Site name: Westerfield House, Humber Doucy Lane

Site ref: IP280
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 18383 46932
Area: 3.41 hectares
Date: 23rd August 2019
Recorder: A Looser
Weather conditions: Hot and sunny, 26°C
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:

Photos:

View south towards cedar and leylandii trees

View south-east across recent excavations with oak and pine trees

View east across recent excavations and new construction towards line of pines on boundary

Westerfield House from Humber Doucy Lane

Habitat type(s):

Pine belt, species-poor hedgerow, scattered trees, poor semi-improved grassland, buildings, hard standing

Subsidiary habitats:

-

Site description:

The site is located on the eastern side of Humber Doucy Lane and includes Westerfield House (a Grade II listed former manor house) and grounds, as well as open grassland to the south which is currently short mown. The building is currently a residential care home with an approved planning application (18/00526/OUT) for a 'Care Village' on the site.

At the time of the visit, the majority of the land to the east and south was fenced off as a construction site and no access was available to this area. Significant excavation work had recently been undertaken east of the house for the purpose of construction of a cellar beneath one of the new buildings. Linear mounds of spoil were piled up along the eastern and southern boundaries. New buildings had also been recently constructed east of the house towards the northern boundary.

The boundary with the road is marked by a thick hedge with a second hedge planted behind this, with a narrow walkway between the two. The eastern boundary is defined by a tree belt dominated by pine trees. There are two groups of mature trees within the site which are to be retained as part of the proposals.

Protected species seen or known:
Records in the surrounding area include:
Soprano pipistrelle bat
Common pipistrelle bat
Noctule bat
Serotine bat
Barn owl
Badger

Protected species potential:
Common lizard

Priority habitats present:
-

Priority species seen or known:
Records in the surrounding area include:
Hedgehog
Stag beetle
Common toad
Brown hare
Small heath butterfly
Wall butterfly
Grayling butterfly
BoCC Red List birds include turtle dove, skylark, house sparrow, starling, yellowhammer, linnet, lapwing, cuckoo, herring gull and lesser redpoll
BoCC Amber List birds include bullfinch, swift (Suffolk Character Species) and song thrush

Priority species potential:
-

Connectivity:
The site is poorly connected, being situated within a largely arable landscape. Although the site has hedges and tree belts on the boundaries the links to a wider ecological network are poor.

Structural diversity:
This is very limited with the majority of the site either built, disturbed ground or short mown grass. The hedges and trees make the greatest contribution to structural diversity.

Flora:
Due to lack of access this could not be fully assessed. Species recorded in what could be assessed of the grassland include cock's-foot and false oat grass with creeping thistle, spear thistle and prickly lettuce. A Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken in 2018 by James Blake Associates.

The hedge along the road was species-poor being dominated by elm with prunus spp, holly and traveler's joy. Ivy was also dominant within the hedge. The second hedge planted behind this appeared to be largely dominated by beech.

Amongst the trees being retained on site were a massive cedar tree, as well as sycamore, copper beech and leylandii. A pine line is present along the northern boundary.

Avifauna:
The timing of the survey was suboptimal for this group. Common bird species may nest in the hedgerows and hole nesting birds may utilise cavities in the larger trees. A magpie was seen during the visit.

Invertebrates:
The invertebrate interest on this is largely confined to the mature trees and hedgerows. Stag beetle is known to be present in the area and could be on site if there is any subterranean dead wood associated with the mature trees.

Herpetofauna:
A reptile survey took place in 2018, when the habitats on site were reported to be more suitable for this group, but no reptile species were recorded. The site is currently unsuitable for amphibians.

Mammals:
The mature trees may have potential bat roosting features but this could not be assessed due to lack of access. The historic building also has features which may support roosting bats.

Due to the current levels of disturbance the site is largely unsuitable for mammals, with the exception of the boundary features. Any hedgehog activity in this area will be confined to these features.

Comments and recommendations:
The site is proposed to expand as a 'Care Village'. Consequently, the design is already fixed and there is less scope to influence the scheme by making recommendations for net gain. It appears that work has commenced on this site with the construction area securely fenced and excavation underway.

The general principals are that new development should retain as much of the existing habitat as possible and integrate it within a landscaping scheme. In this scheme the mature trees and hedgerows are being retained. In the Design and Access statement it is stated that 'the wider site will be subject to a detailed landscape assessment and final design. A co-ordinated, sustainable and appropriate landscape design will be a key element in the final proposals'. This landscaping scheme should include low-maintenance nectar and berry producing shrubs and perennial plants to provide some benefit for birds and invertebrates. If there was a commitment to regular maintenance, then a wildflower area could also be sown to benefit invertebrates. The mix should include species typical of

the prevailing soil conditions. Wildflower areas are left uncut until mid-July/August and then cut, with a second cut in September. Where appropriate, interpretation panels can be used to showcase the presence of on-site habitats and species and help residents appreciate their local wildlife.

The Design, Access and Heritage Statement indicates that surface water with be disposed by a permeable surface and self-draining sub-base and engineered soakaways. Underground storage tanks will also be constructed to provide 'green water' for horticultural use. However, careful planning and design can integrate the requirement for sustainable drainage systems with the creation of new wildlife habitat. Such places can also create aesthetically pleasing features which can also be integrated into landscaping schemes. Rain gardens would be a suitable sustainable drainage feature for this scheme. These are most effective when larger in size and slow down run-off from downpiped or paved areas. They require free-draining soils in trenches and can be planted with nectar producing species, which can be non-native as long as they are not listed as invasive. They can provide attractive habitat in a landscaped setting.

References

Design, Access & Heritage Statement. Westerfield House care Home, Humber Doucy Lane, Ipswich. KLH Architects. 4th June 2018.

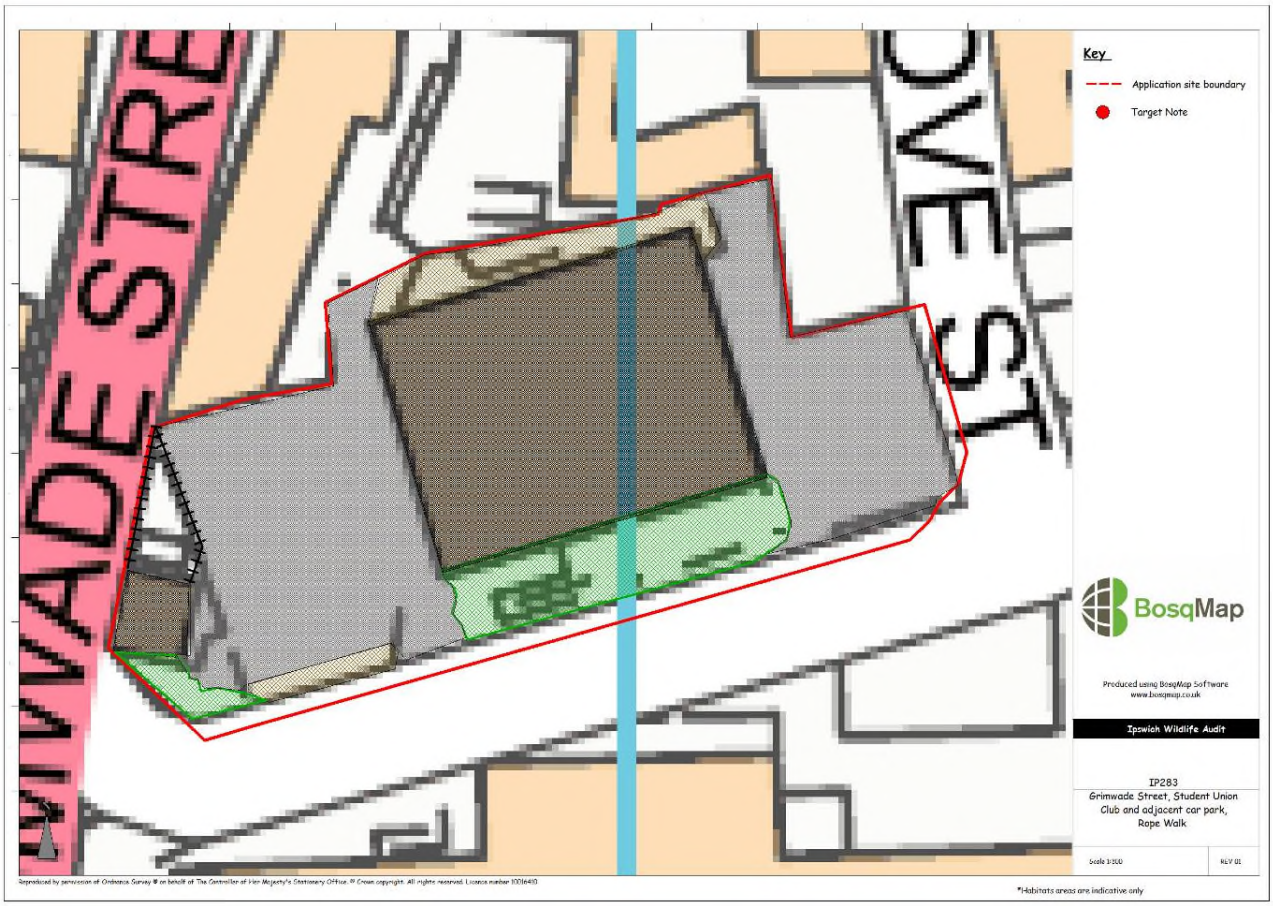
Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Land at Westerfield House, Humber Doucy Lane. James Blake Associates April 2018.

Reptile Survey of Land at Westerfield House, Humber Doucy Lane. James Blake Associates. September 2018.

Site name: Grimwade Street, Student Union Club and adjacent car park, Rope Walk

Site ref: IP283
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 16991 44456
Area: 0.27 hectares
Date: 2nd August 2019
Recorder: J Crighton
Weather conditions: Bright with moderate wind, ca. 80% cloud cover, 21°C
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

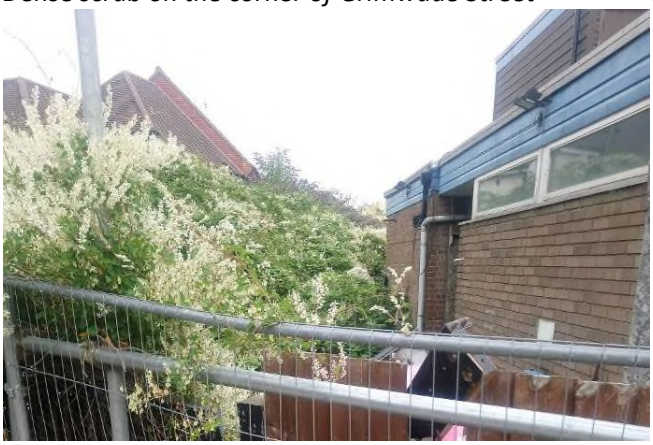
Map:



Photos:

Dense scrub on the corner of Grimwade Street

Herras fenced area fronting Rope Walk



Russian vine to the north of the building

Habitat type(s):

Buildings, hard standing, dense continuous scrub, scattered broad-leaved trees

Subsidiary habitats:

Wall surfaces

Site description:

This is a small site located between Grimwade Street and Dove Lane, fronting Rope Walk. It is adjacent to a conservation area and an Area of Archaeological Importance. It contains a vacant flat-roofed building previously used as a social club and to the east and west of the building are two areas of car parking. A vacant brick dwelling is present on the western boundary.

The majority of the site is occupied by hard standing and building, but there are some areas of dense scrub and some planted sections along Rope Walk.

Protected species seen or known:
Records in the surrounding area include:
Badger
Brown long-eared bat
Common pipistrelle bat
Soprano pipistrelle bat
Daubenton's bat
Natterer's bat
Noctule bat
Common lizard
Slow worm

Protected species potential:
-

Priority habitats present:
-

Priority species seen or known:
Records in the surrounding area include:
Hedgehog records
Stag beetle
Swift (Suffolk Character Species)
Common toad
House sparrow
Starling

Priority species potential:
-

Connectivity:
A degree of connectivity is provided by the landscaped areas associated with Suffolk New College, leading out towards Alexandra Park to the south east.

Structural diversity:
There is moderate structural diversity albeit limited by the small size of the site.

Flora:
On the corner of Grimwade Street and Rope Walk, there is a raised bed planted with dense scrub, which includes hazel, cherry, buddleia, cotoneaster and bramble.

Narrow raised beds separate Rope Walk from the western car park which have been planted with some ornamental species, but a lack of management has resulted in colonization by typical species such as redshank, knotgrass, creeping thistle, hedge bindweed, wall barley, prickly sow thistle, dandelion, hedge mustard and Canadian fleabane which have also encroached across cracks in the hard standing.

Along the southern edge of the building, there is more buddleia scrub with some variegated maple and silver birch. And behind the building, the invasive species Russian vine dominates the entire area.

Avifauna:
It was a sub-optimal time of year for recording this group. However, there are nesting opportunities for common assemblages of birds associated with the scrub.

Invertebrates:
This site is likely to support a small number of common invertebrates, including flying insects such as butterflies, particularly around the buddleia.

Herpetofauna:
There are no opportunities for this group within this site.

Mammals:
The vacant brick dwelling within the site has features which could support roosting bats.

The scrub within the site could provide refuge and hibernation opportunities for hedgehogs. Common small mammals such as mice, voles and shrews are also likely to be present.

Comments and recommendations:
Proposals for this site include 14 dwellings at medium density (45 dph).

The building on the western boundary could support bats and consequently further surveys are recommended.

This site contains cotoneaster and members of this group are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended, because they can become dominant to the detriment of other species. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause these species to grow in the wild. If this plant is removed as part of a vegetation clearance programme then it should be disposed of in a way as not to contravene the legislation. In addition, although not listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981, as amended, Russian vine is a non-native very fast-growing species and can spread quickly. It can cover native trees and shrubs and reduce biodiversity by shading out other species. It can be difficult to eradicate. This assessment did not constitute an invasive species survey, so it is recommended that this is undertaken particularly to investigate whether other non-native species are present.

This site is small and in a built-up area of the Town, so the opportunities for enhancement are limited. However, a perimeter landscaping scheme which includes low-maintenance nectar and berry producing shrubs and perennial plants would provide some benefit for birds and invertebrates.

In addition to this, action can be taken for individual species such as swifts, hedgehogs and stag beetles.

Swifts are a declining migratory species that is almost totally dependent on holes and crevices in buildings for nesting but leave no mess. Swift boxes should be integrated into taller new buildings using 'swift bricks' or 'swift blocks'. Externally mounted boxes can also be used but have a shorter life span than integrated features. Both types are most effective at attracting swifts when used with a swift 'call system'.

Holes in fences for hedgehog should be part of any new housing proposals, to deliver landscape permeability for this wide-ranging, declining species.

Although a declining species, this area of the County is a stronghold for stag beetles which can often be found in relatively small garden habitats around Ipswich. A habitat pile, created by burying stumps in an upright position, rather like a cluster of organ-pipes, should be constructed within a corner of greenspace to benefit this species.

Site name: Land at Rushmere (Ramsey, area inside IBC)

Site ref: IP302
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 19299 46146
Area: 1.56 hectares
Date: 24th July 2019
Recorder: J Crighton
Weather conditions: Clear sky, no wind, *ca.* 32°C
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:

Photos:

IP302 Gap in the hedgerow to access site

IP302 Looking north from the southern boundary

Habitat type(s):
Arable field, species-rich intact hedgerow with trees, dense/continuous scrub, scattered broad-leaved trees

Subsidiary habitats:
Bare ground, field margins

Site description:
This site is the south-western section of a much larger arable field currently sown with wheat crop. It lies north-east of Humber Doucy Lane, between the road and the Rushmere St Andrew parish boundary. An ancient hedgerow with mature standards that are associated with a low bank separates the road from the site, with a bare ground access point near the centre. These hedges are likely to be classed as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Protected species seen or known:
Records in the surrounding area include:
Soprano pipistrelle bat
Common pipistrelle bat
Noctule bat
Serotine bat
Barn owl

Protected species potential:
Badger
Common lizard

Priority habitats present:
Hedgerow

Priority species seen or known:
Records in the surrounding area include:
Hedgehog
Stag beetle
Grayling butterfly
Small heath butterfly
BoCC Red List birds include turtle dove, cuckoo, house sparrow, starling, yellowhammer, song thrush, linnet, herring gull, skylark and lapwing
BoCC Amber List birds include bullfinch, dunnock and swift (Suffolk Character Species)

Priority species potential:
-

Connectivity:
This site has limited connectivity with the only link to other similar habitats being the hedgerow along the south western boundary.

Structural diversity:
The site has limited structural diversity with the only significant features being the hedgerow and mature trees.

Flora:
The hedgerow comprises blackthorn, elm, field maple, hawthorn, elder, bramble, ivy and hop with some ash and oak standards. Around the access point there are dense thickets of bramble on either side.

The field margins are very narrow but contain a mix of forbs including creeping thistle, common mallow, ragwort, black horehound and prickly lettuce, with false oat, Yorkshire fog, cock's foot and perennial rye grasses.

Avifauna:
It was a sub-optimal time of year for recording this group, and the extreme hot weather meant there was not much bird activity noted. However, the hedgerows provide good potential nesting and foraging sites. There is the potential for birds associated with farmland hedgerows such as yellowhammer, bullfinch and dunnock, as well as more open ground suitable for breeding skylark.

Invertebrates:
Although the majority of this site is a monoculture of arable crop which provides sub-optimal habitat for invertebrates, the hedgerows and field margins offer some opportunities for a range of species. In particular, the ancient hedgerow could support stag beetle larvae within subterranean deadwood. Oak trees also support a high insect biomass.

Herpetofauna:
There are limited opportunities for this group within this site, however the hedgerow and field margin may be used as transitory habitat for amphibians and reptiles, particularly common lizard.

Mammals:

Some of the mature trees on the south-western boundary of this site, contain features which could support roosting bats, which are also likely to commute and forage along the hedgerow.

A number of hedgehog records exist from Humber Doucy Lane and the associated residential areas, and they are likely to use the hedgerow and field margin for refuge and foraging.

No evidence of a badger sett was found but this did not constitute a detailed survey, and a sett could be present within areas which were inaccessible during the survey. Badgers are also likely to forage around the field boundaries.

Common species of mammal such as fox, rabbit and deer species are likely to forage on this site. Mice, voles and shrews are also likely to be present in the field margins and hedgerows.

Comments and recommendations:

The roadside hedgerow should be retained and enhanced by additional planting on other boundaries. Woody species typical of the area should be used and protected from browsing mammals until they establish.

There are opportunities to enhance biodiversity on this site, potentially through providing land for off-site compensatory habitat for other developments. Planning policy supports the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimise, remediate and only as a last resort, compensate. However, due to the nature of the existing habitats on some of the other sites, it is likely that future development at these locations will require off-site compensation to avoid a biodiversity loss and to deliver net gain.

Compensation for habitat loss can be delivered through the creation of new habitat, restoring or enhancing existing habitats or occasionally, by accelerating successional processes. Off-site compensation habitat should be located as close as possible to the site and should seek to replicate the characteristics of the habitat(s) to be lost, taking account of the structure and species composition to provide local distinctiveness. New or restored habitats should aim to achieve a higher distinctiveness and/or condition than habitats lost and wherever possible, should contribute to the wider ecological network. They should also be subject to long-term good habitat management practices.

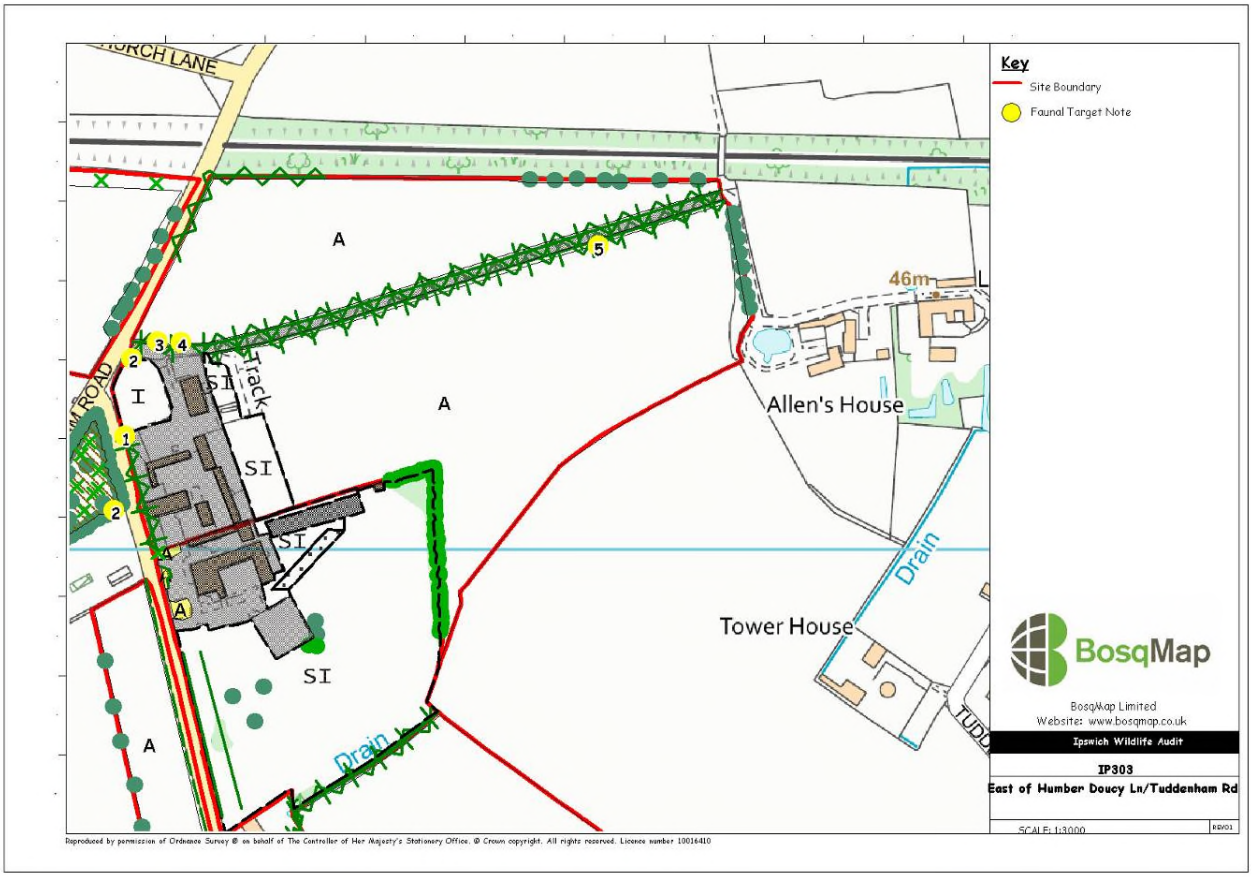
Delivering net gain is independent of any wider requirements of planning policy or the need to comply with legislation relating to nature conservation or biodiversity.

If this site were to become available as public open space, interpretation panels should be used to showcase the presence of on-site habitats and species.

Site name: East Corner of Humber Doucy Lane/Tuddenham Road

Site ref: IP303
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 18475 47088
Area: 8.59 hectares
Date: 23rd August 2019
Recorder: A Looser
Weather conditions: Hot and sunny, 26°C
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:

Farm buildings off Humber Doucy Lane

Farmhouse off Humber Doucy Lane

Mature oak tree in hedge bordering track, one of many such trees

View south-east across arable field towards mature hedgerow trees on eastern boundary

Habitat type(s):

Arable, poor semi-improved grassland, improved grassland, species-rich hedgerows

Subsidiary habitats:

-

Site description:

This site is situated east of the Tuddenham Road and north of Humber Doucy Lane. The northern boundary is defined by a section of the Ipswich to Lowestoft rail corridor. Most of the southern boundary crosses a larger arable field. In the south-west corner are a series of farm buildings including a house and a number of barns and sheds of different ages. There are small paddocks west

and east of the buildings, the latter with an array of solar panels.

There is a low hedge bordering Humber Doucy Lane with a veteran oak (Target Note 1). A well-defined track with a public footpath runs from Tuddenham Road in a north-easterly direction. The track is thickly hedged on both sides and has a series of mature trees interspersed along its length. The largest of these have been shown as Target Notes 2-5. These hedges are likely to be classed as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. This site abuts IP280 to the south, with a belt of trees, mainly pines, defining the boundary between the two sites.

The field south of the railway is arable and bordered by a gappy hedge adjacent to Tuddenham Road. Woody species also form a gappy margin along the northern boundary.

Protected species seen or known:
Records in the surrounding area include:
Soprano pipistrelle bat
Common pipistrelle bat
Noctule bat
Serotine bat
Barn owl
Badger

Protected species potential:
Common lizard
Great Crested Newt
Hazel Dormouse

Priority habitats present:
Hedgerow

Priority species seen or known:
Records in the surrounding area include:
Hedgehog
Stag beetle
Common toad
Brown hare
Small heath butterfly
Wall butterfly
Grayling butterfly
BoCC Red List birds include turtle dove, skylark, house sparrow, starling, yellowhammer, linnet, lapwing, cuckoo, herring gull and lesser redpoll
BoCC Amber List birds include bullfinch, swift (Suffolk Character Species) and song thrush

Priority species potential:
White-letter hairstreak butterfly

Connectivity:
The proximity of the railway line means that this site is well connected to the wider ecological network. The mature hedgerows bisecting the site also provide an internal wildlife corridor.

Structural diversity:
The areas of short grass and arable fields are low in structural diversity, with the hedgerows and trees as the most significant features within this site.

Flora:
The hedgerows along the roadside and either side of the track heading towards the railway line are species-rich with a good diversity of woody species including oak, ash, sycamore, hawthorn, midland hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, elm, dogwood, dog rose, hazel, spindle, bramble and travelers joy. Many of the large trees were ivy covered. It was a sub-optimal time of year for recording ground flora but false wood brome, curled dock and black horehound were noted.

The areas of grassland were species-poor being dominated by grasses with occasional common herbs including bristly ox tongue, smooth hawk's-beard, dandelion, ribwort plantain and scentless mayweed.

Avifauna:
The farmhouse is suitable for nesting swifts and the farm buildings are suitable for nesting swallows. The hedgerows and associated trees also provide good foraging, roosting and nesting habitat for a range of bird species including declining farmland birds such as yellowhammer. The large arable fields will also support ground nesting birds such as skylark.

Invertebrates:
The invertebrate interest will be largely associated with the trees and hedgerows. A number of very large dead stumps were noted along the hedgerows. This provides excellent habitat for stag beetles (Priority Species) as the larvae require subterranean dead wood. The presence of large amounts of elm in the hedgerows provides good habitat for white-letter hairstreak butterflies (Priority Species). Other species will be present and a good number of common butterflies were seen during the visit including large white, small white, peacock, speckled wood, and red admiral. A southern hawker dragonfly was also seen as well as numerous bees and hoverflies. The ivy in particular provides good nectar sources for this group.

Herpetofauna:
Common lizard may be present in the field margin adjacent to the railway line. Great crested newts have been recorded in the area and there is a pond cluster immediately east of the site boundary which has the potential to support this species. Great crested newts could use the hedgerows and associated ditch network during the terrestrial phase of their lives and could hibernate in the base of the hedgerows on site. Toads have also been recorded in the area and the hedgerows provide good habitat for them.

Mammals:
The farm buildings and farmhouse are suitable for roosting bats. A bat box is present on the end wall

of one of the barns. Some of the larger trees have potential bat roost features. Hazel dormice have been recorded in the hedgerow network to the west and the hedgerows on site provide good habitat for this species.

Hedgehog may forage and potentially nest along the hedgerows and other boundary features. Larger mammals are likely to live or move through the site, including badger, fox, brown hare and deer species. The boundary adjacent to the railway was not accessed and this bank could support a badger sett.

Comments and recommendations:

This site is proposed for residential development as part of a larger allocation (IPSA4) for 496 dwellings. These would be subject to traffic and other infrastructure provision as part of a wider comprehensive master plan.

Further detailed and up-to date surveys will be required to assess the wildlife interest including bats, hazel dormice, and great crested newt, badger, reptiles and breeding birds (including the likelihood of nesting birds within any of the buildings).

Planning policy supports the mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimise, remediate and only as a last resort, compensate. New development should retain as much of the existing habitat as possible and integrate it within a landscaping scheme, in particular the hedgerows. This will help retain the local biodiversity resource, with enhancement through additional habitat creation and long-term good habitat management practices. Greenspaces should be interlinked to provide functional ecological corridors for a range of species and as much as possible they should connect with wider off-site ecological networks, therefore the scheme should maintain some open space adjacent to the railway line corridors.

The residential lighting scheme should be designed to prevent light spillage into areas specifically retained for wildlife. Bats are particularly sensitive to increased light levels, so it is important to maintain dark corridors to support local ecological networks.

Delivering net gain is independent of any wider requirements of planning policy or the need to comply with legislation relating to nature conservation or biodiversity.

Swifts are a declining migratory species that are almost totally dependent on holes and crevices in buildings for nesting but leave no mess. In addition, swift boxes should be integrated into taller new buildings using ‘swift bricks’ or ‘swift blocks’. Externally mounted boxes can also be used but have a shorter life span than integrated features. Both types are most effective at attracting swifts when used with a swift ‘call system’.

Careful planning and design can integrate the requirement for sustainable drainage systems with the creation of new wildlife habitat. Such places can also create aesthetically pleasing features which can also be integrated into landscaping schemes. There is the opportunity to channel and store run-off through surface features such as swales, retention basins and ponds, resulting either in temporary or permanent water features. The design should incorporate a variety of features to maximise potential habitats niches and any planting should utilise native species. Where possible, existing habitats

should be retained and integrated into the system as this will result in greater species diversity. New habitats should be created taking into account local ecology and site conditions.

A stag beetle habitat pile, created by burying stumps in an upright position, rather like a cluster of organ-pipes, should be constructed within a corner of the allocated greenspace.