

Extended Phase One Habitat Survey (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal)

Version Two. 14.06.2025

Prepared for: Starship Grp/Onward Homes

Prepared by Simon Brain (Managing Director).

NAME OF SITE:	Halsnead Farm
PROJECT No:	12449
CLIENT NAME:	Starship Grp/Onward Homes
SPECIALIST:	Amenity Tree Care Ltd
DATE PREPARED:	27.01.2025
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DATE REVIEWED:	14.06.2025
VERSION CONTROL:	Version 2

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1. Introduction

Amenity Tree have been instructed by the client to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) on land located at Halsnead Farm.

1.1 Background to the project

The client is proposing the re development of the site for residential housing.

1.2 Site location, context and main habitats

The site is located on the southern boundary of the M62 and north of Symmetry Park. The survey area consisted of modified grassland (g4), urban introduced shrub (u-1160), urban buildings and sealed surfaces (u1b), other woodland (mixed) and urban trees.

1.3 Report purpose

To prepare a Preliminary Ecological Assessment or Extended Phase One Habitat Survey for the development site following CIEEM guidelines (*Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, April 2013*). The purpose of the report is to provide information relating to the location, extent and distribution and impact on the conservation of wild plants and animals and natural and semi natural habitats affected by development. This report sets out the methods, results and recommendations arising from the above work.

1.3.1 Surveyor information

Simon Brain has attained a Post Graduate Certificate in Biological Recording and has attended residential FSC Field Courses for Land mammal, Songbird Barn Owls (CIEEM) and Advanced Bird Survey Techniques. He holds a NE Class 2 bat license (17334-CLS). He has over fifteen years experience as a practice ecologist and 30 years experience as an arborist.

2. Desk Study

2.1 Methodology

The desk study collated information on designated statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites within 1km search radii around the proposed development site.

Information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites and legally protected/notable species records were obtained from <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx> and contained in section 2.2 below.

2.2 Designated sites, species and habitats - Results Overview

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (<http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) has confirmed no statutory designations apply to the site and the site boundaries.

The site is located within SSSI Impact Zone for The Mersey Estuary SSSI / RAMSAR site which is located 5825m south of site. Clinton Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located 3800m south of site. The development proposal does not appear to conform to those development types that require the LPA to consult Natural England on the likely risks.

Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website data has confirmed the following habitats and species apply to the site and its immediate locality:

- There are section 41 habitats listed on the inventory on the site. Ancient Woodland which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is located immediately adjacent to the southeastern and western boundaries. A 15m buffer zone should be applied to any proposed development in these areas to avoid impacts on the woodland parcels. The southeastern woodland parcel is directly adjacent to the existing built form of the farmhouse building and associated access/boundary treatments.
- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland is located in numerous areas within a 2km radius of site.

- A Network Expansion Zone is located onsite.
- The Network Enhancement Zone is located on site
- The site is covered by the Grassland Assemblage Farmland Birds (2 species) (England).
- The site is covered by the Arable Assemblage Farmland Birds (4 species) (England).
- There are no important Bird Areas, Seabird considerations, or water and wetland considerations in respect of avian species. The RAMSAR site which is located 5825m from site
- The closest granted European Protected Species (EPS) license application by Natural England was for bat species (C-PIP;S-PIP;BLE;NATT) approximately 1390m from site. No granted European Protected Species are within a 1km radius of site.



Section 41 ancient woodland parcels. Source: [Magic Map Application](#)

3. Extended Phase One Habitat Survey

3.1 Methodology and survey results

The site was visited on the 21st December 2025 and a survey of the site was conducted using the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <https://www.ukhabs.org>). Distinct habitats were identified and any features of nature conservation interest or habitat areas that were too small to map were subject to a more detailed description in a Target Note (T1 etc) and contained in Appendix 2 –UK Habitat Survey Map.

3.1.2. Vascular Plants and Habitat

UK Habitat Classification code	Dominant species	Less frequent species
Woodland	Fagus sylvatica Prunus avium Quercus robur Aesculus hippocastaneum Tilia x europaea	Crataegus monogyna Betula pendula Salix caprea
Modified grassland	Lolium perenne Trifolium repens	Dactylis glomerata Bellis perennis Plantago lanceolata Taraxacum officinale Rumex acetosa Agrostis sp(p) Sencecio jacobaea
Introduced shrub	Hebe Pyracantha sp	Euonymus japonicus
Urban trees	Acer platanoides Acer pseudoplatanus	

Target Notes – None taken

3.1.3 Protected and Notable Species (Mammals)

Water Voles

Running water is present adjacent to the eastern boundary site boundary, which is a narrow watercourse located 50m to the east. The site will not impact on this habitat and therefore there is no need for a water vole survey.

Bat species

Bats are comprehensively protected under UK and European legislation. Bats are largely ubiquitous there is green infrastructure linking the site to the wider landscape. The site contains suitable foraging habitat. Trees may need to be removed for development which could contain bat roosts. There is an older farmhouse and a series of agricultural buildings which may contain features suitable for roosting bats.

Badgers and Hedgehog

Badgers are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which prohibits deliberate interference with the animal or its sett. A standard badger survey was undertaken making checks on site and in the immediate site margins. For example, up to 30m+ from site was checked for signs for field signs of Badger (hair, tracks, prints, dropping or latrines), none where found.

Amphibians

The desktop and field survey exercises indicate a single field pond located 180m north of site but separated from site by the M62. A second pond is located 400m to the east which appears on aerial images as fully overgrown by mature trees. There is no aquatic breeding habitat associated with the site itself and sub optimal foraging, dispersal or hibernating habitat for amphibians to be present.

3.1.5 Birds

All birds with only minor exceptions are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended. It is also an offence to disturb birds whilst nesting or displaying breeding behaviour, during the breeding season.

Urban birds may use the site such as house sparrow and starling which are birds of conservation concern.

3.1.6 Vascular Plants

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 13 1(b) affords some wild flowers protection from uprooting. No other IUCN listed, BAP or other notable plants were identified.

3.1.7 Reptiles

All native reptile species in the UK are protected under law from killing or sale. Suitable basking habitat is present onsite but onsite habitats (modified grassland, introduced shrub, hardstanding) are regularly managed so are considered unsuitable for reptile species.

3.2. Constraints to the Surveys

The timing of the site visit was sub optimal for all species and habitats to be identified within the framework of a Phase 1 survey.

4. Summary and Impact

4.1 Summary – Protected habitats

The surveys have confirmed that the site is directly adjacent to two areas of S41 ancient woodland subject to TPO located to the southeast and western red line boundary which is a habitat protected under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (*NERC*) Act 2006 - Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England. There are no priority hedgerows on the site.

Summary - Protected species

Evidence of protected species was recorded in the Farmhouse buildings and a PRA followed by a suite of emergence surveys has been undertaken. No other evidence of protected species was found during the site walkover.

Summary – Protected sites

There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites within the boundaries of the development site or within the site margins.

Impact – General

The development proposal seeks to construct a new residential housing and associated infrastructure and there is a direct loss of mainly amenity grassland and urban sealed / building for the footprint of the development.

Impact - Species

The full extent of protected species that may reside on this site will require confirmation following further surveys as recommended in section 4.2. The following general impacts are considered to apply:

Species	Impact of species of development
Amphibians	No impact considered likely.
Badger/hedgehog	Currently no evidence of badger but S41 woodland to the SW of site is suitable habitat and evidence of badger may be found on site in the future, hedgehog has potential to be present on site.
Bats	Loss of sub-optimal commuting and foraging. The existing trees to be removed have been classified as negligible. The building to be demolished contains a bat roost.
Birds	Loss of foraging habitat and disturbance during the breeding season.
Reptiles	Affected habitats onsite have poor suitability for reptiles: no impact considered likely
Vascular plants/woodlands	Loss of vascular plant habitat identified on site is a low-level impact. Protected ancient woodland located to the southeast and western boundaries requires a buffer zone to reduce impact on Section 41 habitats.

	The southeastern parcel is already subject to RPA incursion in the form of the existing farmhouse, access road, outbuildings, adjacent properties, delapidated outbuildings and boundary treatments. Consideration of buffer zones and recreational pressure is required for these habitats to avoid degradation and loss. A buffer zone for these areas has already been implemented for the design proposals and Natural England have raised no objections.
Water vole	No impact considered likely.

4.2 Recommendations for protected species

4.2.1 Mammals

Bat species

A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the building to be demolished has been undertaken. The PRA may recommended the need for emergence survey/s to be undertaken within the optimal survey period (May-August).

The site may hold some significance for commuting and foraging bat species due to existing woodland to the north and S41 woodland edges on the south of site that are either on site or immediately adjacent to site. The habitat that could be of potential use for commuting and foraging bats but it is all to be retained and a suitable lighting design in these areas is required that is bat friendly.

A Ground Level Tree Inspection (GLTA) is has been undertaken to assess the trees that may be affected for bat roost suitability, further aerial inspections by a suitably qualified climber are not required as Potential Roost Features (PRFs) were classified as negligible. Subsequent bat emergence surveys have been undertaken after inspection of potential features and have confirmed presence of low numbers/common species and a Natural England Mitigation License is required before any works can be undertaken of the farmhouse building.

Badgers / hedgehog

No evidence of these species was found but a pre start check shall be made to ensure no badger activity has developed since this walkover survey. Measures are required to incorporate hedgehog into the development plans.

4.2.2 Amphibians

No other further surveys are required for these species.

4.2.3 Avian

A precautionary breeding bird appraisal / survey will be required prior to any tree to removal ascertain the importance of the site to breeding birds at that time and check for presence of active nests to avoid damage and disturbance. This may require hand searching and dawn observations depending upon the time of year.

4.2.4 Vascular Plants

No other further surveys are required for vascular plants.

4.2.5 Reptiles

No further surveys are required for these species.

5. Recommendations, mitigation, enhancement measures

5.1 Recommendations, mitigation, enhancement measures

Mitigation applies to works required to comply with legislation when developing land where protected species reside, or protected habitats are being lost. Enhancement relates to biodiversity improvements often made under the National Planning Policy Framework.

Buffer zones for the ancient woodland parcels have already been considered and applied to the proposed layout and have considered existing built form. Enhancement measures for these areas should include minimising any built form in the buffer zone, no dig construction of any soft landscape works, educational signage, boundary treatments to exclude access to offsite woodland areas from within the development, supplementary planting of native woodland species to provide connectivity.

Other protected species that may be present on site include badgers and hedgehog.

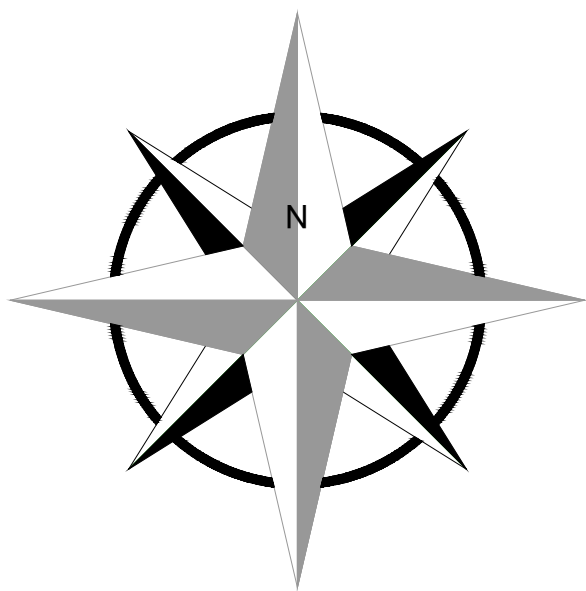
The extent of protected species requires the surveys referred to in section 4.1 and 4.2 are to be completed before mitigation can be proposed to support this development. Upon completion of these surveys mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures can be provided and confirmed.

The provision of a Biodiversity enhancement report and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is considered to apply to the site in accordance with the NPPF and The Environment Act 2021.

Appendix 1: Species List

Acer platanooides
Acer pseudoplatanus
Aesculus hippocastaneum
Agrostis sp(p)
Bellis perennis
Betula pendula
Cornus sp
Crataegus monogyna
Dactylis glomerata
Euonymus europaeus
Euonymus japonicus
Fagus sylvatica
Fraxinus excelsior
Lolium perenne
Plantago lanceolata
Prunus avium
Prunus sp(p)
Quercus robur
Rumex acetosa
Salix caprea
Senecio jacobaea
Taraxacum officinale
Tilia x europaea
Trifolium repens
Rubus sp(p)

Apendix 2: UK Habitat Survey Map



UK Habitat Classification

- KEY
- u1b Building / developed and sealed surface
 - u-1160 urban- introduced shrub
 - u1b Urban garden
 - u1c- artificial unvegetated unsealed surface
 - g4 - modified grassland
 - Urban trees

AMENITYTREE

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Client:

Starship Group

Project:

Halstead

12449

Detail:

UK Habitat Classification Key - Overview

Drawn By:

Date:

Scale:

SB

11/11/2025

1:400 - A0

Dwg No:

Revision:

TR-01-Overview Sheet

V1

Appendix 3: Site images of southeast woodland (W1) and exisiting built form.

