seek to enhance the ecological value of the site by making use of native plant species of local provenance and replace all trees that have been lost.
- Enhancement of the retained grassland within the ownership boundary to increase species diversity, where possible periodic grazing or a hay meadow cutting regime could be used;
- If fencing is necessary it should be open such as post or rail or have gaps on opposing boundaries to allow the free movement of wildlife such as badgers and hedgehogs across the site.
- The provision of bird nest boxes at the eaves of the new garage on site for Priority Species such as the house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) or nest cups inside any open stables for swallows (*Hirundo rustica*).
- There is scope for bat roosting features to be incorporated into the new residential dwelling to provide crevice roosting opportunities for bats, such as integral or external bat boxes in the new walls of the building.

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APPENDIX 1 – LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Amphibians

The seven native species of amphibian receive protection under the W&AC 1981 (as amended). The four widespread and common amphibians (common frog, toad, smooth newt and palmate newt) receive only limited protection – making their sale illegal.

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) receives full protection under the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and under the Habitat Regulations 2019. The combined legislation makes it illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a great crested newt;
- possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb great crested newts; in particular, any
 disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or
 reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating
 animals, to hibernate or migrate.

Great crested newts (*T. cristatus*) and common toads (*Bufo bufo*) are species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Badgers

Badgers are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The Act makes activities such as development that would harm or disturb badgers or damage, obstruct or destroy their setts illegal. If badgers are to be affected by the proposed development, activities can be undertaken only under a licence issued by Natural England.

Bats

All bat species in Britain are fully protected by the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and by the Habitat Regulations 2019. In summary, the combined legislation makes it an offence to:

 damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a bat;

- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of bats to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating bats, to hibernate or migrate; or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
- deliberately kill, injure or take any bat.

Birds

All wild birds are protected under the W&CA 1981 (as amended). The Act makes it an offence to kill, injure or take a wild bird or to damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird whilst in use or being built. Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, such as barn owls and kingfishers, are afforded additional protection against disturbance while nesting.

Hazel dormice

Hazel dormice receive full protection under the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and under the Habitat Regulations 2019. These make it illegal to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a dormouse;
- possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a dormouse;
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by a dormouse; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb dormice; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or in the case of hibernating or migrating animals, to hibernate or migrate.

Invasive non-native plants

The W&CA 1981 (as amended) provides the primary controls on the release of nonnative species into the wild in Great Britain. It is an offence under Section 14(2) of the Act to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9, Part II. The species listed in the Act include Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Otters

Otters are fully protected by the W&CA 1981 (as amended) and by the Habitat Regulations 2019. In summary, the combined legislation makes it an offence to:

- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place or intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter by an otter;
- deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb otters; in particular, any disturbance which is likely to impair the ability of otters to survive, breed or reproduce or nurture their young; or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species; and
- deliberately kill, injure or take any otter.

Reptiles

The four widespread reptiles most likely to be encountered (adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard) are protected under the W&CA 1981 (as amended). The Act makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure, possess or sell any of the species.

The aforementioned species are all listed as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Water voles

Since April 2008, water voles have received full protection under Section 9 in Schedule 5 of the W&CA 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take water voles or to possess or control live or dead water voles or derivatives. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose.

The water vole is listed as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England (*'UKBAP Priority Species'*) under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Wild mammals

Under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 it is an offence to intentionally inflict unnecessary suffering, as specified by the Act, on any wild mammal.

APPENDIX 2 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



1. Line of young trees to the rear of the large stable block (B2) which had been recently coppiced (w1g 33 517).



3. Ruderal and ephemeral between the storage barn (B5) and residential (B6) (u1f 81).



5. Young ash tree and semi-mature goat willow tree to the north of the buildings (32).



2. Line of young trees between the small stable block (B3) and hay barn (B4) with bramble scrub present to the rear (w1g 33 and h3d)



4. Recently coppiced trees present between the hay barn (B4) and storage barn (B5) (u1f 32 517).



6. Large concrete areas to the rear of the large barn (B1) (u1b).



7. Immature sycamore tree to the rear of the large storage barn (B1) (32).



9. Concrete and gravel driveway leading to the north of the site (u1e).



11. Internally open to the ceiling with the underside of corrugated sheets visible (B1).



8. Semi-mature oak tree to the rear of the large stable block (B2) (32).



10. Large storage building viewed from the north-west (B1).



12. Bird droppings present below rafters on raised mezzanine level to the rear of the building (B1).



13. Small old birds nest present on the blockwork wall in the open eaves (B1).



15. Breezeblock walls and stables within the building, internally open to the roof (B2).



17. Small stable block viewed from the south (B3).



14. Large stable block viewed from the northern elevation (B2).



16. The rafters and ridge were heavily cobwebbed throughout (B2).



18. Hay barn viewed from the south (B4).



19. Small storage barn viewed from the south (B5).



21. Ivy growth on the southern side of the small storage barn (B5).



23. Open to the roof internally with an old, raised water tank present (B4).



20. The sides of the hay barn featured boarding over old windows, with gaps externally that were very cobwebbed and open internally (B4).



22. Open to the roof internally with an old, raised water tank present (B3).



24. Cobwebbed throughout rafters and around raised vent (B3).



25. Ivy growing over open eaves (B5).



26. Hole in corrugated sheet roofing due to tree branch at the rear corner of the small storage building (B5).



27. Residential building viewed from the eastern elevation (B6).



28. Residential building viewed from the southern elevation (B6).



29. Mossy corrugated metal sheeting (B6).



30. Tight timber barge board below the gutter along the eaves (B6).



31. Heavily cobwebbed ridge and un-boarded floor within the roof void (B6).

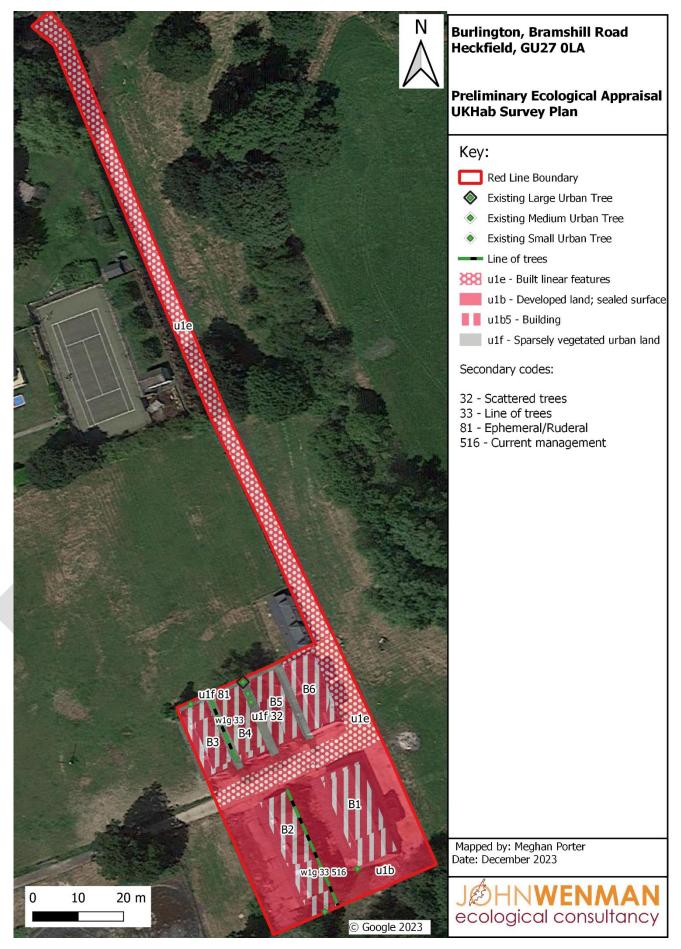


 Boarded northern gable, with daylight visible and fibreglass insulation present below wall (B6).



32. Daylight visible at the open eaves (B6).

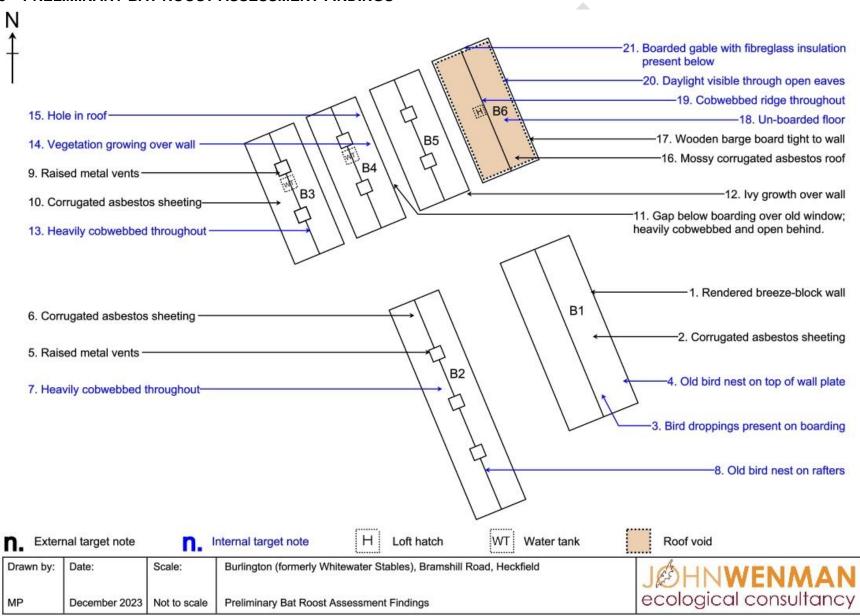
APPENDIX 3 – UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION SURVEY PLAN



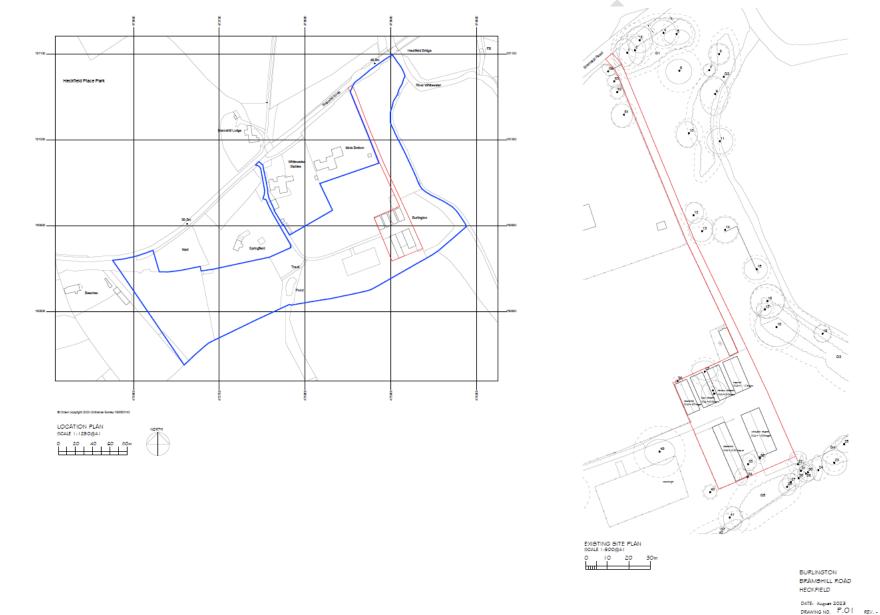
APPENDIX 4 – PLANT SPECIES LIST

Common name	Scientific name
Bramble	Rubus fruticosus
Broadleaved dock	Rumex obtusifolius
Buttercup	Ranunculus repens
Common mouse-ear	Cerastium fontanum
Creeping bent	Agrostis stolonifera
Dandelion	Taraxacum agg.
Dog rose	Rosa canina
European ash	Fraxinus excelsior
Goat willow	Salix caprea
lvy	Hedera helix
Lime	Tilia x europaea
Nettle	Urtica dioica
Oak	Quercus robur
Ragwort	Jacobaea vulgaris
Spear thistle	Cirsium vulgare
Springy turf moss	Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus
Sycamore	Acer pseudoplatanus
Willow species	Salix sp.
Yorkshire fog	Holcus lanatus

APPENDIX 5 – PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT FINDINGS



Burlington (previously Whitewater Stables), Heckfield - Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (R3630a).docx



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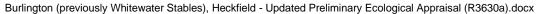
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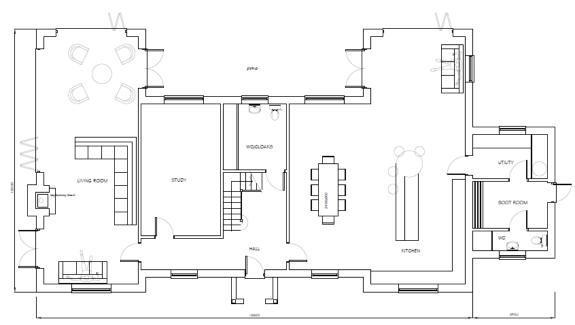
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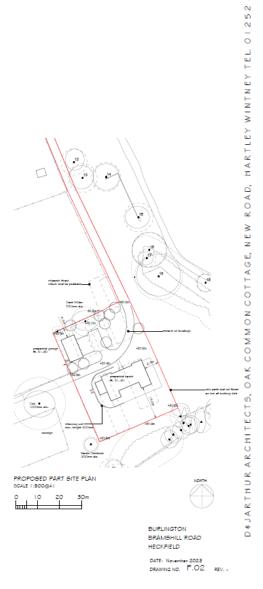
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APPENDIX 6 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED SITE PLANS





PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR GIA = 1975q.m SCALE 1:50 @AT



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