PRELIMINARY ECOLOGY APPRAISAL

FOR

LAND EAST OF THE TWYNINGS
WICKHAM SKEITH
IP23 8LX

ON BEHALF OF

PHIL COBBOLD PLANNING

CLIENT

SANDY PHILPOTTS

FEBRUARY 27TH 2024

TCW/ FE / 9083024

Report produced by T C Watts FMD NE licence no 2017 28477
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1. INSTRUCTION BY

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REASON

Erection of dwelling.

LOCATION : Land area grid reference TM 095692

2 METHOD

SITE VISIT - FIELD STUDY

A walk over of the site and immediate area of local ponds was made on the 27th January 2024 by Tim Watts - an independent, qualified and experienced ecologist.

Weather was fine 3/4 degrees celsius over the course of the survey time, dry, 5 mph NW breeze

Direct access gained from ' The Twynings ' residential property drive / car park with access to the area of gardens east of the drive way via the rear gardens of the main house.

The objective to establish the potential / presence and habitat suitability of protected species within the land area.

Consideration was given to the land area of any future workings and that of the surrounding habitat.

To look at the area of impact within viable / relevant distance of particular protected species that may be affected by the proposals. This with particular reference to species / habitats of local data searches.

Weather conditions and season were not considered a barrier to appraise habitats of protected wildlife within the area.

All survey methods were carried out in accordance with the most up to date good practise guidance Guidelines for Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and broad methodology and principals of Joint Nature Conservation Committee for relevant protected species .

3 OBJECTIVE – LEGISLATION

The objective to investigate for species which have specific protection within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, European Habitats Directive on Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild fauna and Flora 1994 and subsequent amendments to Conservation of Habitats and species regulations 2010
Consideration of National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraphs 174 – 188 .

The Conservation of Habitats and Species regulation 2017 articles 1(b) and 1 (h) of the habitats directive ' Priority Natural Habitat Type' and ' Priority Species' – ENGLAND'S BIODIVERSITY 2020 : A Strategy for Wildlife and Ecosystem Services.

The threshold above which a person will commit the offence of deliberately disturbing a wild animal of European protected species raised. A person will commit an offence if he deliberately or unintentionally disturbs such animals in a way as to be likely significantly to affect (a) the ability of any significant groups of animals of that species to survive,breed or rear or nurture their young, or (b) the local distribution of that species. It is to be noted that the existing offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended which cover obstruction of places used for shelter or protection (for example bat roost-badger set - water vole burrow etc) ,disturbance and sale – still apply to European protected species.

The Survey was carried out /with consideration to Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC 2006) and extending the biodiversity duty as set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 " Crow Act " and amendments to the species protection measures provided by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

- - Bats
- Garden / Farmland birds and mammals
- Amphibian species - Great crested newts

Principal importance (NERC 2006) Birds of Concern (Stanbury A et al 2012)

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidates previous badger legislation by providing comprehensive protection for badgers and their setts, with requirement that any authorised sett disturbance or destruction be carried out under NE licence.

The European Community Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) sets out general rules for the conservation of all naturally occurring wild birds, their eggs and habitats. It requires a member states to designate Special Protected areas (SPAs) for protection of certain species.

The Hedgerows Regulation 1997 aim to protect important hedgerows in the countryside. They make it illegal to remove most countryside hedges without first notifying the local planning authority, and provide protection for ' important hedgerows'.

Particular seasonal reference to bird nesting regarding hedgerow management works.

In addition to investigate local species listed in the UK Biodiversity action plan for Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk - 'Species of Conservation Concern' to build up a reliable and responsible picture of localised populations where present.

In consideration of the latter any requirement for future survey work.

4 SPECIES OF LEGAL PROTECTION

The species below have particular conservation status as mentioned within both local and European relevance, or ' rare ' /' vulnerable' /amber listed and covered by general protection within life cycle, migration,or habitat that may be considered and surveyed within an ecology statement.

SPIE (formally UK Bap) protected species - a reduced list shown below regarding potential relevance to the survey site and surrounding area.

Species covered by Statutory Instrument – Schedule 2EHD
Great Crested Newt (triturus cristatus)
Otter (lutra lutra)
Bats (all species rhinolophidea and vespertilionidae)
Dormouse (muscardinus avellanarius)

SPECIES COVERED BY LOCAL ACTION PLANS AND THE WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 -- CONSERVATION CONCERN (BoCC) / PRIORITY SPECIES ' RARE ' / 'VUNERABLE'

Barn Owl (tyto alba)
Nightingale (Luscinia megarhynchos)
Skylark (Alauda arvensis)
Stone Curlew (Burhinus oedicnemus)
Water vole (arvicola terrestris)
Hazel Dormouse (muscardinus avellanarius)
Hedgehog (erinaceus europaeus)
Badger (meles meles) covered by the Badgers Act 1992
Polecat (mustela putoriua)
Brown Hare (lepus europaeus)

All amphibians - Great crested, Smooth, and Palmate newts. Common and Natterjack Toad , and Common Frog.

All reptiles.

Red listed Bird Species –
SongThrush,Linnet,Yellowhammer,Skylark,Grey Partridge, Turtle dove - extreme decline, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow,Tree Sparrow and Starling.

Amber listed birds - Dunnock, Bullfinch and Reed Bunting.

WC1 Schedule 1 Birds Fieldfare and Redwing - migrants

Protected - all wild birds nests and eggs.

SPIE - Invertebrates – Lepidoptera species include White admiral and small heathland Butterflys.

Specimen and specialist flora.

Note and record non Native / invasive alien species such as Japanese knotweed / Himalayan balsam.

5 IMPLICATIONS OF LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

With legal responsibilities and planning implications, it is essential that any ecological assessment of potential development site, including the area of this report,must determine the possible presence or absence of any protected species as part of any planning development consideration. Or make recommendations for further survey work to conclude presence of protected species.

Without this assessment the potential developer would be unable to demonstrate due diligence in his/her responsibilities. Further more the local planning authority would not have been provided with sufficient information for a planning decision to be made. This could result in the application being designated incomplete and not determined,or simply refused.

Paragraph 99 of the ODPM Circular 2005 highlights that " It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species,and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development , is established before the planning permission is granted , otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision"

Where mitigation or compensation measures are required to ensure that no significant impacts will result on biodiversity from the development , the proposed measures may be secured though planning conditions or by EPS Mitigation Licences from Natural England.

6 Consideration was given to the sites habitat suitability to EPS and LPS - local protected species with reference to the National Biodiversity Network / SBIS data / MAGIC mapping.

Species and Recorded within 2 km - Sites 13 km

Amphibian recording - All species identified SBIS including the Great Crested Newt 9 recordings nearest 1.8 km North.

Common Frog 27 Common Toad 41 and Smooth newt all recorded some 750 m SW

Hedgehog 62 recordings nearest 750 m SW

Common and Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long eared , Myotis,Western Barbastrelle, and Stertone Bats recorded recorded within 1.8 km North of the site.
Daubenton's recorded within 100 m.

Reptiles - one recording of Grass Snake 1 km west.

Swifts and garden birds Linnet,Dunnock, House Sparrow and Yellowhammer recorded within the village of Wickham Skeith.

Regarding local floristic quality grasslands Green Winged orchid 1.8 km North and Pyramidal orchid 1.7 km East.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS

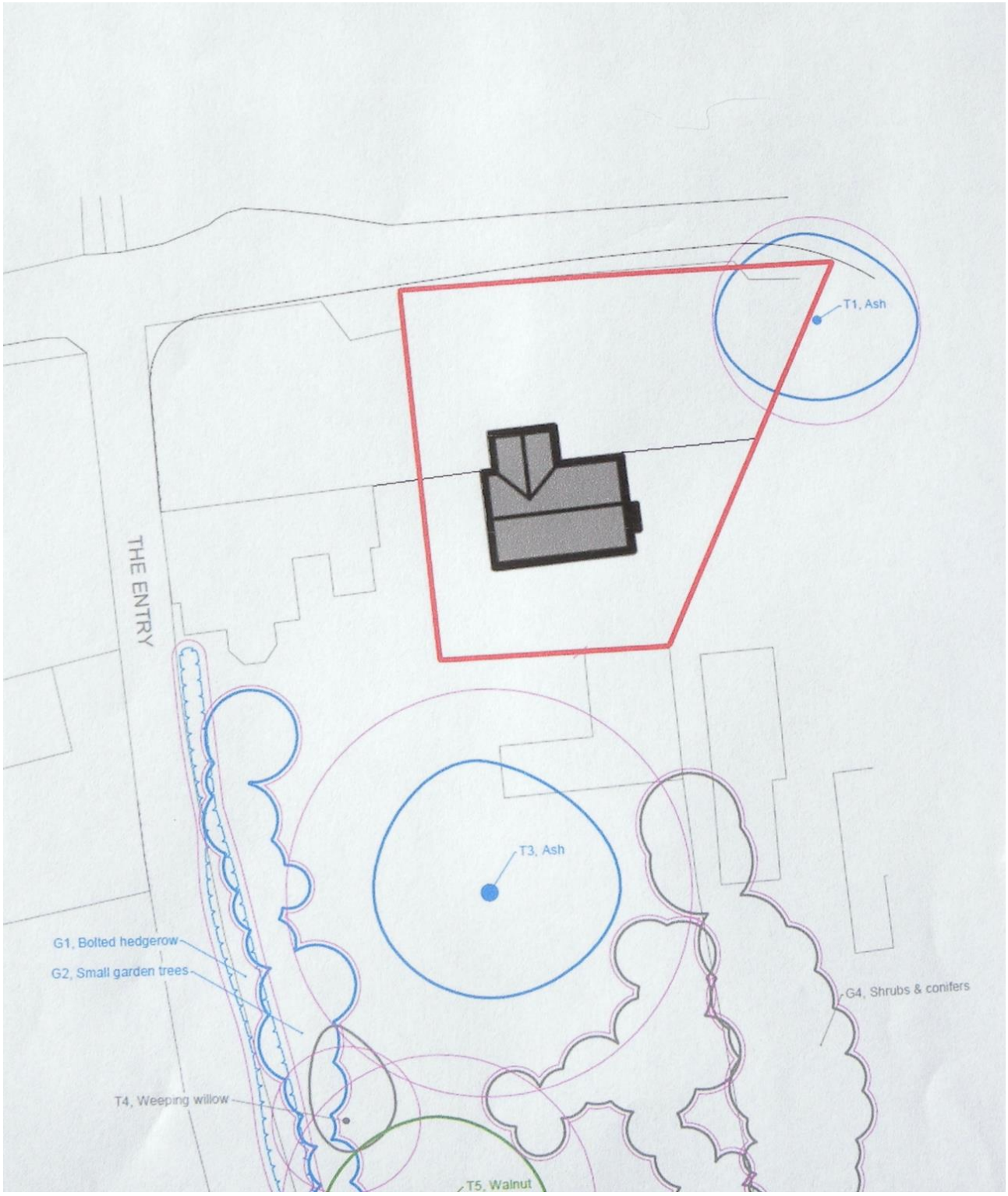
Major Farm Braisworth - SSS1 Statutory Designated Site 5 km NE.

County Wildlife Sites - Specialist Habitats.

Redgrave and South Lopham Fen (Ramsar site) 8 km North.

Cavernham (National nature Reserve) 6 km West

The Pennys (Local nature Reserve) 8 km North West.



Site area marked in Red

7 SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal area and survey concerns a roadside ' garden ' of some five hundred square metres of established flower beds, semi mature fruit trees, free range and chicken pen area, three various sheds ,a lean-to, poly tunnel, garden shrubs, and a mature leyland tree.

The garden area is surrounded by mature ivy clad hedging to the north and west.

Mature trees with scrubby understory and fence panels boundary the site to the east.

The southern boundary of the proposals consists of a continuation of gardens and garage buildings with lean-to.

The area is immediately fronted (to the north) by a tarmac access road off ' The Broadway ' within the village of Wickham Skeith. The sites road then enters ' The Entry ' to the left and continues to the west to service properties south the the village green.

The site sits within the centre of the residential area of Wickham Skeith some hundred metres east from the village green and pond.

8 FIELD SURVEY

8.1 The northern boundary of the site proposal runs immediately alongside a tarmack access road and is of an established hedge.

8.2 The hedge and its connections of to the south do not incorporating ditch or drainage.

8.3 The hedge is some two metres in height consisting of Ivy – hedra helix clad Sycamore – acer pseudoplatanus, Blackthorn – prunus spinosa,Elder – sambucus nigra and Oval leafed privet - ligustrum ovalifilium.

8.4 The western boundary is of a continuation of like hedging species and a division of the proposal site to the gravel drive of the Tywings.

8.5
Both hedges are fronted with 10 mm wire to ground level, to prevent free range chickens from escape. This providing a barrier and hazard to species entry / colonisation of the site.

8.6 The southern site boundary is of garden lawn and flower beds incorporating a mature 'topped' ivy clad Leyland tree – cypressus leylandii - of a girth of some 1.5 m.

8.7 A dilapidated lean-to extends from the adjoining southern garages. It is clad in Honeysuckle – lonicera periclymenum.

The building's cracked and missing boarding and roof sheet allowing wildlife access.

The roof is of cement fibre sheet with felt internal cavity supported by wire.

There is evidence of internal mammal damage and staining to the roof area.

8.8 The eastern boundary is of wooden fence panels joining a scrubby hedge of Snowberry – symphoricaipos rivularis, two mature topped Yew - taxus baccata. A mature Ash – fraxinus excelsior stands towards the road of this hedge – see mapping.

8.9 The internal area of the gardens consists of garden shrubs and flower beds, and includes some eighty square metres of wire netting fence panelled chicken run.

The pen is open and chickens allowed to forage the surrounding garden area of beds and shrubs.

8.10 Various debris of timber /sheet and plastic create animal refuge throughout the garden.

8.11 Five semi mature fruit trees span the northern area of garden to a height of some three metres.

8.12 Three small (25 to 10 square metres) of ' match boarded' single skinned timber buildings are present within the garden area. None showed evidence of internal wildlife activity. Nest boxes have been placed on the external eves and some show recent bird access.

Shed bases some on concrete would provide animal refuge.

8.13 Fourteen bird and invertebrate boxes are present on structures and trees on the site.

8.14 A poly tunnel covers on area of the garden, some twenty five square metres in size.

8.15 Three ponds were previously identified with connectivity to the Tywings (Framlingham Environmental TCW/FE/9049023) Habitat suitability Index calculations.

Heads Nook TM 0961469177 - some 60 metres to the south , The Green Pond some hundred metres to the West and Hall Farm Pond – some seventy metres NE. See Habitat suitability calculations and photographs in end section of the report.

9. HSI DATA SHEET

HABITAT SUITABILITY INDEX TABLE

HSI Criteria	Heads Nook Pond	The Green Pond	Hall Farm Pond
SI1 Location Field Score	Zone A 1	1	1
SI2 Pond Area Field Score	0.2	0.8	0.9
S13 Pond Drying Field Score	0.5	0.9	1
SI4 Water Quality Field Score	0.33	1	0.01
SI5 Shade Field Score	1	1	1
SI6 owl Field Score	1	0.67	0.01
SI7 Category	0.67	0.67	0.67
SI8 Ponds Field Score	1	1	1
SI9 Terrestrial habitat Field score	1	0.67	0.33
SI10 Macrophytes Field score	0.3	0.9	0.3
TOTAL	0.01 10^{th} root 0.00663 – 0.605	0.19 10^{th} route 0.1948 0.849	0 10^{th} route 0.0000059 0.299

Categorisation of HSI Scores

HSI	Pond Suitability
< 0.5	Poor
0.5 – 0.59	Below average
0.6 - 0.69	Average
0.7 - 0.79	Good
> 8	Excellent

10 SUMMARY

10.1 The proposed site's north and eastern boundary hedges are of density and structure to provide both nesting, feeding and roosting areas of merit.

10.2 Mature trees of yew and ash stand in direct connection to the sites interior on the eastern boundary, and a mature leyland stands within the site proposal area.

All provide both bird nest and bat potential roost features.

10.3 The smaller buildings and chicken run presently support active bird nesting boxes.

10.4 The adjoining dilapidated lean-to provides suitable bat roost features and evidence of mammal activity within the roof structure.

10.5 There are recent data recordings of bat activity within one hundred metres of the site.

10.6 The sites internal areas lack density of habitat and flora. Areas indicate historic pressure of free range chicken activity.

10.7 The site has viable connectivity to southern garden areas and Heads Nook Pond (some 80m from the proposals)- average GCN HSI calculation.

11 POTENTIAL OF HABITAT / SUITABILITY / PRESENCE OF PROTECTED SPECIES AS IDENTIFIED IN FIELD SURVEY / AREA DATA.

11.1 REPTILES.

The site is unlikely to support reptiles due to historic and present evidence of free range chicken activity. This has lead to declines in habitat and prevention of daylight sunning of the species.

11.2 AMPHIBIANS.

Amphibians (see GCN - HSI calculations of local ponds)
The site provides some areas of terrestrial habitat and areas of refuge beneath sheds and various garden debris.

The area is largely separated by roads and neighbouring garden fencing to prevent colonisation from ponds to the east and west. Possible access from habitats / Heads Nook pond.

11.3 BATS

The sites boundary and internal mature tree show roost features. An assessment of the buildings on the site was made using the below criteria.

Assessment of Potential to Support Roosting Bats - Categories for Buildings

Negligible Potential	Buildings with no features capable of supporting roosting Bats. Often these buildings are of a 'sound' well sealed nature,or have a single skin and no roof void . They tend to have high interior light levels, and little or no insulation. Buildings without any roof s fall into this category.
Low Potential	Buildings with limited features for roosting Bats (e.g shallow crevices where mortar is missing between bricks / blocks) They may have open locations which may be subject to large temperature fluctuations and bat access points may be constrained. No evidence of Bats found (e.g droppings/staining) Buildings may be surrounded by poor or sub-optimal bat foraging habitat. No evidence of Bats found.
Moderate Potential	Buildings with some features for roosting bats. Buildings usually of brick or stone construction with a small number of features of potential value to roosting bats e.g loose roof tiles / ridge tiles, gaps in brick work, gaps under fascia boards, and or warm sealed roof spaces with under felt. Evidence of bats found a small scattering of droppings or urine staining. Could be suitable for summer day roost.
High Potential	Buildings with a large number of features or extensive areas of obvious potential for roosting bats. Generally they have sheltered locations, with a stable temperature regime, and suitable bat access points.Evidence of bats found droppings urine staining . Could be suitable for a maternity roost or summer day roost.
Confirmed Roost	Bats discovered roosting within the building , or recorded emerging / entering the building at dusk/ dawn. A confirmed record (as supplied by an established bat group) would also apply to this category.

The small buildings have negligible potential to bats.

The timber lean-to and mature trees have moderate potential to bats within an area of suitable and recorded habitat.
This habitat of sheltered gardens, mature trees and flyway corridors to open water and grassland.

11.4 BARN OWLS

There is no evidence (feathers,pellets, or white excreta splashing) that Barn Owls reside within sites trees or access the buildings.

11.5 BADGERS

There is no evidence of earthworks or hedge line breaches to indicate the presence or passage of badgers.

11.6 HEDGEHOGS

The site immediately abuts road / roadside hazards with regard to the survival of hedgehogs. Fencing North and East provided exclusion and hazard on the site.
The sites interior generally lacks density of habitats.

11.7 OTTERS and WATER VOLE

The site does not provide suitable habitat for these species.

11.8 HAZEL DOORMOUSE

The site is not connected to large areas of suitable woodland.

11.9 INVERTEBRATES

The site lacks habitat of merit for rare or specialist invertebrates.

11.10 NON - NATIVE / INVASIVE PLANTS/ MAMMALS.

The sites gardens contain non native plant species but none were considered invasive.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS.

12.1 A Bat detector survey should be carried out to establish the possible presence or feeding/ commuting activity of bats associated with the site. BTC Survey guidelines – timing from

May to September.

12.2 No demolition should take place of the shed or removal of tree / trees until this survey is completed.

12.3 The results of these surveys would provide information regarding requirements of Precautionary Methods and Mitigation.

12.4 A DNA - GCN test should be undertaken of Heads Nook pond to provide further information on protected species with possible connectivity to the site, to aid mitigation and precautionary statement requirements.

12.4 Any removal of bird boxes only done post a bird nest survey by a suitably qualified ecologist.

12.5 No trimming / cutting of the mature leyland , surrounding

hedges or removal of garden scrub should be done between the 1st March and 1st September.

12.6 Precautionary Method statement and Habitat Enhancement based on findings of the above should be produced.

13.1 PRECAUTIONARY METHODS
(Under any future site preparation)
---- likely to include.

13.2
If ground foliage develops site clearance should be done manually via two stage manual strimming.

13.3

Any excavation works of foundation /trenches should be filled the same day as dug , or if this is not possible covered overnight with secure boarding, or materials put in place to provide escape to safe guard small mammals, amphibians and reptiles.

13.4

Dealing with site waste / demolition materials - to avoid damage and injury to local wildlife.
Existing material on site - and over any construction phase.
Method statement required.

13.5

Any future fence installation proposals should allow access / exit for small mammals.
Removal of existing wire.

13.6

A lighting plan would be likely to include ----
Avoid illumination of possible bat and nocturnal bird activity reference foraging corridors and territorial dispersal routes from the adjoining residential areas to pond and grassland.

This during the construction phase and building design.

13.7 Future lighting design likely to contain -
Detail of lighting for dwellings which would feature -

(a) All luminaires should lack UV elements, and all fluorescent sources to be avoided.

(b) Only LED Warm white spectrum (ideally < 2700 kelvin) to be used.

(c) Internal luminaries to be recessed where installed near windows to reduce glare and light spill onto neighbouring hedges.

(d) External luminaires to be mounted only on the North face of the buildings.

(e) Luminaires to be mounted on the horizontal I.e no upward lift and cowled to avoid spill.

(f) Any additional security lighting on garages / sheds to be mounted similarly and set on motion sensors and short (1 min) timers.

13.7 HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

Dependant on the survey information and final plan design of the dwelling these are likely to include.

13.8
A double row of native hedging to replace the existing fence panels and strengthened the scrubby section of the eastern

boundary.

13.9
Replacement of any fruit tree / other tree to enable development with standard native trees to complement boundary hedges.

13.10
Further screen planting / protection / fencing off of these areas.

13.11
Provide guidance on suitable additional bird and bat box installation on any new structures on the site.
This after survey works of box removal and potential roost.

13.12
Considerations of fencing and animal access.

14. LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The base line conditions reported and assessed in this document represents those identified during a single site survey on the 27th of February 2024.
A reasonable assessment can be made of habitats from a single visit however clearly it is not possible to observe seasonal

variations of growth and decline.
The survey provides an overview of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site.
Where no evidence is found this does not necessarily mean that species are not present or periodically visit the site.
Further surveys are only recommended if there is significant likelihood that protected species may be present and impacted by the proposals, based on the suitability of habitat and any direct evidence.

Desk top data provided within the report by biodiversity information services is limited to the availability of recorders and survey efforts and should not be an indication that particular areas are devoid of particular species presence.

All areas of the site were accessible on the day of the survey.
Lean-to shed cavity roof was not possible to fully investigate.

15 REFERENCES

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16 Site Photographs

Proposal Land area east of the Twynings Wickham Skeith IP13 8LX - TM 095692

Looking into the site North - from the Southern boundary

Proposal Land area east of the Twynings Wickham Skeith IP13 8LX - TM 095692

Southern boundary of the proposals, looking east.

Proposal Land area east of the Twynings Wickham Skeith IP13 8LX - TM 095692

Northern roadside boundary looking West

Proposal Land area east of the Twynings Wickham Skeith IP13 8LX - TM 095692

Eastern boundary looking North.

Proposal Land area east of the Twynings Wickham Skeith IP13 8LX - TM 095692

Interior of the southern boundary lean-to.