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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment

Survey site:
Manor Farm, Brington Road, Old Weston, Cambridgeshire, PE28 5LP

Client:
Lilystone Homes Ltd

Survey date:
30th January 2025

Project:
This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Huntingdonshire District Council. The proposal is described as:
Demolition of old shed, stables and erection of single dwelling.

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.**
PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.**

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Site Location and Context

The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference TL 09772 77301 and has an area of approximately 0.07ha.

The site comprises two buildings, including a garage and former stables, located within the grounds of Manor Farm, which is currently a dwelling. The site is located within the village of Old Weston, within a mainly residential setting, It is bound by an agricultural shed to the south and east, Brington Road to the north and dwelling to the west. The wider landscape is dominated by arable fields.

Survey Details

The site survey was undertaken by Gareth Hey BSc (Hons), MSc, ACIEEM (Natural England Protected Species Licence Numbers: [Bats] (2021-51195-CLS-CLS) [Great Crested Newts] (2017-30374-CLS-CLS) (Natural Resource Wales Protected Species Licence Number: [Bats] (S094455/1)

Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (mph)	Rain
30/01/2025	4	81	0	5	None

Survey limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood, and the known distribution of species as recovered during the searches of historical biological records.

The survey was completed outside of the optimal survey period (April to October) limiting the identification of ground flora species. However, given the nature of the habitats present within the site, it is considered that the information collected as part of the site visit provides a robust assessment of the ecological value of the site.

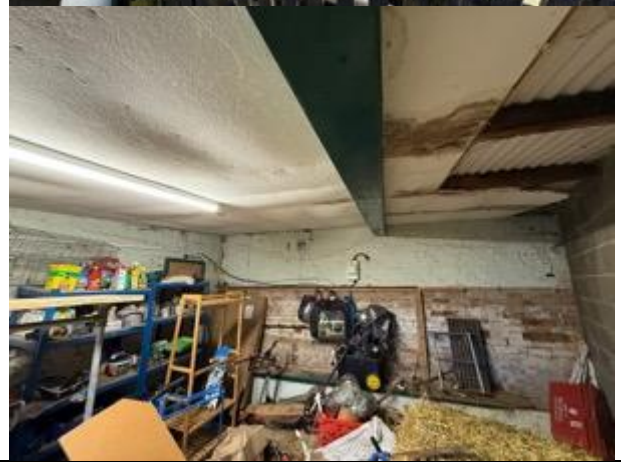
A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

Ecological Survey Factor **Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations**	**Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.**
Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, proposal plan in appendix 3 and photos in appendix 4). **Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).**	
Summary of Survey Findings **(***UKHab codes used)*	The site does not contain any habitats listed as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). The habitats within the site are common and widespread and have low ecological value. Notable habitats are present within 2km. **On-site habitat descriptions** **u1 -** Built-up areas and gardens [vegetated garden 828, introduced shrubs 847] The site is dominated by an area of vegetated garden, associated with the grounds of Manor Farm. It comprises two amenity lawns, which comprise a species poor mix, dominated by perennial rye-grass, with an extremely limited herbaceous layer, with white clover abundant. There are some small areas of introduced shrub present, comprising a range of non-native ornamental species. There are also areas of hardstanding, comprising tarmacked areas along with paving, utilised for access to and from the site along with areas for amenity use. **u1b5** – Buildings There are two buildings present within the site, B1 comprises a garage building, utilised for storage, whilst B2 comprises former stables, which are not currently in use. The buildings suitability for roosting bats is discussed further within this report. **Local notable habitats**

	There are limited areas of priority habitat as designated under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006 within a 2km radius of the site. The closest is an area of deciduous woodland, located 200m west of the site. The only other priority habitat present within a 2km radius is lowland fen, located over 1km from the site.
Foreseen Impacts	**On-site habitats** The proposed development will result in the loss of the buildings and small areas of vegetated garden on site. This is likely to have a minimal impact on biodiversity due to the low ecological value of these habitats. **Notable habitats** No impacts to any notable habitats are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such habitats as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers.
Recommendations	**On-site habitats** To create an enhancement at the site, the following habitat creation measures should be incorporated: • Planting of native trees and shrubs. **Notable habitats** None required. **Biodiversity net gain** The proposed development is considered exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements under the de minimis exemption, as the development will impact less than 0.2ha of on-site habitat. As such, there is no requirement for the development to demonstrate a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain.
Locality and Designated Sites	
Summary of Survey Findings	**On-site designations** The site is not subject to any designation. **Statutory designated sites (within 2km)**

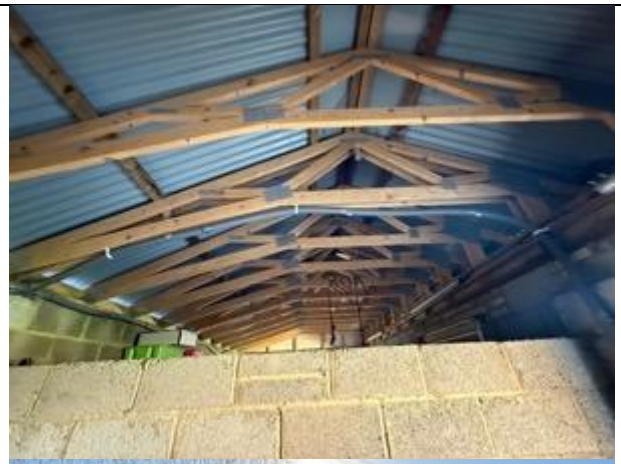
	There are no known statutory sites within 2km of the site. The site lies within the impact risk zone for Titchmarsh Meadows SSSI and Little Catworth Meadow SSSI. **Statutory designated sites (within 10km)** No national network sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar) are located within 5km. **Non-statutory designated sites** The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. However, given the dominance of arable land within the wider landscape, it is unlikely that such designations exist within close proximity to the site.
Foreseen Impacts	**On-site designations** No impacts foreseen. **Statutory and non-statutory designated sites** No impacts to designated sites are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such sites (where known) as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers. The site lies within the impact risk zone for Titchmarsh Meadows SSSI and Little Catworth Meadow SSSI. The proposed development is not listed as a possible high risk for this designation.
Recommendations	**On-site designations** None required. **Statutory and non-statutory designated sites** None required.
Invasive / Non-native species	

Summary of Survey Findings	No problematic invasive and non-native species recorded on site.
Foreseen Impacts	N/A
Recommendations	No further surveys but remain vigilant.
Invertebrates	
Summary of Survey Findings	The habitats present on-site, including lawns and ornamental shrubs, likely provide common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter. The site contains no further notable habitats which may provide niches for specialised or protected invertebrates.
Foreseen Impacts	None foreseen.
Recommendations	No further surveys.
Bats	
Summary of Survey Findings	**EPSL data** A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. No EPSLs are present within a 2km radius of the site. **Foraging and commuting habitat** The dominant habitat on site (vegetated garden) provides minimal value for foraging and commuting bats. In addition to the above, there is an absence of linear features for bats to commute along within close proximity to the site. Given the above, bats are more likely to utilise habitats within the wider landscape for foraging and commuting activity. **Roosting habitat** Buildings to be impacted by the proposed development are assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats below. No evidence of roosting bats was identified on or within B1 or B2.

B1 Building description	***Photographs***
Summary Building B1 is a single storey brick-built garage structure with a corrugated metal roof. There are no voids present within the building and the internal areas of the building are subject to high levels of disturbance, through regular access by the residents of the site, creating a sub-optimal condition for bat occupation. There are no suitable external crevices present that provide suitability for roosting bats. Given the above, B1 is considered to be of **negligible value** to roosting bats.	 

B2 Building description	***Photographs***

Summary
Building B2 is a modern built timber framed single storey former stables, present in the eastern section of the site. It is constructed from timber cladding and beams, with a pitched corrugated metal roof structure present. The barn doors are open, resulting in high lux levels throughout the day. There are no suitable gaps present that provide suitability for roosting bats and as such, it is determined to be of **negligible value** to roosting bats.





Foreseen Impacts	**Roosting habitat [Buildings]** Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within the buildings at the site and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats in this location as a result of the proposed development. **Foraging and commuting habitat** The proposed development will result in the loss of small areas of vegetated garden, but given their low value and the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats. **Artificial lighting** The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting at the site, however, given the low value of the habitats within the site for foraging and commuting bats, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats.
Recommendations	**Roosting habitat [Buildings]** In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice. **Artificial lighting** None required. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** The installation of two bat boxes at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. The bat boxes will be incorporated into the fabric of the new dwelling. Suitable bat boxes include Habibat Bat Box, Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box or similar alternative brand. Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.
Birds	

Summary of Survey Findings	**Buildings** No evidence of nesting birds was identified on or within B1 or B2. B2 is considered suitable for nesting for species such as swallow, house sparrow and wren. **Trees and vegetation** No bird nests were identified within the vegetation on-site, however they all offer nesting opportunities and nest-building resources for birds. **Barn owls** The site does not appear to provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls. **Overwintering birds** Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.
Foreseen Impacts	**Buildings** The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests. **Barn owls** None foreseen. **Overwintering birds** None foreseen.
Recommendations	**Buildings**

	Any building or vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged. **Barn owls** None required. **Overwintering birds** None required. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** The installation of a minimum of two bird boxes on new or retained buildings will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace Or a similar alternative brand. Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.
Reptiles	

Summary of Survey Findings	**EPSL data** A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within 2km of the site. **Habitat suitability** There is no suitable habitat present on site for reptiles due to a lack of habitats such as scrub and rank grassland which would offer refuge for these species. Further, the site is surrounded by urban development (i.e. roads and buildings) which is considered sub-optimal for reptile migration and therefore reptiles are considered unlikely to migrate from any nearby suitable habitats to the development site. As such it is likely that reptiles are absent from the development site.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on reptiles as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	None required.
Amphibians	
Summary of Survey Findings	**EPSL and survey data** A review of the MAGIC database returned two granted EPSL records for great crested newts within 2km of the site. The closest of which (2016-22406-EPS-MIT) is located 300m north-east of the site and relates to the destruction and damage of a resting place. The MAGIC database also returned evidence indicating the presence of great crested newts resulting from class survey licence returns. These records are located 0.42km north-east. Great crested newts exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton *et al.* 2001). As such, it is possible that the great crested newt metapopulation known to be present within 500m of the site could be suitably connected to the site. However, the site is separated from these records by extensive areas of built form, including main roads and residential properties. These features are likely to present a significant dispersal barrier, eliminating connectivity to the site for great crested newts. Further details are provided below. **Aquatic habitat suitability (including ponds within 500m)**

	There are no ponds on the site, but a review of aerial imagery (MAGIC and OS Maps) indicates the presence of a singular pond within 500m; the pond (P1) is located ~0.31km north-east of the site and is situated on the far side of the Main Street and extensive areas of built form, including residential dwellings. These landscape features are likely to represent a significant barrier to dispersal due to heavy traffic flow and high kerbs along the road, eliminating connectivity to the site for great crested newts. **Terrestrial habitat suitability** The site itself provides limited suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians given the urban and frequently managed nature of habitats dominating the site. The areas of hard standing and amenity grass offer sub-optimal habitat for terrestrial amphibians due to a homogeneous habitat structure with an absence of refuge opportunities. Whilst it is acknowledged that areas of introduced shrubs offer a suitable structure for refuge, these areas are sparsely populated and small in extent. Given this, the site is not assessed to represent a significant resource for local amphibians populations, although their presence for transient periods whilst foraging and commuting cannot be discounted.
Foreseen Impacts	Whilst the presence of GCN and other common amphibians cannot be wholly discounted due to the presence of a pond 310m north-east of the site along with the presence of historical records, 400m and 420m north-east of the site, their presence is considered unlikely due to the suboptimal nature of dominating on-site habitats, along with the significant dispersal barriers present between the site and these records and pond. Further to this, there is a notable absence of any significant refuge opportunities for GCN other common amphibians within the site, limiting the potential for impacts to individuals that may be present transiently whilst foraging and commuting. The risk of impacts to GCN and other common amphibians is therefore considered to be low.
Recommendations	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures: • A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area. • Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas.

	• Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. • In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Badger	
Summary of Survey Findings	No badger setts were noted on site or within a 30m radius of the site. The site is considered unsuitable for badgers given the lack of suitable sett excavation areas/ground. Further, there is limited suitable badger foraging habitat on site given the lack of fruiting trees/scrub. The site is also surrounding by urban development (i.e. roads and buildings), which is sub-optimal habitat therefore reducing the likelihood of badgers being present within the surrounding area of the site.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on badgers as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	None required.
Riparian animals	
Summary of Survey Findings	A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for otters or water voles within 2km of the site. There are no water courses on or connected to the site. There are also no riparian habitats present on site or within an influencing distance.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	None required.
Hazel dormouse	
Summary of Survey Findings	**EPSL data** A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for hazel dormice within 2km of the site. **Habitat suitability**

	Dormice typically utilise a three-dimensional habitat structure as to commute between feeding and breeding sites whilst avoiding predation. As such habitats on site are considered unsuitable for hazel dormice and therefore the likelihood of this species being present on site is considered acceptably low.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	None foreseen.
Other e.g. hedgehog	
Summary of Survey Findings	Hedgehogs are known to utilise gardens as part of their range within urban environments. As such, the vegetated garden and introduced shrubs may provide suitable areas for foraging, commuting and refuge seeking hedgehog.
Foreseen Impacts	Small areas of vegetated garden will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.
Recommendations	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs: • Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities. • Creation of brash piles or installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas. • Installation of gaps under boundary fencing to enable hedgehogs to move freely through the site.

Appendix 1: Survey/Habitat map



Appendix 2: Location map



Appendix 3: Proposed plan



Appendix 4: Habitat Photos

Buildings	
Photograph	**Description**
	Figure 1: Stables present at the site.
Garden and driveway	
Photograph	**Description**
	Figure 2: Grass lawn and hardstanding present in the northern section of the site.
Garden	

Photograph	Description
	Figure 3: Amenity lawn in the southern section of the site.

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Version control			
Status	**Issue**	**Name**	**Date**
Draft	0.1	Gareth Hey BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM, Ecological Consultant	10/02/2025
Final	1.0	Harley Stone BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist	18/02/2025
Insert plans	1.1	Gareth Hey BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM, Ecological Consultant	14/08/2026
Final	2.0	Emma Platts BSc (Hons), Senior Ecologist	19/08/2026
Update	3.0	Gareth Hey BSc (Hons) MSc ACIEEM, Ecological Consultant	28/09/2026