



ROAVR | GROUP

Project: 26_BNG_03_111
Site: Oxford Road Tilehurst, RG31 6TH
Client: Tim Pearce



Project Number:	26_BNG_03_111
Report Type:	UK HAB Site Walkover Survey with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment
Site Address:	Oxford Road, Tilehurst, RG31 6TH

Role:	Name:	Position:	Date:
Client	Tim Pearce	N/A	N/A
Surveyor	Leigh-Ann Barran	Ecologist	01/11/25
Consultant	Antony Aslam	Ecologist	31/03/26

Revision History		
Date:	Version number:	Summary of changes:
03/04/26	1.0	First Draft
03/04/26	1.0	First Issue

Summary:

We were appointed by Tim Pearce to undertake an appraisal of Oxford Road, Tilehurst, RG31 6TH in order to map and assess the habitats present on site and to support a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment. This report should be read as an extension to the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken for the site by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology, and builds upon the findings of that earlier ecological work.

The proposed development involves the erection of a detached dwelling with associated access and parking. The current layout seeks to retain the majority of habitats on site, although some removal of woodland and non-native hedgerow may be required to facilitate the development.

The desk study information referred to in this report is taken from the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology and has been relied upon to inform the ecological baseline for this Biodiversity Net Gain assessment.

The original site survey informing the PEA was carried out by Leigh-Ann Barran of Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology on 01/11/25, in accordance with Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance. The present report draws upon that baseline ecological assessment and provides the additional habitat mapping and appraisal required to inform the BNG assessment.

Development proposals must have regard for protected species identified as potentially occurring on, or near to, the site (e.g., amphibians, birds, terrestrial mammals, and reptiles). Mitigation measures to protect these species have been produced within this report to ensure that the proposed works comply with relevant UK legislation.

*Antony Aslam
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Acknowledgements:

Data referred to within this report is drawn from the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology, for which desk study information was sourced from the Natural England Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (DEFRA MAGIC) database.

Client Documents:

This report has been completed on assumption that the plans provided by the client at the time of issue of this report remain the same. A list of the documents provided by the client can be found in the table below.

Table: Documents provided by the client as of 31/03/26

Plans provided by client as of 31/03/26
P2503-03 Prop Site Plan (3).pdf
P2503-04c Prop Plans Elevs.pdf
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.pdf

1 Introduction

- 1.1 ROAVR Group were commissioned to prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment for Tim Pearce at Oxford Road, Tilehurst, RG31 6TH.
- 1.2 This report should be read alongside the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology. The ecological baseline and desk study information referred to in this report are drawn from that earlier assessment.
- 1.3 The methodology, habitat assessment and results used to inform the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations are outlined within this report. Where applicable, recommendations for suitable mitigation and ecological enhancement measures are also provided.
- 1.4 The report is to be submitted to support a planning application to redevelop the site.
- 1.5 The information and recommendations within this report have been prepared and provided in accordance with CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct (CIEEM, 2022).

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.6 The survey site covers an area of approximately 0.114 hectares and is centred on 'SU 67442 75174'.
- 1.7 The site is situated in the Reading Borough Council control area. The site is located on the north west side of the town.
- 1.8 The Site comprised lowland mixed deciduous woodland and a hedgerow, and was bounded by the Tilehurst Ambulance cover point to the north and

east, Oxford Road to the south, and further woodland to the west. The surrounding area is urban in character and includes roads, footways, residential properties, gardens, amenity grassland, the adjacent railway corridor and station, and the River Thames beyond.

The Site also forms part of a wider urban-semi-natural mosaic. South of the River Thames, the landscape includes small woodland parcels, hedgerows, parkland and linear vegetated corridors within a developed urban setting. North of the river, the surrounding land is predominantly agricultural, comprising arable and grazing fields with scattered woodland parcels.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 1.9 The proposed development involves the erection of a detached dwelling with associated access and parking. The current layout seeks to retain the majority of habitats on site, although some removal of woodland and non-native hedgerow may be required to facilitate the development.

SCOPE OF WORKS

- 1.10 The aims of this assessment were to:

- identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the proposed development;
- identify suitable mitigation measures (if required);
- determine whether further surveys are necessary;
- identify opportunities for ecological enhancement;
- Map the site for a BNG assessment

2 Methodology

DESKTOP STUDY

- 2.1 Site-specific information in relation to land designations, protected species, and protected habitats referred to within this report has been drawn from the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology.
- 2.2 The earlier desk study comprised a search of protected and notable species records from the past 20 years within 2 km of the Site boundary, obtained from the National Biodiversity Network Atlas in December 2025. In addition, Hazel Dormouse records were reviewed within 10 km of the Site boundary, and a web-based review of statutory designated sites was undertaken using the DEFRA MAGIC database. Aerial imagery and mapping were also reviewed to identify habitats and ecological features within the wider surrounding landscape.

- 2.3 A Local Environmental Records Centre search was not commissioned as part of the earlier assessment, and no updated desk study has been undertaken by ROAVR Group for the purposes of this report.
- 2.4 The desk study results referred to in this report should be considered indicative only and are reliant on the scope, timing, and data sources used within the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

UK HABITAT SURVEY

- 2.5 The habitat baseline used to inform this Biodiversity Net Gain assessment is derived from the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology.
- 2.6 As set out in the previous assessment, a UKHab survey, comprising a site walkover and habitat mapping, was undertaken by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology on 01/11/2025.
- 2.7 The habitat plan and baseline information referred to in this report are taken from that earlier assessment and have been relied upon to inform the Biodiversity Net Gain calculation. No updated site survey or habitat verification was undertaken by ROAVR Group as part of this assessment.

LIMITATIONS

- 2.7 This report is based on existing ecological baseline information and habitat mapping prepared by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology and has not been informed by a new site visit undertaken by ROAVR Group.
- 2.8 As no updated site survey or ground-truthing exercise has been undertaken by ROAVR Group, the accuracy of the habitat baseline, mapped extents, and condition assessment relied upon in this report is dependent upon the information available from the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and on the assumption that site conditions have not materially changed since the original survey was undertaken.

3 Policy and Legislative Context

- 3.1 This section includes the legislative context of those protected species or other notable species that are recorded on-site, or have the potential to be present on-site. Details on specific legislation for other protected or notable species that have not been identified as being present, or having the potential to be present, are not included below.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as revised on the 20th July 2021 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied in the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system, only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so and is a material consideration for local planning authorities in determining applications.
- 3.3 Planning Practise Guidance is relevant covering the Natural Environment alongside the NPPF. Therefore features of ecological value should be considered in the context of conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 3.4 The Government's objectives for planning are to promote sustainable development, to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology and to contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 3.5 This report has been commissioned in order to comply with policies EN12 and EN14.

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/>

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION

- 3.6 Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1982)
- 3.7 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1983)
- 3.8 Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)
- 3.9 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949)
- 3.10 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)
- 3.11 Protection of Badgers Act (1992)
- 3.12 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017)
- 3.13 The Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1975)
- 3.14 The Hedgerows Regulations (1997)
- 3.15 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994)
- 3.16 Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)
- 3.17 Wild Mammals (Protection) Act (1996)

4 Desktop Study

SITE DESIGNATIONS

4.1 There are 6 designated sites within the 2km search area.

Table 4.1.1: 1 recorded within a 2km radius of the survey site.

Site Name	Reasons For Designation	Approx. Closest Distance from Site (km)
Sulham and Tidmarsh Woods and Meadows SSSI	Mosaic of semi-natural habitats, including wet valley alderwoods, coppiced woodland, seasonally flooded meadows, acid and neutral grasslands, and marshy areas, with a rich assemblage of characteristic flora. The site also supports over 300 species of moth, notable butterflies including White Admiral, Purple Hairstreak and White-letter Hairstreak, as well as a variety of other invertebrates, molluscs and rare fly species.	1.03 NW
Pincent's Kiln SSSI	Disused quarry	1.30 NE
Blundells Copse LNR	Habitats: Ancient woodland with stream Species: Bats, European Hedgehog. Lousehill Copse LNR	1.43 W
Lousehill Copse LNR	Habitats: Semi-ancient woodland, open meadow	2.89 N
Round Copse LNR	Habitats: Woodland Species: Birds, including Nuthatch (<i>Sitta europaea</i>), Treecreeper (<i>Certhia familiaris</i>), thrushes, Blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>), and all three species of woodpecker: Great Spotted (<i>Dendrocopos major</i>), Lesser Spotted (<i>Dryobates minor</i>), and Green Woodpecker (<i>Picus viridis</i>).	3.23 NE
Mcilroy Park LNR	Habitats: Semi-ancient woodland, grassland, sunken ancient track, chalk pits	3.48 SW

*Data from the existing PEA

4.2 The Site intersects the SSSI Impact Risk Zone for Sulham and Tidmarsh Woods and Meadows SSSI. The IRZ relates to infrastructure developments, air pollution associated with livestock and poultry, and industrial combustion processes.

- 4.3 There were 4 non-statutory designated sites that were formerly mapped within the 2km search area.

Table 4.3.1: Non-statutory designated sites formerly mapped within a 2km radius of the survey site.

Habitat	Approx. Closest Distance from Site (km)
SU67S01 Mcilroy Park, Tilehurst	0.50 S
SU67R04 Blundells Copse + The Moor	1.53 S
SU67W02 Lousehill Copse	1.50 SW
SU67X02 The Warren Woodlands complex	1.62 NE

*Data from the existing PEA

PRIORITY HABITATS

- 4.4 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, which forms the main habitat within the Site, is identified as a Habitat of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. It is therefore also treated as a Priority Habitat within the Berkshire Biodiversity Strategy and the Reading Biodiversity Action Plan.

There were no Priority Habitats directly adjacent to the Site boundary. However, within 1 km of the Site there was one parcel of wood-pasture and parkland, 27 parcels of deciduous woodland, and one parcel of ancient woodland known as Kentwood Grove. The closest Priority Habitat was an area of deciduous woodland located approximately 44 m north-east of the Site on the far side of the railway line.

HISTORICAL SPECIES RECORDS

- 4.5 Protected and notable species records referred to in this report are drawn from the previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Leigh-Ann Barran Ecology. For that earlier assessment, records within the relevant search area were obtained from the open source NBN Atlas, with desk study information on designated sites and surrounding ecological context also informed by DEFRA MAGIC.
- 4.6 A full list of identified species recorded within the 2km search area can be requested from LERC.
- 4.7 The absence of identified records does not discount the presence of a species. An absence of identified records is primarily a result of a lack of survey or the non-submission of records. Furthermore, historical records of species do not confirm their current presence within an area.

4.8 Birds

The data search identified 196,933 records relating to 97 protected bird species within 2 km of the Site. These included records of 4 species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, such as Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Tawny Owl (*Strix aluco*) and Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*). Also returned were 17 red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern, including House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and Swift (*Apus apus*), together with 33 amber-listed Birds of Conservation Concern such as Greenfinch (*Chloris chloris*), Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) and Stonechat (*Saxicola rubicola*). In addition, 40 NERC Priority bird species were identified, including Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*) and Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*).

4.9 Mammals

The data search returned 8 records of Badger (*Meles meles*), 65 records of European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), and 1 record of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) within 2 km of the Site. In addition, 102 records of Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) were identified within 10 km of the Site.

4.10 Amphibians and Reptiles

No records of Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) were identified within 2 km of the Site. The data search returned records of 2 reptile species within 2 km of the Site, including Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica*) and Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*).

4.11 Invertebrates

No records of legally protected invertebrate species were identified within the search area. However, 44 records of notable invertebrate species were returned, including White-letter Hairstreak (*Satyrrium w-album*), Common Glow-worm (*Lampyrus noctiluca*), and Early Mining Bee (*Andrena haemorrhoa*).

4.12 Protected Flora

The data search returned records of 3 Schedule 8 protected plant species within 2 km of the Site, including Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Knapweed Broomrape (*Orobanche elatior*), and Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*).

4.13 Invasive Non Native Species (INNS)

The data search returned records of 2 Schedule 9 invasive non-native plant species within 2 km of the Site, including Australian Swamp Stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*) and Common Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*).

4.14 The data search returned records of at least 3 bat species within 2 km of the Site, including Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

Four EPS licences for bats have been granted within 2 km of the Site, both approximately 1.93 km to the west. Three licences, issued in 2016 c. 146 m southwest, permitted the destruction of a Common Pipistrelle, Soprano

Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared Bat roost. The remaining licence, issued in 2011 c.1.59 km southeast permitted the destruction of a Common Pipistrelle roost.

5 Site Survey

- 5.1 The site survey was undertaken by Leigh-Ann Barran BSc (Hons) on 01/11/2025. The weather conditions were considered to be appropriate for the survey.

UK HABITAT SURVEY

5.2 The habitats presented consist of the following UK Habitat categories:

- W1f - lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- H2b - non native and ornamental hedgerow

5.3 A description of habitat present along with target notes is shown in Table 5.3.1. The location of habitats is shown in the Site Habitat Map, Appendix 1.

Table 5.3.1: Description of habitats present on-site (please also see the Site Habitat Map, Appendix 1).

Habitats and Target Notes	Description	Supporting Photo
Habitat 1: w1f - lowland mixed deciduous woodland	The woodland comprised a mixed canopy of planted and naturalised tree species, including Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>), Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>), Norway Maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i>), Horse Chestnut (<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>) and English Elm (<i>Ulmus minor</i>). Structurally, the habitat was relatively simple, with a largely closed canopy, a sparse understorey and a heavily shaded ground layer dominated by Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>). There was little evidence of either a well-developed shrub layer or diverse herbaceous vegetation. This woodland formed a relatively discrete habitat parcel within a hard urban setting, being enclosed by roads, parking areas and other hardstanding. Although contiguous with a further woodland parcel to the west, that adjoining block was also constrained by surrounding roads. Overall, the habitat appeared somewhat isolated within the wider landscape, which limited connectivity and reduced its	

ecological function.

Scores 22/39 - Poor Condition



Habitat 2: h2b - non native and ornamental hedgerow	A managed, predominantly non-native hedgerow was present on site, dominated by Common Snowberry (<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>) with additional Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>), Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.), Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>), Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>) and Cherry Laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>). The hedgerow was ornamental in character.	
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6 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.1 The development should be used as an opportunity for biodiversity net gain, by creating new opportunities for wildlife.

Site Baseline

- 6.2 The on-site baseline biodiversity is calculated at **0.70 habitat units** and **0.12 hedgerow units**. The habitats consist of lowland mixed deciduous woodland and the hedgerow units consist of non native ornamental hedgerow. There are no watercourse units present on site.

Site As Proposed

- 6.3 Post-development, without intervention, the proposed plans will result in **0.52 habitat units** or a net loss of **-25.69%**. Hedgerow units result in **0.21**, or a net gain of **84.52%** and satisfy the trading rules.

Recommended Actions

- 6.4 Since the entire site consists of lowland mixed deciduous woodland, the only opportunity for on site gain is through the enhancement of the retained woodland to a **moderate** condition. This produces an overall net loss of **-10.52%**. Enhancing to a **good** condition would produce a net loss of **-6.86%**, although the target time to a good condition woodland is over 30 years, and so a non-standard agreement may be required.

To offset the rest of the loss, it is recommended that the client pursue off-site habitat creation on land that has been baselined by a qualified Ecologist with potential for enhancement, such as a non-residential open field, or alternatively, habitat banks that offer services in the form of habitat creation for biodiversity offsetting purposes.

Alternatively, statutory credits may be purchased from the government as a last resort if no other options are available. These are to the tune of **0.10 A1 tier** credits and **0.19 A4 tier** credits if woodland enhancement **is** feasible. Or **0.10 A1 tier** credits and **0.36 A4 tier** credits, if woodland enhancement **is not** feasible.

7 Limitations

- 7.1 ROAVR Group has prepared this Report for the sole use of the above named Client/Agent in accordance with our terms of business, under which our services were performed. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this Report or any other services provided by us.
- 7.2 This Report may not be relied upon by any other party without the prior and express written agreement of ROAVR Group. The assessments made assume that the land use will continue for its current purpose without significant change. ROAVR Group has not independently verified information obtained from third parties.
- 7.3 This report, data tables and raw data remain the copyright of ROAVR until such time as any monies owed are settled in full and the report may be withdrawn at any time.
- 7.4 The ultimate decision to do/not do any work on any structure/tree/feature and any legal consequences of any action taken/not taken lies solely with yourselves and/or your employees/subcontractors. ROAVR Group accepts no liability or responsibility in any way for any actions taken/not taken by you and/or your employees and/or any other person/organisation engaged in carrying out/not carrying out any of the proposed work.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.

Antony Aslam
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Appendix 2: Baseline + Proposed BNG Plans

