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Update Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Including a Protected Species Assessment at: Winchester House, Keyston, Cambridgeshire.

On Behalf Of:

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0 SUMMARY

0.1 Skilled Ecology Consultancy Ltd. was commissioned by Rachael Day to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a Protected Species Assessment at Winchester House, Toll Bar Lane, Keyston, PE28 0RB. The report is required to accompany a planning application for new stables (replacing old) and a menage (horse arena).

0.2 The original survey was conducted on 1st November 2024 by experienced ecologist Tommy Root BSc (Hons) ACIEEM The update survey was on the 23rd April 2025 by experienced Ecologist Roger Spring BSc MCIEEM (both licensed to survey for great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* - level 1 and for bats - level 2). The surveys consisted of an inspection for preferred habitat types and signs and evidence of protected and priority species, primarily for bats but also great crested newts, reptiles, badgers *Meles meles* and nesting birds following Natural England (English Nature) Guidelines. A local record search was undertaken.

0.3 The site as found during the survey visits consisted of an old timber frame horse stable and chicken coop with a pitched, corrugated sheeting roof proposed for removal and short improved grass (Modified Grass- Poor Condition) proposed for a new horse arena and stables. The grassland is horse grazed and/or mown when it becomes too long. The site (outside of red-line boundary) also includes boundary hedgerows and scattered trees (not proposed for impact).

0.4 The site is in rural west Cambridgeshire location between gardens and arable farmland with local low-density housing.

0.5 The surveys failed to find signs or evidence of protected or priority species. The proposed construction zone is a common and widespread habitat type with low ecological value. Boundary habitats including hedgerows and trees are high in ecological value, though will all be retained.

0.6 The risk of presence and significant harm or impact to protected, priority or rare species was considered negligible. Further ecological surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

0.7 However, to minimise any residual risk of impact to notable species and valuable habitats, precautionary measures, detailed later in the report, should be followed.

0.8 With the recommendations followed as described, development could proceed with a minimal risk of harm or impact to local ecological value or to protected, priority or rare species. Biodiversity enhancement recommendations are also included in the report in accordance with national planning policy.

0.9 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations are provided to ensure provision of 10% BNG.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Skilled Ecology Consultancy Ltd. was commissioned by Rachael Day to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a Protected Species Assessment at Winchester House, Toll Bar Lane, Keyston, PE28 0RB. The report is required to accompany a planning application for new stables (replacing old) and a menage (horse arena).

1.1.2 Wildlife such as nesting birds, bats, reptiles and great crested newts Triturus cristatus are protected by law. Protected and priority species and habitats, are also a material consideration for individual planning decisions under the National Planning Policy Framework, 2024 (NPPF).

1.1.3 This study and report complies with the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2017 Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

1.1.4 CIEEM guidelines indicate that ecological surveying typically remains valid for between 12 – 18 months.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 A local biological record search was undertaken on behalf of Skilled Ecology through Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC).

2.1.2 A search of the Multi-agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was also conducted, to check for statutory nature conservation sites.

2.1.3 The record search results were then combined with the findings of the site survey to assess the risk of ecology issues, relevant to planning, occurring on the site.

2.2 Study Limitations

2.2.1 The site and surrounds were assessed based on their condition at the time of the survey visits (2024 & 2025).

2.2.2 The surveys were conducted at a suitable time for botanical and habitat assessment, though some flowering species may not be identifiable or visible.

2.3 Initial Site Survey

Habitats and Surroundings

2.3.1 The site was visited on the 1st November 2024 by experienced ecologist Tommy Root BSc (Hons) ACIEEM and again by experienced Ecologist Roger Spring BSc MCIEEM to survey for ecology issues. This included the following:

- Noting the suitability of habitats present on the site, regarding protected, priority and rare species; including plants, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, nesting birds, invertebrates and protected, priority or red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC);
- Assessing the habitats surrounding the site and in the local area;
- Direct survey for evidence of protected species as far as possible, e.g. for bats, reptiles, great crested newts, badgers *Meles meles,* and nesting birds;
- Checking for invasive species such as Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Bat Inspection

2.3.2 The assessment for bats was conducted by experienced ecologists, licensed by Natural England to disturb and take bats for science and education. Buildings and trees were inspected externally for bat activity, suitability and potential for roosting following English Nature Bat Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2004) and Bat Conservation Trust Best Practice Guidelines, therefore considerations were:

- the availability of access to roosts for bats;
- the presence and suitability of cracks, crevices, gaps, fissures, ivy growth and other places as roosts;
- signs of bat activity or presence, such as; the bats themselves, droppings, grease marks, scratch marks, urine spatter and prey remains.

2.3.3 Equipment available for use during the survey included a ladder, high powered torch, digital camera and binoculars.

2.3.4 The availability of access to roosts was assessed based upon the presence of holes large enough to allow entry to bats and lack of cobwebs and dirt.

2.3.5 The outside and inside of buildings and outside of trees were inspected for gaps, cavities, access points and crevices, and any signs of bats (droppings, staining, urine spatter), in accordance with Natural England (English Nature) guidelines (English Nature, 2004).

Reptiles & Amphibians

2.3.6 The site was inspected for potentially suitable terrestrial habitats for foraging, sheltering or dispersing amphibians and foraging, sheltering, breeding and basking habitat for reptiles. High quality terrestrial refuges searched for, included:

- Log piles & rockeries,
- Thick leaf litter,
- Compost & manure heaps,
- Mammal burrows,
- Deep ground cracks;
- Refuse suitable for shelter;
- Tussock grassland;
- Hedgerows and any other potential habitats.

2.3.7 The pond at Winchester House was inspected for suitability for great crested newts by undertaking a Habitat Suitability Index assessment as developed by Oldham *et al.* 2000.

Badgers & Other Mammals

2.3.8 Signs and evidence of badgers, and other protected, priority and rare mammal activity searched for included the following:

- Setts, holes and burrows;
- Foraging holes and other diggings;
- Latrines, droppings, spraints and scats;
- Mammal hairs;
- Paw prints and other tracks;
- Feeding remains;
- Scratch marks, bedding material and other signs.

3 RESULTS AND RISK

3.1 Site Description & Location

3.1.1 The redline site boundary is 0.1415 hectares the broader land ownership boundary at Winchester House is larger though is all outside of the construction zone. The redline boundary includes a small stable building, an area of short improved grass (Modified Grass). The grassland is horse grazed and/or mown when it becomes too long.

3.1.2 Individual trees, a pond, Vegetated Garden habitats, hedgerows and a dry ditch etc. are outside of the redline boundary and will not be impacted by the proposed works and therefore not included in the BNG calculations. However, these habitats were surveyed as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to assess for risk of impact to notable wildlife and habitats etc.

3.1.3 The proposed construction zone includes a new stable (93m2) and horse arena (702m2).

3.1.4 The existing stables and chicken coop were light timber frame construction with single-skin cladding and pitched, corrugated sheeting roof. Modern joinery inside.

3.1.5 The site is located within a rural agricultural area including arable land, horse grazed fields and low-density housing. The broader landscape is very similar.

3.1.6 The garden pond (surface area 70m²) present in the front garden south of the site is understood to be fed via run off excess water and treated sewage water from the property home.

3.2 Nature Conservation Sites

3.2.1 A strip of woodland (designated priority habitat deciduous woodland) is present dividing two fields at the site. The site surveyed found a line of trees in this area, though not substantial enough to be considered woodland.

3.2.2 One other such woodland area is present approximately 0.7km southwest.

3.2.3 Both areas are not proposed for impact.

3.2.4 The nearest designated wildlife site is Tichwell Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This site is designated for notable grassland habitats with botanical interest (MAGIC, 2025).

3.3 Data Search

3.3.1 The biological record data search concentrating on great crested newts was conducted on behalf of Skilled Ecology by CPERC. It is summarised in Table 1 (below).

Table 1: Summary of Local Great Crested Newt Records

Species	Approximate Location	Year
Great Crested Newts (EU & UK protected, UK priority) – most recent record	1.4km northeast	2021
Great Crested Newts (EU & UK protected, UK priority) – nearest recent record	0.4km southeast	2018

3.4 Protected, Priority & Rare Species

Vegetation & Habitats

3.4.1 Habitats on-site (baseline BNG) included short improved grassland (Modified Grass)

3.4.2 Habitats immediately adjacent to the redline boundary and within the land ownership boundary at Winchester House included boundary hedgerows and scattered trees. A dividing strip of trees is identified at priority habitat deciduous woodland. All trees will be retained.

3.4.3 Vegetation found on-site (2024 & 2025 combined) included:

Main site area – short improved grass with herbaceous (low species per square meter)- Modified Grassland- poor condition: white dead-nettle *Lamium album*, stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, common chickweed *Stellaria media*, curled dock *Rumex crispus*, ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea.*

Northern boundary native hedgerow: hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, elm species *Ulmus* sp, field maple *Acer campestre*, English oak *Quercus robur*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.

East boundary area – woodland with dry ditch: grey willow *Salix cinerea*, goat willow *Salix caprea*, weeping willow *Salix babylonica*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* (mature), elm species *Ulmus* sp (sapling), apple *Malus domestica*, dog rose *Rosa canina* agg, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. Also: stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*, ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium.* As mentioned previously this area was really just a line of trees and not considered sufficiently large enough to be classified as a woodland, though is detailed as such in MAGIC.

East – individual shrub/tree species immediately beyond ditch and stock fencing next to stable: cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii*

East – short improved grass (Modified Grass) adjacent to existing stable (east of site): annual meadow grass *Poa annua*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, common couch grass *Elymus repens*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*, common chickweed *Stellaria media*, bristly ox tongue *Helminthotheca echioides*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg, white dead-nettle *Lamium album*, dovesfoot cranesbill *Geranium molle.*

Southern boundary individual trees: Leyland cypress *Cupressus × leylandii*, willow species *Salix* sp, silver birch *Betula pendula*, garden bamboo species probably *Fargesia* sp.

Southern area individual trees: sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* (mature), Norway spruce *Picea abies*, sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa*, holm oak *Quercus ilex*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, crack willow *Salix × fragilis*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, juniper species *Juniperus* sp, hazel *Corylus avellana*

Western boundary native hedgerow – stock fencing with: hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, elm species *Ulmus* sp, elder *Sambucus nigra*, holm oak *Quercus ilex* and stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*

3.4.4 No protected or priority plant species were observed within the main construction zone area. The boundary hedgerows are UK priority habitats. The strip of woodland is not considered substantial enough to be classified a woodland, though if agreeing with the MAGIC definition and assessing the species composition the habitat is a UK priority habitat. No Schedule 9 invasive plants were found.

Bats

3.4.5 The stable building and chicken coop was inspected for presence of bats.

3.4.6 The building was considered negligible in suitability or potential for roosting bats with negligible opportunities for roosting found.

3.4.7 No signs or evidence of bat activity were discovered associated with any part of the building.

3.4.8 The immediate surrounding habitats at the site were considered optimal for foraging bats. All boundary trees will be retained and were not considered suitable for roosting bats. No notable hollows, cracks, crevices, ivy growth or other features were present for roosting bats. The surrounding environment will be utilised by foraging/commuting bats.

Other Protected & UK Priority Mammals

3.4.9 The proposed construction zone (short grass) was considered small in area and low in suitability for foraging by badgers *Meles meles*.

3.4.10 The construction zone was not near habitats suitable for aquatic mammals such as otter *Lutra lutra* and the nearby pond lacked suitable banks and vegetation for water vole *Arvicola amphibius*. The ditch was dry.

3.4.11 The site was also considered small in area and low in suitability for hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus*, it could not be discounted that the occasional hedgehog might cross the site.

3.4.12 No signs or evidence of ground dwelling protected, priority or rare mammals were observed (2024 & 2025).

Birds

3.4.13 The following bird species were observed or heard on or close to the site during the surveys (2024 & 2025 combined): magpie *Pica pica*, carrion crow *Corvus corone*, robin *Erithacus rubecula*, great tit *Parus major,* woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* and blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*.

3.4.14 All bird species recorded were common, widespread green-listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) species.

3.4.15 The onsite stable building and adjacent trees offered nesting opportunities for common and widespread birds.

3.4.16 It was considered likely that, on rare occasions, very low numbers of protected, UK priority birds, red listed BoCC species such as starling etc. may fly over or next to the site occasionally. Significant nesting or foraging by most bird species on-site was considered highly unlikely.

3.4.17 The BoCC ratings are summarised as follows:

- Red-listed - highest conservation concern;
- Amber-listed - moderate conservation concern;
- Green-listed - least conservation concern.

Great Crested Newts & Other Amphibians

3.4.18 The site is small in area and low in suitability as terrestrial habitat for great crested newts (short grass).

3.4.19 Only one pond was identified within 250m of the site. The pond is a small garden pond at Winchester House.

3.4.20 The Habitat Suitability Index HSI scores (as developed by Oldham *et al*.) identified the pond as ‘below average’ in suitability. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Habitat Suitability Index score for the nearest pond located 45m south of the site at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024.

HSI Categories	Score
SI1 - Location	1
SI2 - Pond area	0.1
SI3 - Pond drying	1
SI4 - Water quality	0.33
SI4 - Shade	0.6
SI6 - Fowl	1
SI7 - Fish	1
SI8 - Ponds	0.95
SI9 - Terr'l habitat	0.33
SI10 - Macrophytes	0.3
HSI	**0.53**

HSI Pond suitability
<0.5 = poor
0.5 – 0.59 = below average
0.6 – 0.69 = average
0.7 – 0.79 = good
> 0.8 = excellent

3.4.21 Amphibians were not observed during the survey visits which included the April visit in the peak great crested newt survey season.

Reptiles

3.4.22 The proposed construction zone is small in area and was considered negligible in suitability or potential for reptiles with little safe basking foraging or breeding habitat present.

3.4.23 Reptiles were not observed during the survey visit.

Invertebrates

3.4.24 The proposed construction zone was considered low in diversity of habitats, size and diversity of flora necessary to support a significant assemblage of invertebrates of conservation concern. It is possible that the occasional priority species may visit the site, though significant use by such species was considered highly unlikely.

3.4.25 No protected or priority invertebrates were observed during the survey visit.

3.4.26 No areas of deadwood or rotting tree stumps were present for breeding stag beetles.

Other Protected, Priority or Rare Species

3.4.27 No signs or evidence of any other protected or priority species were observed on the site. The risk of presence of such was considered negligible.

4 DISCUSSION OF RISK AND LEGISLATION

4.1 Protected Species

Bats

4.1.1 Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 and under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Some bats are also UK priority species. A summary of the offences likely to be relevant to development are:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or take a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection, whether bats are present or not;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection;
- Deliberately disturb a bat anywhere.

4.1.2 The broader site area at Winchester House was considered optimal for foraging bats given the mature trees, hedgerows and pond. However, the proposed construction zone was found to be short grassland negligible in suitability for foraging bats. No new external lighting is proposed for the arena.

4.1.3 The existing stable was negligible in suitability or potential for roosting bats with negligible opportunities for roosting. Bats typically prefer stable environmental conditions for roosting. The stables were exposed to climatic changes and poorly insulated. No signs or evidence of bat activity was found.

4.1.4 Overall, the risk of significant impact or harm to bats, bat roosts or local bat conservation was considered negligible.

4.1.5 Further bat surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

4.1.6 However, to minimise any residual risk of harm or impact to bats, impact avoidance precautionary measures, detailed below, should be followed.

Birds

4.1.7 Wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and, with certain exceptions (e.g. pest species) in certain situations, it is an offence to intentionally:

- Kill or injure any wild bird;

- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built;
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

4.1.8 Some bird species (such as barn owls) are also specially protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and others are UK priority species.

4.1.9 The broader site area at Winchester House was considered optimal for a wide diversity of birds. However, the proposed construction zone included a small area of short grass low in suitability for foraging birds and negligible in suitability for nesting birds.

4.1.10 The existing stables were considered suitable for low numbers of common nesting birds. No trees will be lost.

4.1.11 Overall, it was considered that the risk of significant impact or harm to protected or priority birds was negligible and further bird surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

4.1.12 However, to minimise any residual risk of impact to common nesting birds, precautionary measures, detailed later in the report, should be followed.

Other Protected, Priority & Rare Mammals

4.1.13 The site was very low in suitability for any other protected, priority or rare mammals. No signs or evidence of such were observed on the site or adjacent to the site. It could not be discounted that the occasional hedgehog might visit the site, though significant use by hedgehogs was considered unlikely.

4.1.14 Further surveys for any other protected, priority or rare mammals was considered unnecessary. However, to minimise any residual risk of impact to hedgehogs, precautionary measures, detailed later in the report, should be followed.

Great Crested Newts & Other Amphibians

4.1.15 Great crested newts are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Great crested newts are also UK priority species. A summary of the offences likely to be relevant to development are:

- Intentionally or deliberately capture or kill;
- Intentionally injure;
- Deliberately disturb, or intentionally or recklessly disturb in a place of shelter or protection;

- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a place used for shelter or protection.

4.1.16 Great created newts have been recorded locally, though not particularly close to the site (CPERC, 2024). Habitats present are small in area and low in suitability for great crested newts or other amphibians. This combined with the below average suitability of the closest pond to the site for great crested newts and the fact that this pond is the only pond within 250m meant it was considered that the risk of great crested newts using the proposed construction zone and being impacted by the proposed development is very low.

4.1.17 Therefore, further amphibian surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary. However, to minimise any residual risk of impact, precautionary measures, detailed later in the report, should be followed.

Reptiles

4.1.18 Widespread reptile species including, grass snake, adder, slow worm and common lizard, are protected from intentional killing and injuring under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are also UK priority species.

3.4.28 The site was considered negligible in suitability or potential for reptiles. No reptiles were observed during the survey visit.

4.1.19 Therefore, the risk of presence and potential for impact was considered negligible. Further reptile surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

Plants & Invertebrates

4.1.20 No rare, protected, priority plant species or UK priority habitats are proposed for impact.

4.1.21 Further botanical surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

4.1.22 Regarding invertebrates, habitats present were common, widespread and small in area. The risk of presence of a significant assemblage of invertebrates of conservation concern was considered very low.

4.1.23 Further invertebrate surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary.

Other Protected & Priority species

4.1.24 No signs or evidence of other protected, priority or rare species were observed on the site and it was considered that there was a very low risk of such species occurring on the site or being impacted by the proposed development.

4.2 Other Issues

Sensitive Habitats

4.2.1 The site is a significant distance from any statutorily designated nature conservation sites. The risk of impact to such sites or wildlife which use such sites was considered negligible.

4.2.2 Further surveys or mitigation for designated nature conservation sites or other sensitive habitats were considered unnecessary.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Precautionary Measures

Bats

5.1.1 To minimise any residual risk of impact to bats, the following precautionary measure should be undertaken:

- Stable demolition should be undertaken by hand, with hand deconstruction of the roof. If bats or evidence of bat activity, droppings etc. are found, works should stop and an ecologist called for advice.
- Any new proposed external lighting should be minimised. Where external lighting is required it should be warm white LED lamps (<2700k) with glass glazing, rather than plastic, as these produce the least amount of UV light possible, minimising the attraction effects on insects and minimising disturbance to local bats;
- Any new external lighting proposed for the development should be aimed carefully, to minimise illumination of boundary habitats and avoid light spillage into the sky, or horizontally out from any buildings, by using hoods or directional lighting;
- External security lighting should be set on short timers and be sensitive to large moving objects only, to prevent any passing bats switching them on.

Birds

5.1.2 Demolition of the stables and any reduction in shrubs or trees should be undertaken outside the nesting season (March to end of August). If this is not possible then a daylight inspection of the stables should be undertaken by an ecologist to determine the presence or absence of nesting birds before demolition.

5.1.3 If an active bird nest was found, it would be necessary to protect the nest from harm or disturbance until the bird had finished nesting.

Amphibians & Hedgehogs

5.1.4 The risk of impact to hedgehogs and amphibians was considered very low. To minimise any residual risk of impact or harm, the following precautionary measures should be undertaken:

- Ground vegetation should be maintained short by regular cutting or grazing to prevent habitats improving for wildlife before any construction commences.
- During works, waste material should be removed off site immediately and construction materials should be stored on hardstanding or off the ground on pallets, to prevent wildlife from sheltering in the materials and being harmed by movement of the materials.
- The site should be well drained and ground vegetation maintained short throughout the development, to prevent attracting wildlife into harm's way.
- Any excavations for the development should be covered at night or have a roughly sawn plank placed in them to facilitate escape for any wildlife which may fall in.
- No construction/demolition works at night when amphibians and hedgehogs are mostly active.
- In the unlikely event that a hedgehog or amphibian is observed on the site during development, activities in that area should cease and the animal should be allowed to disperse of its own accord. If rescuing is required and ecologist should be called for advice.

5.2 Enhancements & Biodiversity Net Gain

5.2.1 By following the below biodiversity enhancements, the development will improve the site for local wildlife and provide a net-gain in accordance with national planning policy (NPPF, 2024).

5.2.2 The following bat and bird boxes should be installed on the site as biodiversity enhancement. The boxes should be installed on adjacent trees.

- 1 x Schwegler 1B general purpose bird box.
- 2 x Eco Kent Bat Box.

5.2.3 The bird and bat boxes should be installed high on trees (above 4m). The bird box should be installed facing a northerly direction or out of direct sunlight. The bat box should be facing a southerly direction.

5.2.4 Any new or restored grass areas can be created using a wildflower meadow mixture such as EM1 from Emorsgate Seeds;

5.2.5 Any other new soft landscaping could include native and or wildlife attracting species only.

5.2.6 Measurable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) was calculated using the most up-to-date Statutory Biodiversity Metric (July, 2024) and habitat condition assessment sheets (see separate documents). A summary of the calculations is included below with Headline results in the Appendices.

5.2.7 For the purposes of BNG the site areas for the arena and stables are combined because it is one application. Architectural advice was provided in obtaining site areas including existing and proposed areas of buildings and hardstanding etc.

5.2.8 It should be re-iterated that the project is for equestrian facilities and that most works are outside of residential curtilage meaning that tree planting can be used to create BNG off-site (but with the blueline ownership) because it is not within private gardens.

Total site area: 0.1415

Existing On-Site Habitats

- Developed land; sealed surface (existing stables, chicken coop and section of driveway) 0.013ha
- Modified Grassland (Poor Condition) – the proposed menage area, the access area and proposed new stable area 0.1285ha

Retained Habitats

- Modified Grassland (Poor Condition) – retained access area will stay as grass 0.054ha
- Developed Land; Sealed Surface- existing driveway 0.008ha

Enhanced Habitats

- N/A

Proposed On-Site Habitats

- Developed land; sealed surface (stables) 0.0093ha
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (menage) 0.0702ha

Existing Off-Site Habitats

- Modified Grassland (Poor Condition) 0.01

Proposed Off-Site Habitats

- 15 x New Small Rural Trees (Moderate Condition)

5.2.9 With these calculations followed, the existing On-site Baseline Habitat is 0.28 units. The on-site Post Intervention Habitat is 0.12 units. The net change on site is -0.16 (-57.98%).

5.2.10 The off-site Baseline Habitat Value is 0.02 and with 15 trees planted the Off-site Post Intervention value would be 0.23 equating to a 14.71% increase in Biodiversity Net Gain.

5.2.11 Please note that the applicant owns the entire redline and blueline site boundaries. The proposed tree planting and biodiversity enhancement should be considered non-significant enhancements even though trees are a medium distinctiveness habitat. This is because the proposals are so small in scale, that it would not be reasonable to secure a monitoring strategy for a 30 year period.

5.2.12 Therefore, no Habitat Management Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is require. However, a standard Landscape Management Plan should be drafted as a condition of planning consent detailing which tree species are to be planted and how to manage these trees to ensure survival with a one-for-one replacement requirement if any die within the first 5 years of planting.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposed construction zone (redline boundary) was considered low in ecological value with common and widespread habitats present. The risk of presence and significant impact to protected, priority or rare species or notable habitats was very low/negligible.

6.2 Further ecological surveys or mitigation were considered unnecessary for the development to proceed.

6.3 However, to minimise any residual risk of impact, recommendations for birds, amphibians, hedgehogs and bats are included in the report and should be followed accordingly.

6.4 With the recommendations followed as described in the report, the proposed development could proceed with a minimal risk of impact to protected, priority or rare species or habitats.

6.5 Furthermore, by following the biodiversity enhancements, the development would be enhanced even further for the benefit of local wildlife in accordance with national planning policy. 15.34% BNG can be achieved with planting of 15 trees adjacent to the stables.

7 REFERENCES

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1: Figures

Figure 1: Habitat map (BNG Baseline) at Winchester House, Keyston. April 2025.

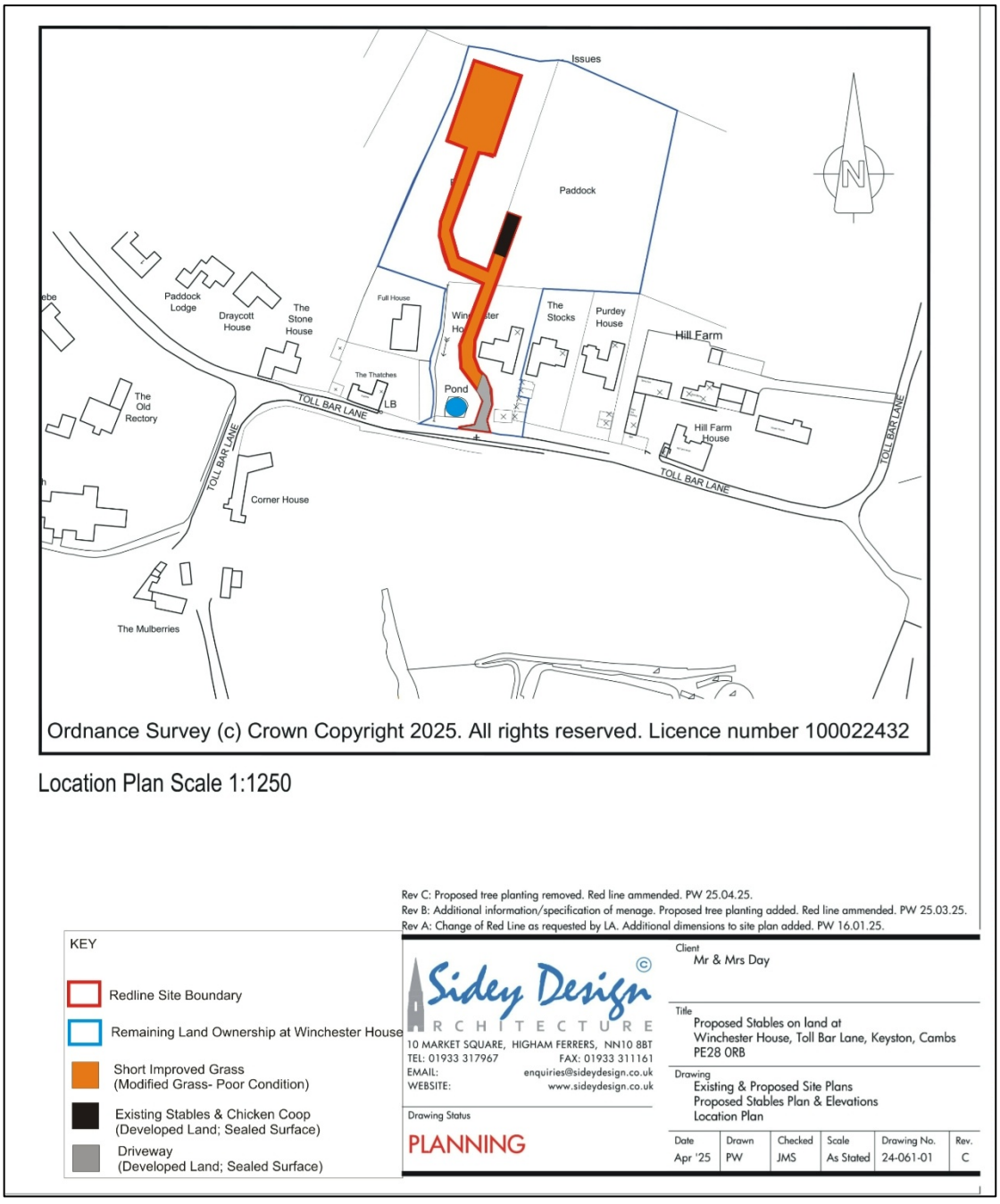


Figure 2: Site location & proposed development.

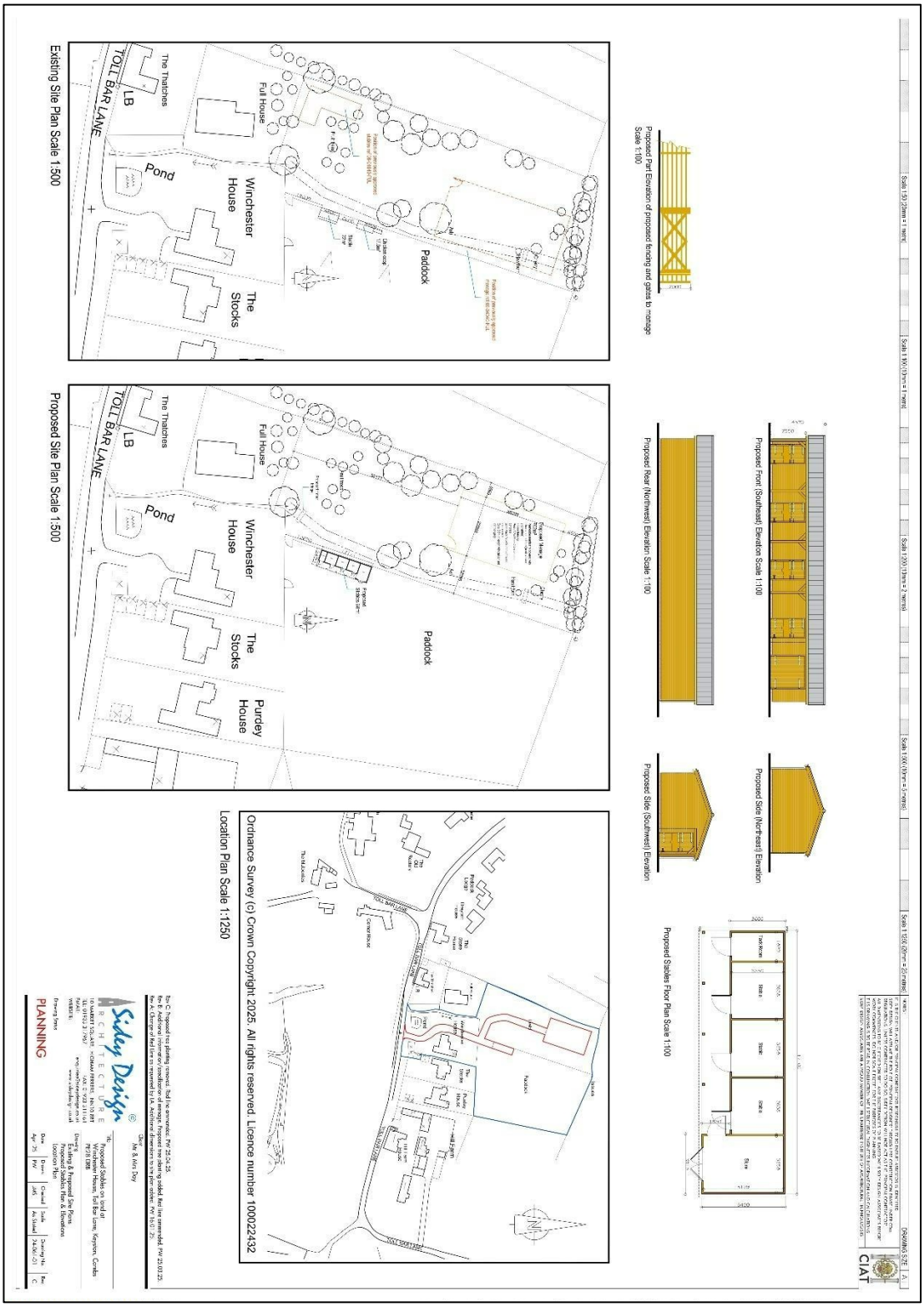


Figure 3: BNG Post Intervention Habitats.

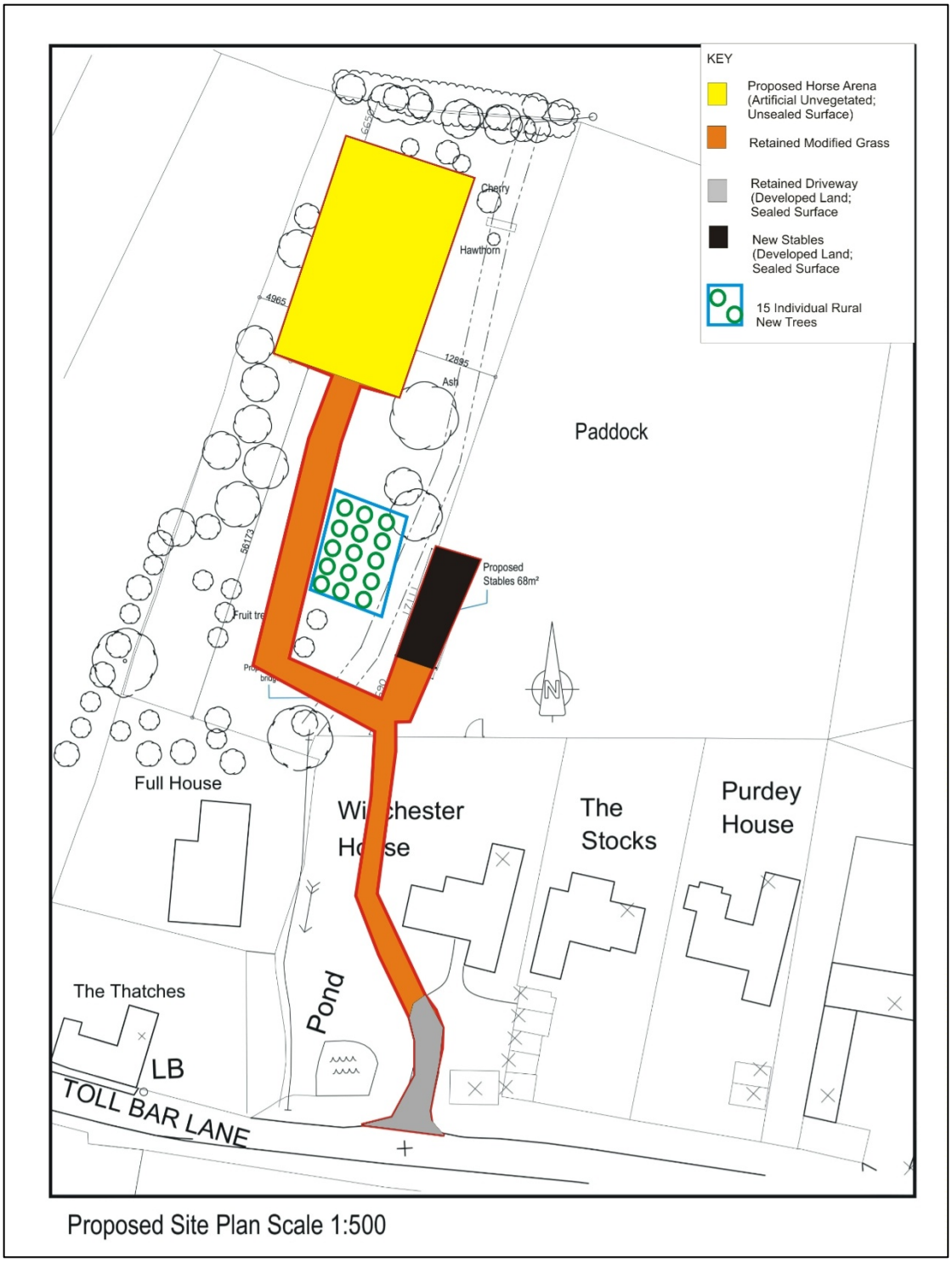
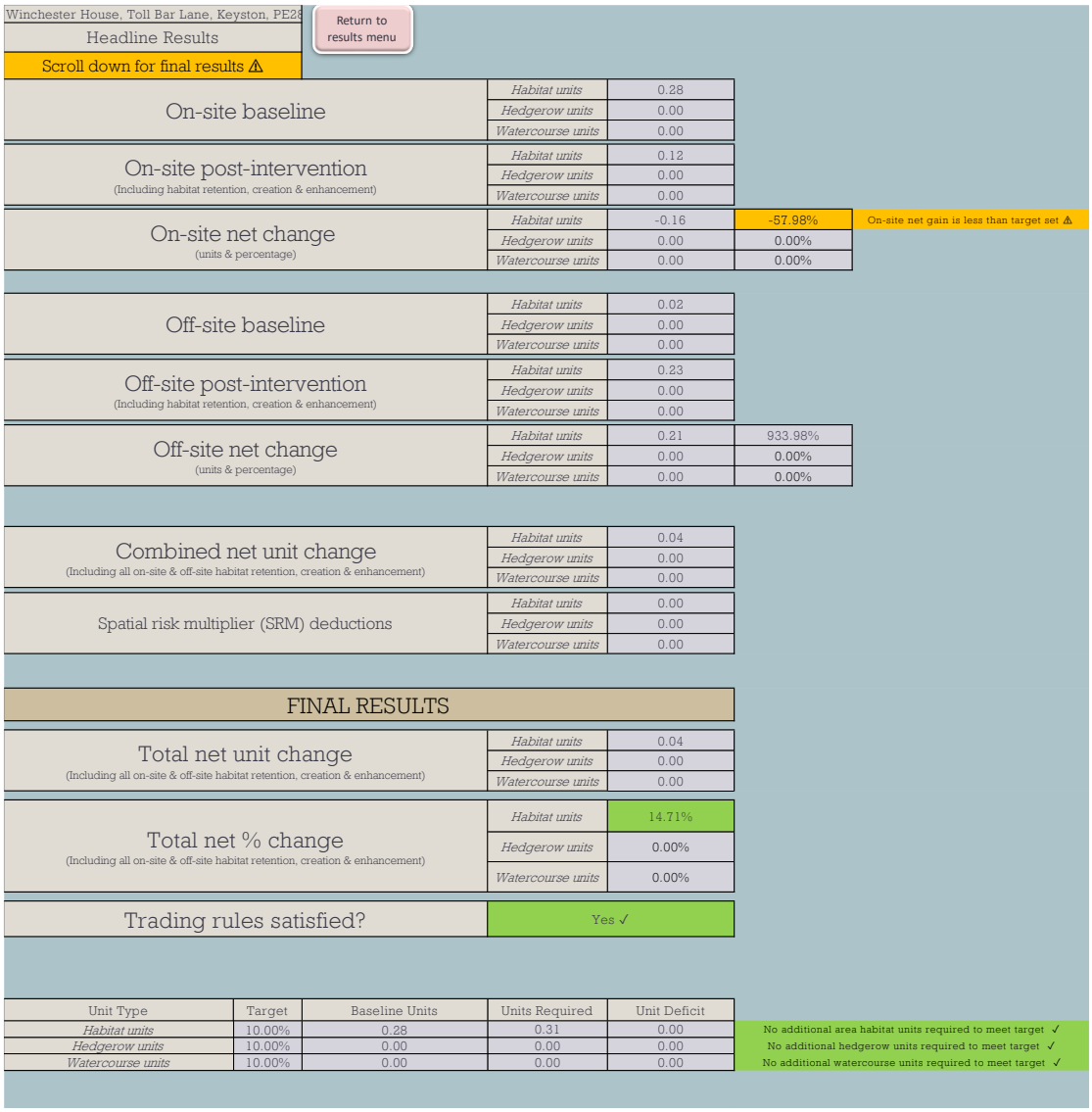


Figure 4: BNG Headline Results.



Winchester House, Toll Bar Lane, Keyston, PE28

Return to results menu

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ⚠

On-site baseline	*Habitat units*	0.28		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.12		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Habitat units*	-0.16	-57.98%	On-site net gain is less than target set ⚠
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
Off-site baseline	*Habitat units*	0.02		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.23		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	*Habitat units*	0.21	933.98%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.04		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	*Habitat units*	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.04	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	14.71%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Habitat units	10.00%	0.28	0.31	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

8.2 Appendix 2: Photographs

Photograph 1: Area proposed for new arena at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 2: Southern half of site at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 3: West side of site at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 4: Dry ditch – east side of site at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 5: Stable building (proposed for demolition) – north & east sides at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 6: Stable building – south & west sides at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 7: Stable interior at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 8: Stable – interior access hole at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 9: Nearest pond – 45 meters south of site at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 10: Adjacent field to the east of site at Winchester House, Keyston. 1st November 2024



Photograph by Tommy Root 2024

Photograph 11: Main site area. 23rd April 2025



Photograph by Roger Spring 2025

Photograph 12: Main site area. 23rd April 2025



Photograph by Roger Spring 2025

Photograph 13: Field gate between the house garden and the site. 23rd April 2025



Photograph by Roger Spring 2025