

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 Recommendations are made for further protected species surveys, together with preliminary recommendations for the protection of important ecological features, and / or to avoid or mitigate ecological impacts, and to enhance the ecology of the site post-construction. These are consistent with recommendations identified in 2022, with full detail provided in the PEA and Protected Species Reports. It is intended that these recommendations are considered during future changes to the design of development proposals so that protection of important ecological features is secured and opportunities for ecological enhancement are realised.
- 5.2 The following further surveys (Table 5) will be required prior to refining development designs and formulating a suitable avoidance and mitigation strategy.

Table 5: Recommendations for mitigation / further ecological survey

#	Recommendations for mitigation / further ecological survey
R1	Due to the constrained nature of the site, it is not possible to adequately retain and protect the habitats immediately surrounding sett TN4 within the final development layout. It will be necessary to obtain a sett closure licence from Natural England before undertaking the proposed development works.
R2	Updated presence / absence surveys for roosting bats within buildings B1, B2, B3, B4 and B5 and other suitable structures, if works do not commence before May 2025, undertaken between May and August.
R3	Presence / absence surveys for roosting bats within trees T4, T5 and T9 if they are affected by proposals for the site, undertaken between May and August.

- 5.3 The following species / groups (Table 6) require specific precautionary measures to be adhered to prior to and during construction to ensure that an offence under the relevant legislation is avoided.

Table 6: Recommended precautionary measures

#	Recommendations for precautionary measures
R4	Removal of nesting bird habitats (including vegetation and buildings) will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, which runs from 1 March to 31 August. It will therefore be carried out between September and February, but should be planned and implemented in accordance with the findings of the further ecological surveys recommended above.
R6	If works to fell or lop the PRF-I suitability trees at T1-T3, T6-T8 and T10-T11 are required, they will be undertaken in accordance with a Non-Licensed Method Statement to reduce the risk of killing/injury to roosting bats. The Method Statement will specify reasonable avoidance measures including timing restrictions (works to be carried out during March-April or September-October to avoid critical maternity and hibernation periods), 'soft felling' techniques to enable bats to disperse, and will be carried out under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. Additionally,

#	Recommendations for precautionary measures
	appropriate compensation for the loss of trees assessed as having PRF-I suitability to support roosting bats will be provided to maintain the roost resource within the survey area.
R7	Vegetation clearance works will be undertaken during the reptile active season (broadly March / April to September / October) and in accordance with a Precautionary Working Method Statement to reduce the risk of killing / injury to reptiles.

5.4 The following protection measures (Table 7) should be carried out as part of the proposed scheme.

Table 7: Ecological protection measures

#	Recommended ecological protection measures
R8	Areas of woodland habitat within the survey area are of high intrinsic ecological value and provide habitats suitable for a range of protected species, including amphibians, nesting birds, invertebrates, [REDACTED] bats and reptiles. The majority of this habitat will be retained and protected during construction, and will also provide a focus for ecological enhancement measures.
R9	Standard site procedures to prevent impacts on trees will be adhered to during construction.
R10	Standard site procedures to prevent impacts on nearby aquatic environments will be adhered to during construction.
R11	The use of external lighting will be avoided or minimised to prevent impacts to nocturnal species such as bats. Lighting will not be directed towards retained trees, woodland or River Thames.
R12	Small access gaps will be provisioned at the base of new fence boundaries to enable continued dispersal of small mammals across the site.
R13	At the end of each working day excavations will be covered over and open pipework capped to prevent entrapment of mammals, amphibians and other fauna.
R14	Where fox dens or rabbit warrens are to be damaged or destroyed as part of the proposed works, this will be undertaken in accordance with the Mammals Act 1996 by a registered pest control company.

5.5 The following ecological enhancements (Table 8) should be considered for the site to improve the survey area for wildlife following construction.

Table 8: Recommendations for ecological enhancement

#	Preliminary recommendations for ecological enhancement
R15	The woodland to be retained around the boundary of the survey area will be enhanced through a more active management regime. Coppicing of smaller trees and shrubs and the opening up of small rides and glades will provide increased light penetration, which will benefit the ground flora. Reduction in extent of stands of single species non-native shrubs such as snowberry <i>Symphoricarpos</i> sp. and the planting of appropriate native shrubs will help to further enhance the condition of the woodland.
R16	The historic pond at TN1 will be reinstated to increase habitat availability for species such as grass snake <i>Natrix helvetica</i> , amphibians and invertebrates such as dragonflies. The pond will be designed to retain the wet woodland feel of the area, with only minor excavation. The pond will

#	Preliminary recommendations for ecological enhancement
	be profiled to incorporate a variety of depths, where possible, with shallow sloping sides providing access points for wildlife, and planted with appropriate marginal vegetation. Plants suitable for damp margins include; amphibious bistort <i>Persicaria amphibia</i> , marsh marigold <i>Caltha palustris</i> , reed canary grass <i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> , brooklime <i>Veronica beccabunga</i> , wild angelica <i>Angelica sylvestris</i> , purple loosestrife <i>Lythrum salicaria</i> , greater bird's-foot trefoil <i>Lotus uliginosus</i> , and gypsywort <i>Lycopus europaeus</i> . Drainage engineers and landscape architects will be involved in specifying the mix of species as their suitability is dependent on how frequently wetland areas will be inundated.
R17	The site's landscaping plans will utilise plant species which encourage bats by providing additional food sources or roosting opportunities.
R18	Habitat piles for amphibians, invertebrates and reptiles will be created within areas of retained rough grassland, scrub or woodland.
R19	The value of the site for birds will be enhanced by installing a range of artificial nest boxes onto new buildings and retained trees.
R20	The value of the site for bats will be enhanced by installing a range of artificial roost boxes onto new buildings and retained trees.

6 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 An EWS was carried out for the site of a proposed residential development at Grandpont House, Abingdon Road, Oxford. Its purpose was to assess any changes in the extent, character or condition of habitats present, and reassess their potential to support protected species, since the 2022 PEA and protected species surveys undertaken by UEEC.
- 6.2 The survey area lies to the south of the centre of Oxford, and comprises c.0.73ha of partly developed land, including a mosaic of woodland, scattered trees and scrub, introduced shrub, tall ruderal, amenity grassland, running water, buildings and bare ground. It is bounded to the north by a branch of the River Thames and the site of an educational establishment, to the east by the River Thames, to the south by a Holy Rood church and playing fields, and to the west by the A4144 Abingdon Road.
- 6.3 The character and condition of habitats present within the survey area is broadly unchanged since 2022, with only minor variations in structure or composition. Previous conclusions made in the 2022 PEA and Protected Species Surveys report regarding protected species and ecological impacts are considered to still be valid and remain unchanged.
- 6.4 In conclusion, the majority of land proposed for development is of low ecological value. Significant constraints to development were identified including priority habitats, and the potential presence of nesting birds, [REDACTED] roosting bats and reptiles. No further surveys are required prior to submitting a planning application, but proportionate and effective mitigation is recommended to enable offences under the relevant legislation to be avoided, along with recommendations for ecological enhancement.

Appendix I: Updated Phase 1 Habitat Map

Grandpont House, Abingdon Road, Oxford

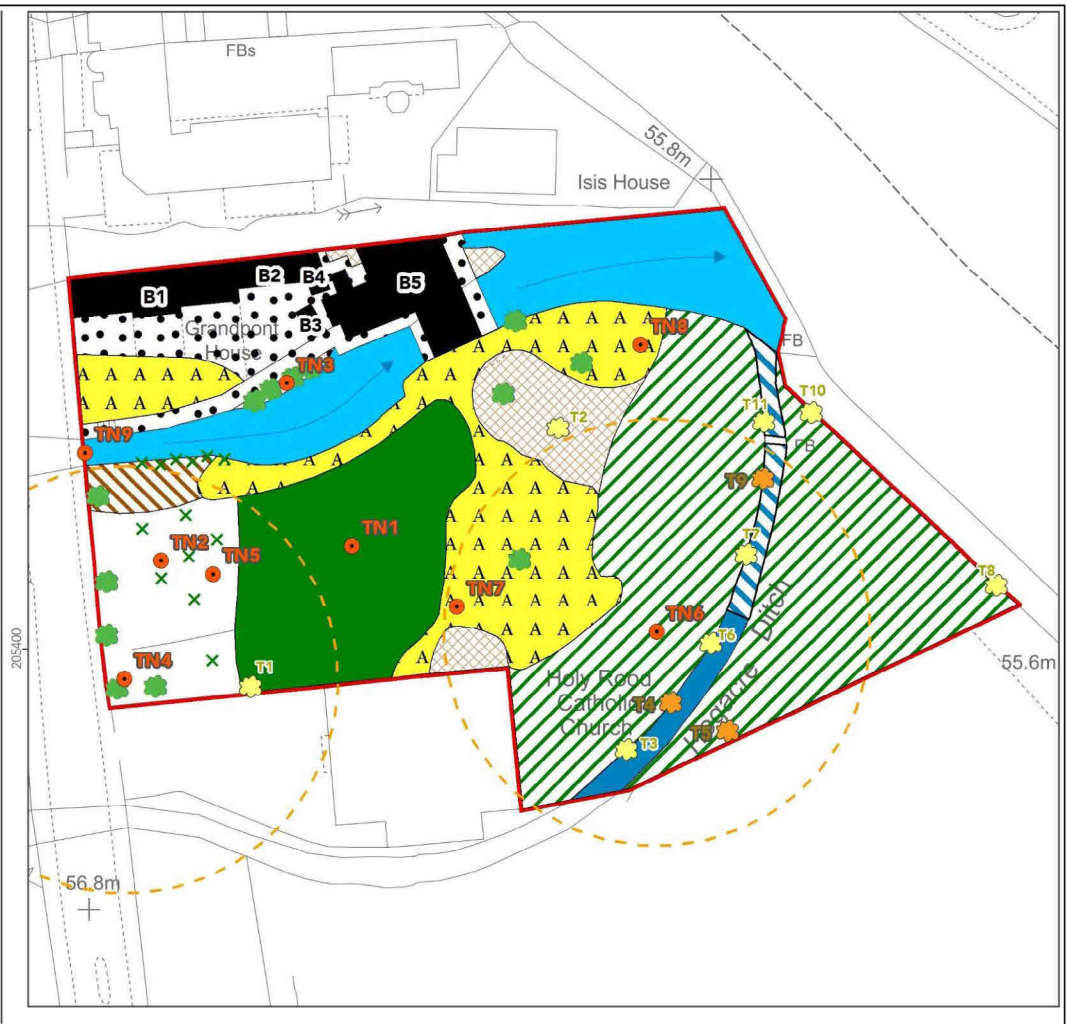
- Survey area
- Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
- Broadleaved woodland - plantation
- Tall ruderal
- A Amenity grassland
- Introduced shrub
- Running water
- Wet ditch
- Dry ditch
- Bare ground
- Building
- Target note
- x Scattered scrub
- Scattered tree
- PRF-M
- PRF-I



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Ordnance Survey 0100031673

Scale: 1:750 Created by: MT
Date: Mar 2024 Reviewed by: NP
Drawing number:
UE0490ECO-Grandpont_HabitatMap_240315

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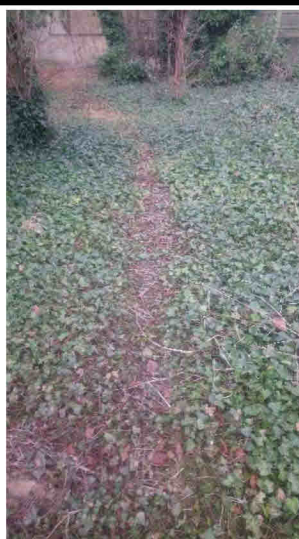
Appendix II: Target Notes (2022)

Target Note	Photo
<p>1. Wet Woodland on site of historic pond. Dominated by mature crack willow <i>Salix fragilis</i>, but sedge <i>Carex</i> sp. and other wetland spp. abundant</p>	
<p>2. Open area dominated by dense ivy with some scattered scrub. Brash pile(s) present on northern edge. Adjoins tall ruderal with scattered scrub to north, with brash / log / rubble piles.</p>	
<p>3. Section of unprotected bank (i.e. without engineered walls) supporting trees, scrub and patchy ivy and tall ruderal.</p>	

Target Note

Photo

5. Mammal path through dense ivy and small, apparently unused holes in ground



Target Note	Photo
	

Appendix III: DNA Analysis Results



26 March 24

Re: Identification Results for Jennie Alverson, Urban Edge Environmental Consulting

Job number 20566, received 04 March 2024

Sample labelled: UE0490/B5 Grandpont House, 26.02.24

PCR amplification successful. DNA sequence:

GAAAAACCCACCCATTAATAAAAATCGTTAACAGCTCATTATTGACTTACCTGCCCC
ATCCAATATTTTCATCATGATGAAACTTTGGCTCCCTCCTAGG

Phylogenetic analysis identification: *Sorex minutus*

Confirmed by maximum likelihood, maximum parsimony, bootstrap 100%.

Best regards,

Professor Robin Allaby

The results and conclusions in this report are based on an investigation of mtDNA sequence analysis. The results obtained have been reported with accuracy. The interpretation represents the most probable conclusion for the DNA sequence obtained rather than the sample provided given current levels of species data. It should be borne in mind that different circumstances might produce different results. Therefore, care must be taken with interpretation of the results especially if they are used as the basis for commercial recommendations.

Professor Robin Allaby

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Appendix IV: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2022)

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**Grandpont House,
Abingdon Road, Oxford**

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

February 2022

Grandpont House, Abingdon Road, Oxford

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Client:	Netherhall Educational Association	
Report No.:	UE0490_Grandpont_PEA_0_220211	
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Abbreviations

CHS	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
EPS	European Protected Species
GCN	Great crested newt
HSI	Habitat Suitability Index
LGS	Local Geological Site
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OCWS	Oxford City Wildlife Sites
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Assessment
PRF	Potential (bat) Roost Feature
SAC	Special Area for Conservation
SNCI	Site of Nature Conservation Interest
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TVERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
TN	Target Note
WCA	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

0 Executive Summary

0.1 Introduction

0.1.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken for the site of the proposed student residential development and refurbishment of the Grade II Listed building at Grandpont House, Abingdon Road, Oxford (Grid Reference: 451468, 205419). The report has been prepared to establish the site's suitability for development, inform the design process for the proposal, record the ecological baseline and identify key ecological features within and around the proposal site.

0.2 Results

0.2.1 There are no internationally (Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area or Ramsar) or nationally (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) important wildlife sites within the 1km desk study search area. However, there are seven non-statutory sites of local importance, including three Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and four Oxford City Wildlife Sites (OCWS). There is also one proposed Oxfordshire LWS, one proposed OCWS and one other Oxfordshire site. There are records of a range of protected or notable species in the locality, including amphibians, birds, fish, invertebrates, terrestrial mammals, flowering plants and terrestrial reptiles, together with four priority habitats: Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Lowland Meadows, Lowland Fen and Deciduous Woodland, including Ancient Woodland.

0.2.2 The survey area lies to the south of the centre of Oxford. The site comprises c.0.73 ha of partly developed land, comprising a mosaic of woodland, scattered trees and scrub, introduced shrub, tall ruderal, amenity grassland, running water, buildings and bare ground. The wider landscape includes the built up area of Oxford, but also especially floodplain grassland, often set within hedgerows, and other greenspaces.

0.3 Evaluation

0.3.1 Table 0.1 presents a summary of ecological constraints and opportunities identified within the survey area.

Table 0.1: Summary of ecological constraints and opportunities

Feature	Detail
Constraints:	
Designated sites	None of the designated wildlife sites within the desk-study search zone are likely to be affected by the proposed development, considering the size and nature of the proposal and its distance from the designated sites.
Priority habitats	Most of the woodland Priority Habitat will be retained as part of the development, although there may be impacts on the area of Wet Woodland arising from the

Feature	Detail
	construction of a pond on the site of the historic pond (TN1). Given the very small size of the Wet Woodland (c.250m ²) these impacts are not expected to be significant.
Other habitats	Permanent losses of up to c.200m ² of dense ivy, tall ruderal and scattered scrub, depending on the extent and layout of development proposals. These areas are of relatively low ecological value but provide habitats suitable for a number of protected species (e.g. nesting birds, badger and reptiles).
Bats (roosting)	Buildings B1, B2, B3 and B4 were provisionally assessed as having <u>low</u> suitability and building B5 as having <u>high</u> suitability to support roosting bats. Other structures and ivy clad walls may also have some potential for roosting bats. The trees at T1-T11 contain features suitable for roosting bats (e.g. woodpecker holes, lifted bark, dense ivy clad). It is currently anticipated most woodland habitats will be retained as part of the proposed development.
Reptiles	Permanent losses of up to c.350m ² of suitable habitats (dense ivy, tall ruderal, scattered scrub and brash/rubble piles).
<i>Opportunities:</i>	
Priority habitats	The woodland priority habitats within the survey area are of high intrinsic value and can provide a focus for ecological enhancement measures.
Habitat enhancement	Habitat creation and enhancement opportunities include woodland management, pond creation/restoration, habitat piles and bird/bat boxes.

0.4 Recommendations

0.4.1 Recommendations are made for further protected species surveys, together with preliminary recommendations for the protection of important ecological features to avoid or mitigate ecological impacts, and to enhance the site for wildlife post-construction; these are summarised in Table 0.2. It is intended that these recommendations should be considered during future changes to the design of development proposals so that protection of important ecological features is secured and opportunities for ecological enhancement are realised. The recommendations should be reviewed following the completion of further ecological surveys.

Table 0.2: Summary of recommendations

#	Summary of recommendations
<i>Protected species surveys</i>	
R2	Presence / absence surveys for roosting bats within buildings B1, B2, B3, B4 and B5 and other suitable structures, if they are affected by proposals for the site, undertaken between May and August.
R3	Presence / absence surveys for roosting bats within trees T5 and T9 if they are affected by proposals for the site, undertaken between May and August.