

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Site: Land adjacent to 40 Heros Walk, Reading, RG2 8TY

Grid ref: SU716693

Client: Loddon Property LTD

Date: 10/09/2025

Version 001

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Document history sheet

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Revision history

Version	Description of change	Date	Initials
1	Original report	10/09/2025	N.G

DISCLAIMER

It should be noted that the information above provides details of the Site's current ecological situation. In the event that the proposed development does not commence within 12 months of the date of this report, further advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist as to whether the information provided requires updating in light of changing ecological conditions.

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SUMMARY

This is a brief description of the findings and recommendations for the proposed site. Please read the report for full details.

- Noa Girdler was commissioned by Loddon Property LTD to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) survey including a desk study for the site land adjacent to 40 Heros Walk, RG2 8TY totalling approximately 0.0224 (224.26sqm) Hectares (hereafter referred to as the site). The PEA report consists of data search for the purpose of putting the site into context. An extended phase 1 habitat survey and protected species assessment.

The site is the subject of a planning application to create a single new dwelling. The site will consist of a purpose built driveway, an approximate footprint of 67.26sqm for the proposed dwelling and an 92.57sqm private rear garden.

- The Site itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designation. There are no statutory or non-statutory designations within 2km of the site.

The closest nature reserve is within 1.6km - Pearman's Copse. No protected species were on site or in close proximity to the site by the desk study.

- The PEA report was conducted on the 10th September 2025. The habitats onsite consists of: Brambles classified as Scrub, area of gravelled, man-made unsealed surface.
- The site itself does not comprise any trees. The ground flora is dominated by common species such as: : Common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Ivy (*Hedera Helix*), Common Wormwood (*Artemisia Absinthium*) .
- A number of birds were recorded including pigeons, Black birds and Red kites.
- No protected species or signs of them were detected during the walk-through survey.
- Based on the results of the PEA no further surveys are required.
- Biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment has been carried out in line with current regulations. The Metric tool shows a loss of -0.05 Units loss due to the Bramble scrub being clear during the development and the units required to compensate for the loss are 0.06 Scrubs units.

Measures to avoid, mitigate and compensate for anticipated ecological include:

- Timing of habitat clearance to avoid periods when birds are actively nesting.

Measures to enhance the site for wildlife in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are also provided and include:

- Implementation of wide trees to create habitat for birds, as well as shrubs for a soft landscaping strip on the area adjacent to the site as an enhancement.
- Installation of diverse shrubs boundary hedges.

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- Installation of bird boxes.

INTRODUCTION

Noa Girdler has been commissioned by Loddon Property LTD in relation to a proposed development of 1 detached house on the site known as 40 Heros Walk. The site currently consists of an area owned by Loddon Property LTD which features a gravelled ground and an area of scrub dominated by Bramble .

The site is located on 40 Heros Walk, RG2 8TY Grid ref: SU716693.

The PEA report consists of data search for the purpose of putting the site into its landscape context. An extended phase 1 habitat survey and protected species assessment.

The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of ecological features present within the site and immediately adjacent, to identify any ecological constraints and provide appropriate mitigation, compensation and avoidance measures, as appropriate, as well as map and identify the existing habitats within the survey area, check for evidence of protected species, and assess the potential for protected species to be present on site.

This report has been produced by Noa Girdler, CIEEM associate member and subject to the CIEEM code of conduct.

Site description

The site is located approximately 3.5km from the Reading centre and in the Whitley Woods area ,grid reference: SU716693. The assessment covered the whole of the site, which is approximately 0.03ha in area.

The surrounding area is mainly suburban houses. The Kennet river is approximately 1.2km to the north, the nearest point to the Pearman's Copse –a small area of woodland is approximately 1.6 km to the east.

The site itself comprises a core of bramble scrub, gravelled ground and ground flora.

Photographs of the site are provided in Appendix 1 and 2.

Proposed Development

The proposed development will require a clearance of the site and a construction of 1 detached house, services to be put in place to the dwelling, private driveway and a private garden for the dwelling. The proposed house is approximately 67.26sqm in footprint with an 92.57sqm rear garden.

Methods

The methodology for the ecological assessment was split into two main areas: a desk study and a habitat and faunal survey. These are discussed in more detail below.

Desk study

In order to aid with the interpretation of the field survey data, a desk study has been undertaken to identify other potential ecological constraints such as sites designated for nature conservation value.

MAGIC - The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside website (www.magic.gov.uk) was accessed on 09/09/2025 and searched for statutory and non-statutory designated sites and habitats of principal importance.

TVERC - A data search was accessed on 12/09/2025 from Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre to further assess any protected species on site and within 2km of it.

To put the site into context of the surrounding area and landscape as well as check connectivity between the site and other nearby habitats, Aerial images were viewed and analysed on Google Earth and Google Satellite.

Phase 1 habitat survey

A Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken by Noa Girdler on 10/09/2025 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the Site and Wider Survey Area to determine the need for further assessment.

The Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken in accordance with standard methodology (JNCC, 2010). The Phase 1 methodology involves the classification of habitat types based on vegetation present. The Site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list provided for each habitat type identified.

In addition, invasive weeds were also searched for during the Phase 1 habitat survey, as listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The information is presented in accordance with the standard Phase 1 habitat survey format with habitat descriptions and a habitat map, provided at Appendix 1. In addition, target notes providing supplementary information, for example relating to species, habitat composition, structure and management are also presented on the habitat map.

Protected/Priority Species Assessment

General faunal activity was recorded during the habitat survey, including mammals and birds observed or heard. Specific attention was also paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species, as described below

- Bats
- Birds
- Plants (protected/notable)
- European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*).

- Other species considered to be national or local priorities for conservation

The site is lacking of aquatic habitat (distance to the river Kennet is approximately 1.2km) so no further consideration was given to otters (*Lutra lutra*), water voles (*Arvicola amphibious*) and white clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) on this report. The site does not have a pond and isn't suitable for supporting Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) community.

Reptiles were also considered during the site visit as the site consists of tall ruderals and shrubs and in a sunny aspect.

Survey Limitations

Desk study

A data search has been conducted using the *National Biodiversity Network* (www.nbn.org.uk) for species records and not the local biological records centre.

TVERC - Data search was accessed on 12/09/2025 from Thames Valley Environmental Record Centre to further assess any protected species on site and within 2km of it.

Phase 1 Habitat survey/ Protected species assessment

The site was visited over a period of one day and in late Summer so seasonal variations could not be observed. Access was granted to survey the area of scrub and gravel ground, however, due to the nature of the dense Bramble it was only possible to view from the path between Heros Walk and Basingstoke Road, and the adjacent Basingstoke Road.

Baseline Ecological Conditions

Desk study

Statutory Designated Sites

The site is situated in the South of Reading and is surrounded by suburban housing.

There are no statutory ecological designated sites located on or directly adjacent to the site. The nearest SSSI is located 3.7km south of the site.

Although there are no records of protected species on the site itself, there are a number of records within the 2 km study area.

Further details of designated sites and protected species are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Statutory designated sites within 4km of the site (Source MAGIC).

Site Name	Protection/Designation	Distance from Site
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Stanford End Mill and river Loddon SSSI	Site of special scientific interest	3.7km to the South
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Non Statutory designated sites

There are no non-statutory designated sites located on or directly adjacent to the site. The nearest non-statutory designated sites are: Pearman's Copse and Maiden Erleigh Park(LNR), located approximately 1.69 and 3.48 km to the East of the site.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Site Name	Distance from site
Pearman's Copse	1.69 to the East
Maiden Erleigh Park	3.48km to the North-east

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey – Habitats

Find below the results of the Phase 1 habitat survey, undertaken on 10th September 2025. The results are presented in map form with a key and target notes attached (Appendix 3).

The site comprises unmanaged scrub area with the predominant species is Bramble and an area of bare ground covered with gravel with ephemeral short perennial weeds are sparsely present. There is a public footpath between Heros walk and Basingstoke Road which is overgrown and not managed. The site is bordered by residential properties and associated gardens on the right side of the site and roads to the left and rear of the site.

The site currently has no buildings within its boundaries.

In the periphery area of the site and outside of the red boundary line there are large areas of scrub, mainly bramble as well as Ivy, Silverberry, Bindweed and one small Ash tree and an Elder tree.

There are no trees present within the red boundary line of the site.

The site has an area of: Bracken, Ivy, Silverberry. Other species recorded in the understory and ground-layer included: docks (*Rumex* spp.), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) Dandelions, Mugworth.

Species within the area of scrub alongside Basingstoke Road and Heros Walk (outside the red boundary line) included Bramble, Silverberry, Mugworth, Ash tree, Elder tree.

Protected/Priority Species

Bats

Currently there are 17 species of bat known to breed in the UK. All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). In the UK it is also required to protect their habitats.

This legislation makes it illegal:

- to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats
- to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts.
- Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

A visual survey of the site was completed to record any evidence of bats or features that could provide potential roosting opportunities.

During the survey no woodpecker holes or other voids/spaces were detected in any of the existing trees or adjacent buildings. As there is no good connectivity to the surrounding countryside so the likelihood of the site acting as a roosting site for bats is negligible.

The data search from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre carried out on 12/09/2025 show that no evidence of bats were recorded on or near the site. Within a 200m area there has been several recorded sightings of Common Pipistrelle Bats and one Noctule - their sightings date back from 2015.

Birds

Several species of birds were recorded during the survey: Pigeons, Black Birds and Red Kites. After a close inspection, it is not expected that the site is used by common birds for nesting.

Reptiles

There were no ponds on-site and therefore no breeding opportunities for amphibians. Despite a careful search of the site, no species of herpetofauna were found sheltering in the scrub.

Invasive Non-Native Species

An inspection for invasive non-native species was carried out and no species were observed to be present on site.

LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY OVERVIEW

A summary of the legislative and planning context which has been used to inform this ecological assessment is provided below.

Legislation

There are a number of tiers of legislation to protect wildlife and habitats within England and Wales, the highest of which being European legislation. A summary of relevant legislation is provided below:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

- Countryside Rights of Way Act, 2000

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made>

Please find below a summary relating to habitats, species and designated sites that may be present within the site or the site's impact zone, based on the combined findings of the field survey and desk study.

Statutory designated sites

An area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) is land protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act). It protects the land to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

The CROW Act sets out the roles and responsibilities that different organisations must follow to manage AONBs.

Under the CROW Act, you, the relevant local authority, must make sure that all decisions have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Your decisions and activities must consider the potential effect it will have within the AONB and land outside its boundary.

Non-Statutory designated site

Local Nature Reserve

These nature reserves are declared by Local Authorities (County, District, National Park, or Parish) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as living green spaces in towns, cities, villages and countryside. They are declared and managed for nature conservation, and provide opportunities for research and education, or for simply enjoying and having contact with nature. All LNRs are owned or controlled by Local Authorities, though they may be managed by others. Some are also SSSIs, approximately 1400 nationally.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs)

are wildlife-rich sites selected for their local nature conservation value. They vary in shape and size and can contain important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species.

They are not protected by law like SSSIs or National Nature reserves, however, as part of the Local Plan process, the National Planning policy Framework requires local authorities to identify and map locally designated sites of biodiversity importance. They are also required to draw up criteria based policies against which proposals for development affect them.

Bats

All species and their roosts are protected under Regulation 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). As a signatory to the Bonn Convention (Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe) the UK is also required to protect their habitats. This legislation makes it illegal to kill, injure, capture or disturb bats, or to obstruct access to, damage or destroy bat roosts. Under the law, a roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

In England and Wales, the relevant pieces of legislation are the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended); the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017; the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, 2000; and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC), 2006.

Birds (General)

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended). It is an offence to:

- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is being built or in use.
- Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird.

The birds breeding season runs between February to the end of August.

Some species of birds are also species of principal importance, as listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Reptiles

All reptile species are protected at some level under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). The more common

species of reptiles, which include slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), common or viviparous lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), adder (*Vipera berus*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) by part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5). This means that they are protected against intentional or reckless killing and injuring (but not 'taking') and against sale and transporting for sale.

Invasive non-native plants

The legislation aims to prevent the planting of Schedule 9 listed plant material in the wild where it then poses a threat to our native biodiversity and ecosystems.

Subject to the provisions of this Part, if any person plants or otherwise causes to grow in the wild any plant which is included in Part II of Schedule 9, will be guilty of an offence.

List of plant species can be found in link form in the references section below.

Constraints to survey

The walk-through survey was undertaken in September, access was granted to the site, however, due to the overgrown and unmanaged area of scrub, the survey was conducted from the footpath surrounding the site.

Conclusions and recommendations

The development proposals are to construct 1 new property with associated hard and soft landscaping, requiring the clearance of the existing scrub.

The area adjacent to the site is to be enhanced using several 5m wide trees and shrub planted soft landscape strip using native species.

The site is of overall low ecological value, with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain, with no evidence of protected species recorded.

Although there are considered to be no ecological constraints to the proposals, a series of generic mitigation measures, as detailed below, should be implemented to reduce any impact the development proposals may have on local wildlife. There is also an opportunity to implement some enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance as set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 20213.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation has been carried out and due to the need to remove the area of Bramble scrub, a deficit of 0.05 with 0.06 units of scrub habitat units required to offset the current scrub habitat loss.

The client has started enquiring and acquired agreement in principle.

- Ensure that where digging takes place that any retained tree roots are left in place, use hand digging around these to avoid damage.
- Timing of works to avoid harm to nesting birds – avoid 1st March to 1st October when birds are most likely to be nesting - any trees or shrubs for removal outside those times should be checked by an ecologist to ensure they are not being used by nesting birds.
- Precautionary approach to works, especially vegetation removal and excavations, to avoid killing or injuring other species such as hedgehogs.

Bats

A thorough examination of the adjacent building (40 Heros Walk) and trees was completed, with all potential access points and/or roosting opportunities fully inspected for evidence of bats. Allowing a thorough inspection and therefore, there are considered to be no constraints to the survey findings. Following a thorough inspection and together with the data search from TVERC, No evidence of bats were recorded, and therefore no further bat survey will be required to be undertaken.

Birds

It should be noted that all species of wild bird and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore, site clearance works should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season, which, in general, runs from February to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a check should be carried out prior to any clearance works to ensure there are no active nests present.

Mammals

All mammals are protected under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. Precautionary approach to works, especially vegetation removal and excavations, to avoid killing or injuring other species such as hedgehogs.

Plants

As part of the proposals, soft landscaping will be carried out. Where any new planting is proposed it should aim to use native species, but where this is not practicable then species of known value for wildlife can be used. In particular, flowering plants will be of benefit to invertebrate species and shrubs and trees may provide nesting opportunities for birds once they become established.

Enhancement

- Any new boundary treatment should be designed to promote permeability of the site to minimise fragmentation and allow free movement of wildlife throughout the site, for example by strengthening/enhancing the existing boundary vegetation, planting up a series of new trees. These measures will strengthen habitat connectivity and provide additional foraging habitat, cover and nesting opportunities. As the above, it would be advisable to increase species diversity in the land adjacent to the site with plants native to the UK.
- Providing roosting and nesting opportunities for birds by installing a series of bird and Bat boxes on suitable vegetation to be installed in suitable locations on the site or on the adjacent plot.
- In order to promote and encourage pollinators such as bees and butterflies permeable paving could be used on the proposed driveways of the new dwelling together with wildflower plugs.
- Plant suitable native trees in the garden of the proposed development to supplement any trees removed prior to construction.

References and bibliography

British Standards Institute (BSI) (2013). *BS42020 - Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development*. BSI, London.

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Bat Conservation Trust (2016) *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines* 3rd Edition.

Froglife (1999) *Reptile Survey – Advice Sheet 10*.

JNCC (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit*.

Websites:

Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC):
www.magic.gov.uk – accessed September 2019

Google Maps

Google Satellite

[Areas of outstanding natural beauty \(AONBs\): designation and management - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281222/areas_of_outstanding_natural_beauty_aonbs_designation_and_management.pdf)

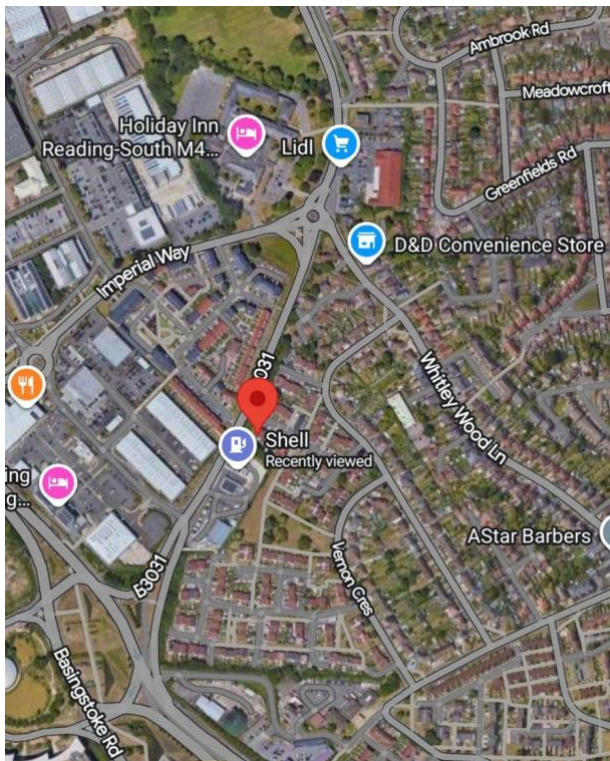
[Local Wildlife Sites - data.gov.uk](http://data.gov.uk/dataset/local-wildlife-sites)

[Guidance on section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281222/guidance_on_section_14_of_the_wildlife_and_countryside_act.pdf)

[Species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(wlgf.org\)](http://www.wlgf.org/)

Appendix

APPENDIX 1: Site location:



Site Photographs: APPENDIX 2

Site entrance:



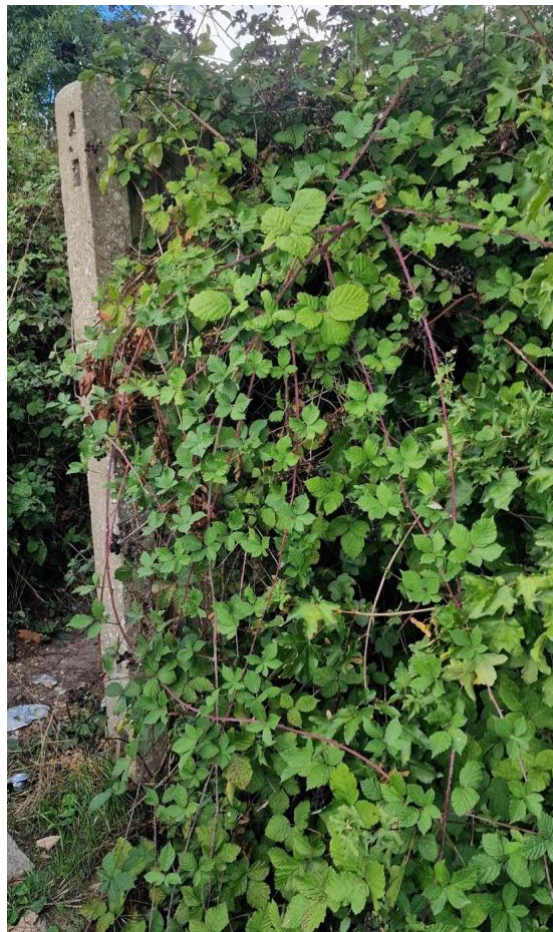
Site from the rear of the plot:



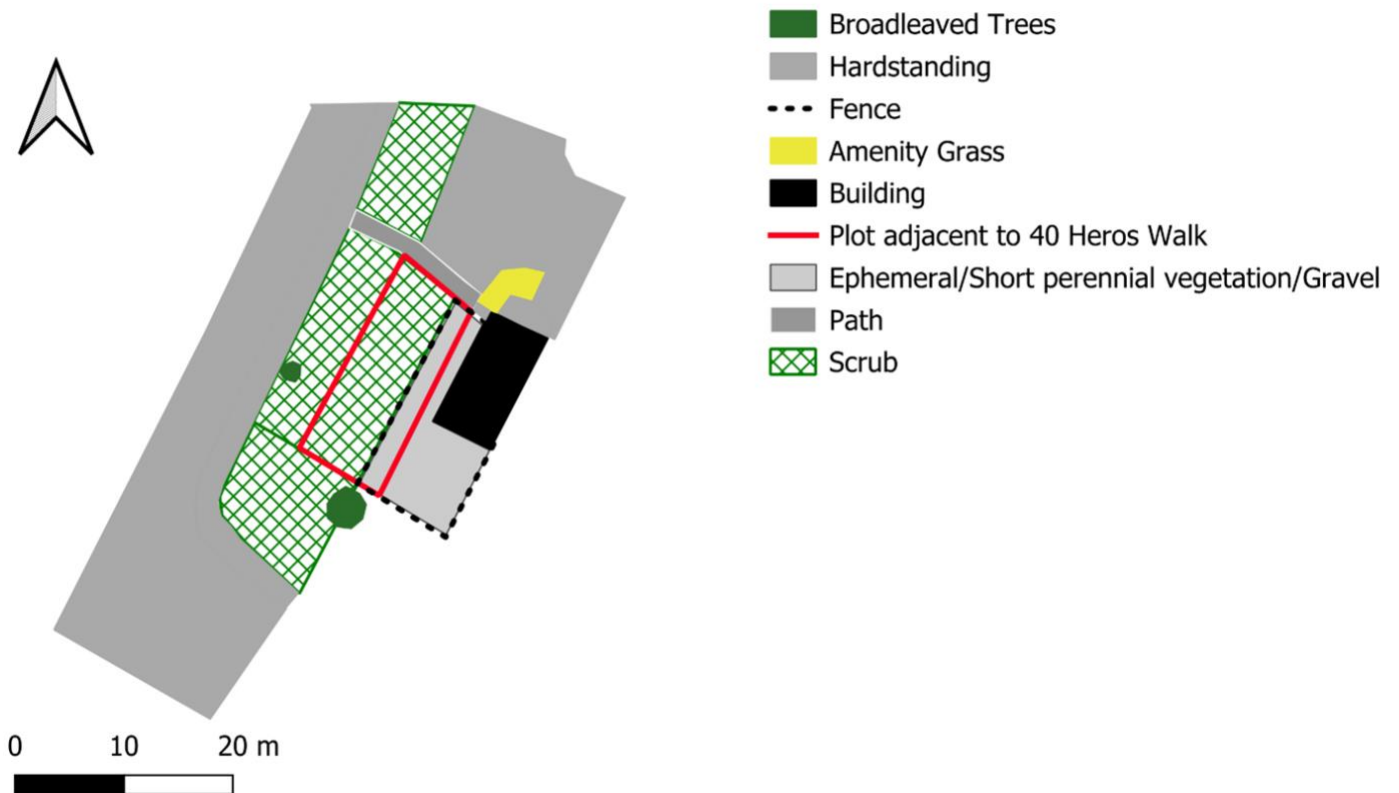
More pictures of the site:



Area adjacent to the plot which can be enhanced as outlined in the client's planning application:



Appendix 3: Phase 1 Map



This report has been prepared by a CIEEM Associate member in accordance with the CIEEM Code of Professional conduct. The findings represent an objective, professional assessment for planning purposes.