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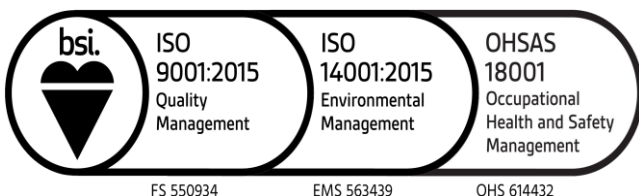
# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – 1 East Heath Road



**Site:** 1 East Heath Road, NW3 1BN

**Client:** Lifespace Cabins

**Date:** February 2021



## DOCUMENT HISTORY AND STATUS

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Life Span of Survey Data and Report	
Report	This report remains valid for 12 months from date of issue. The report, conclusions and recommendations are valid for current development plans only. Should these change the report should be reviewed and, if necessary, further survey work and desk study review undertaken.
Survey Data	Survey data are valid for 12 months from the date the survey was undertaken.

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# Contents

1.	Executive Summary.....	4
2.	Introduction .....	5
2.1	<i>Site Context</i> .....	5
2.2	<i>Proposed Development</i> .....	6
2.3	<i>Objectives</i> .....	6
2.4	<i>Survey Limitations</i> .....	6
3.	Legislation and Planning Policy .....	7
3.1	<i>Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern</i> .....	7
3.2	<i>Breeding Birds</i> .....	7
3.3	<i>Bats</i> .....	7
3.4	<i>Ecological Enhancement</i> .....	8
4.	Methods.....	9
4.1	<i>Data Search</i> .....	9
4.2	<i>Phase 1 Habitat Survey</i> .....	9
4.3	<i>Protected Species Assessment</i> .....	9
5.	Baseline Ecological Conditions.....	11
5.1	<i>Desk Study</i> .....	11
5.2	<i>Designated sites of importance for nature conservation</i> .....	11
5.3	<i>Ancient Woodland</i> .....	11
5.4	<i>Priority Habitats</i> .....	11
5.5	<i>Wildlife EPS Licenses</i> .....	11
5.6	<i>Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern</i> .....	11
5.7	<i>Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey - Habitats</i> .....	12
5.8	<i>Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey - Species</i> .....	12
6.	Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Assessment.....	13
7.	Conclusion.....	15
8.	Recommendations .....	16
8.1	<i>Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern</i> .....	16
8.2	<i>Breeding Birds</i> .....	16
8.3	<i>Bats</i> .....	16
8.4	<i>Ecological Enhancement</i> .....	16
9.	References .....	18
10.	Figures.....	19
11.	Appendix 1 – Site Photographs.....	20

## 1. Executive Summary

This is a brief summary of findings and recommendations. Please read the report in its entirety for full details.

- Microbee Limited was commissioned by Lifespace Cabins to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA); encompassing a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, desktop study, advise mitigation measures and concluding the presence/likely absence of protected species. The site encompasses an open-sided structure due for removal and associated landscaping of a residential property (1 East Heath Road, NW3 1BN). The survey site totals an approximate size of 100m<sup>2</sup>.
- The site demonstrates negligible suitability for protected species including bats. No further surveys are required should the proposal proceed.
- Multiple priority habitats (deciduous woodland, lowland heathland and woodpasture and parkland habitats are within close proximity (<10m ) to the site. However, due to the low impact of the scheme, no negative impact will be seen, no further actions required.
- The findings of this report conclude that no ecological constraints are present which would impede the proposal. Further guidance in regards to mitigation measures and best practise should be followed as per Chapter 8.



## 2. Introduction

This Extended Phase 1 survey was commissioned by Litespace Cabins. The survey and report were carried out by Steve Price BSc (ACIEM) of Microbee Limited. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was requested to determine habitat presence, highlight mitigation measures and advise ecological enhancements.

The purpose of the survey was to assess the conservation value of the survey area, the potential for presence of notable or protected species, to identify any features, habitats or species which would constitute potential constraints to the proposed development, and to make recommendations for mitigation and/or further survey work, as appropriate.

### 2.1 Site context

The site is situated at 1 East Heath Road, NW3 1BN within the London Borough of Camden. The site is predominantly dominated by an existing open outdoor structure, amenity planting and hardstanding.

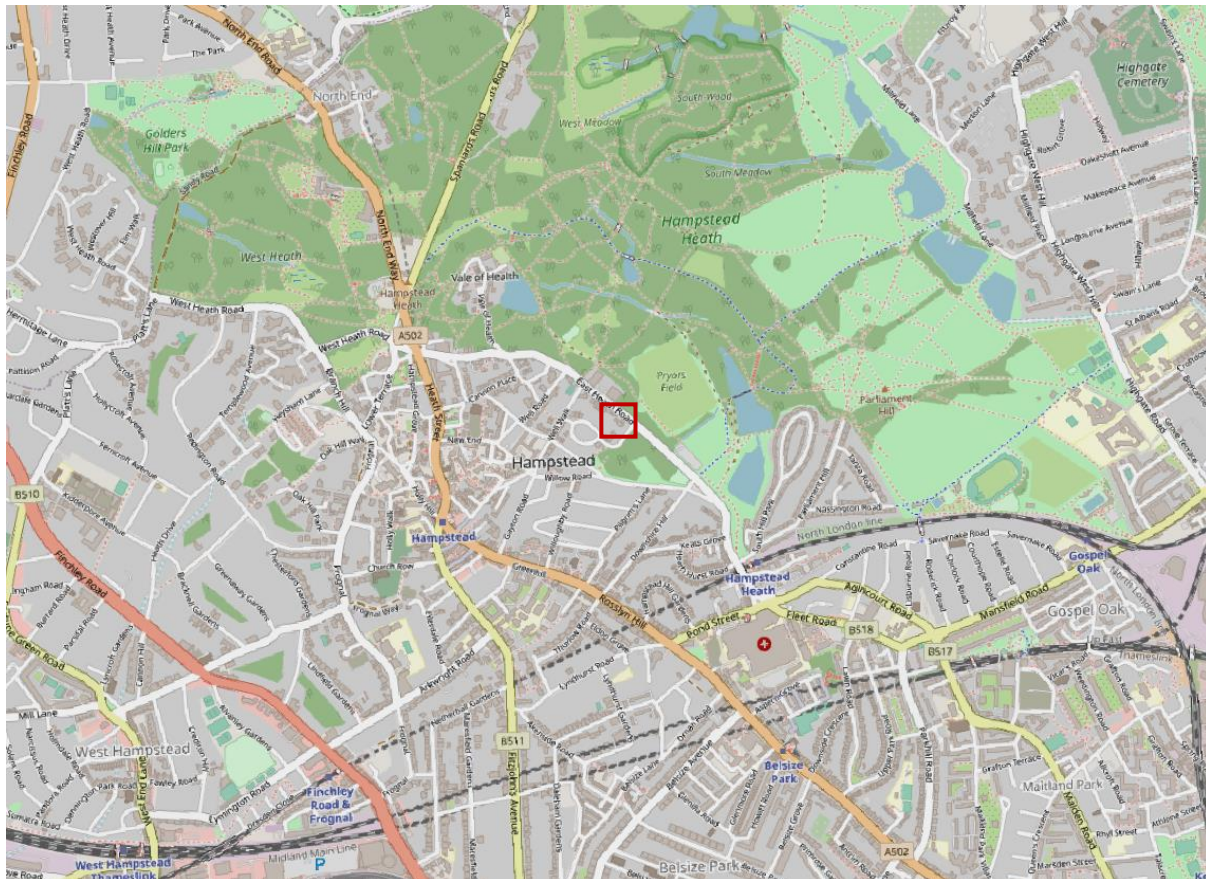


Figure 1: 1 East Heath Road, NW3 1BN

## **2.2 Proposed Development**

It is understood that this report will be part of a planning submission for the site in question. The proposal would see the construction of a garden cabin in place of the current structure; the details of which have been forwarded to the author of this report. No negative impacts on neighbouring habitats are anticipated.

## **2.3 Objectives**

The purpose of the survey and report was to:

- Check for evidence of protected species and assess the potential for protected species to be present on site.
- Identify the existing habitats within the survey area adopting the classification system published by UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).
- Make recommendations for further survey work as appropriate.
- Propose mitigation measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate for ecological impacts, as appropriate.

## **2.4 Survey Limitations**

Due to the level of survey commissioned a full Local Environment Records Centre (LERC) search was not requested. However, a desktop study encompassed Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and National Biodiversity Network (NBN) were sought.

### 3. Legislation and Planning Policy

This section provides a summary of legislation for protected species and habitats that may be present on site.

The legislation and planning policy detailed in this section is intended to provide a summary only. The relevant pieces of legislation and planning policy should be referred to for full information. Below is a summary of legislation and National Planning Policy that protects wildlife in England:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended)
- Countryside Rights of Way Act, 2000
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012
- Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System

#### 3.1 Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern

The NPPF sets out government policy on biodiversity in planning decisions. Under the NPPF, the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal.

#### 3.2 Breeding Birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, it is illegal to take, damage or destroy the nests of wild birds whilst being built or in use. No breeding birds were recorded onsite.

#### 3.3 Bats

All British bat species and their roosts are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010. Therefore, it is a criminal offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats.
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time).
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

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

### **3.4 Ecological Enhancement**

Both national and local policy support ecological enhancement in the design of developments. The NPPF and accompanying Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/05 state that Local Planning Authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity.



## 4. Methods

This report has been produced with reference to current guidelines for Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys and guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2015). The assessment comprised a desktop search and site visit, followed by a review of the data to provide habitat summaries and key notes concerning relevant protected species.

### 4.1 Data Search

An online data search was undertaken; where the following published materials were consulted:

- Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside ([www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk))
- National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas ([www.nbnatlas.org/](http://www.nbnatlas.org/))

### 4.2 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

The survey follows the national guidelines JNCC (2010) and the following equipment is available for the inspection:

- Tablet (Phase 1 mapping)
- Binoculars.
- Thermometer/hygrometer.
- Camera
- Sample bags for collecting dropping and feeding evidence.

Target notes (TN) were used to identify potential for protected or notable species or habitats, and to give more detailed site descriptions. If a deviation from the standard guidelines has been made the reason and justification will be explained below: -

*No deviation from the standard guidelines and methodology has been made for this survey.*

### 4.3 Protected Species Assessment

As part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), the site was assessed for its potential to contain protected or notable species. The assessment was made based on the habitats present within the site and their suitability for protected species (information on the legislation of protected species can be found in Section 3). Protected species assessed for, but not limited to, were:

- Plants of conservation concern.
- Invertebrates of conservation concern.
- Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*).
- Common toad (*Bufo bufo*).
- Reptiles.
- Breeding birds.
- Bats.
- Hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*).
- Badgers (*Meles meles*).

- European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*).
- Brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*).
- Otters (*Lutra lutra*).
- Water voles (*Arvicola amphibius*).

In addition, a search was undertaken for evidence of non-native, invasive species.

## 5. Baseline Ecological Conditions

### 5.1 Desk Study

A basic data search was carried out as per section 4.1

### 5.2 Designated sites of importance for nature conservation

Hampstead Heath Woods SSSI is situated 720m to the north of the site with Belsize Wood LNR positioned 900 m south-east. The proposed scheme would not have a negative impact on these designated sites.

### 5.3 Ancient Woodland

The site is not located within an area of ancient woodland or plantation on ancient woodland. Sandy Heath ancient woodland is located 700m north-west of the site, with Ken Woods (Hampstead Heath Woods SSSI) positioned 720m to the north.

### 5.4 Priority Habitats

Lowland heathland (National Habitat Network All Habitats Combined) class is highlighted onsite as per the desktop study. Following the onsite survey this can be deemed as an inaccuracy within the mapping platform.

Woodland - There are no designated areas of woodland found onsite although there are several areas of designated deciduous woodland within 2000m of the site, namely those habitats associated with Hampstead Heath which is located <10m north-east of the site.

Lowland Heathland – Hampstead Heath is located within close proximity (<10m) of the site and is comprised of a mixture of habitats including lowland heath.

Woodpasture and Parkland – Numerous pockets of woodpasture and parkland BAP are highlighted from the desktop search, including those associated to Hampstead Heath.

### 5.5 Wildlife EPS Licenses

The Magic website displayed two applications for protected species licences within 2 km of the site; both of which for bat species.

### 5.6 Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern

The below provides a summary of records of protected species and species of conservation concern within 2 km of the site, found on the NBN Atlas. Only ≤10 years old have been included.

Amphibians: Smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) (four records) and common frog (*Rana temporaria*) (12 records).

Bats: Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) (21 records), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) (12 records) brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) one record.

Mammals: European hedgehog (19 records) and Eurasian badger (one record).

Insects: Several species of conservation concern, including but not limited to stag beetles (*Lucanus cervus*) (11 records), brown hawker (*Aeshna grandis*) (eight records) and small tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) (28 records).

Birds: Several species of conservation concern, including but not limited to Eurasian wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), common starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Eurasian collard dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), and lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*).

### **5.7 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey - Habitats**

The following habitats were recorded on the site:

#### **Buildings (J3.6)**

Open-sided structure onsite which is due for removal; the footprint of which will be used by the newly proposed cabin. As such this structure/habitat is the key feature for the survey.

#### **Other habitat (J5)**

This classification can encompass a broad range of habitat types which may not be classified elsewhere on the habitat matrix. Areas of hardstanding associated to the site include the small courtyard to the north.

#### **Improved grassland (B4)**

This classification can encompass a broad range of grassland habitats; however, all of which display similar characteristics of enriched species poor composition; areas to the south can be captured within this classification.

#### **Intact/ defunct species poor hedging (J2.1.2)**

The decorative planting to the site boundaries, largely to the east have been captured within this classification.

### **5.8 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey – Species**

The following flora was recorded during the survey:

- Bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*)
- Burkwood species (spp) (*Osmanthus burkwodii*)
- Common dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)
- Common plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*)
- Fescue (*Festuca*) (spp,)
- Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Japanese cheesewood (*Pittosporum tobira*)
- Japanese euonymus (*Euonymus japonicas*)
- Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*)

- Japanese skimmer (*Skimmer japonica*)
- Mexican orange blossom *Choisya ternata*)

The following fauna was recorded during the survey:

- Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

## 6. Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Assessment

Table 1 sets out known and potential ecological constraints to the development, as a result of the data search and the extended Phase 1 habitat survey, including designated sites, priority habitats, ancient woodland, and protected species/species of conservation concern. Where a potential ecological constraint has been identified, further survey work and/or appropriate mitigation is likely to be required to address the issue.

**Table 1. Ecological Constraints and Opportunities Assessment**

Species/Species Group/Habitats Designated sites	Potentially Present / Known to be Present on Site	Assessment and Justification
Designated sites	None	Hampstead Heath Woods SSSI is situated 720m to the north of the site with Belsize Wood LNR positioned 900 m south-east. The proposed development would not have an impact on these sites of nature conservation importance due to the low impact nature of the works.
Priority habitats	None/low	Lowland heathland is highlighted onsite as per the desktop study. Following the onsite survey this was deemed as an inaccuracy within the mapping platform. Deciduous woodland, lowland heathland and woodpasture and parkland habitats are within close proximity to the site. However, due to the low impact of the proposed scheme it can be anticipated that no negative impacts will be observed on these priority habitats.
Ancient woodland	None	Sandy Heath ancient woodland is located 700m north-west of the site, with Ken Woods (Hampstead Heath Woods SSSI) positioned 720m to the north.
Plants of conservation concern	None	No protected or notable rare plant species were noted during the survey. The site does not contain habitats which could support the plants of conservation concern recorded in the data search. Therefore, rare plant species are not discussed further in this report.

Species/Species Group/Habitats Designated sites	Potentially Present / Known to be Present on Site	Assessment and Justification
Invasive species	None	No invasive species were recorded onsite (outside of the decorative planting).
Invertebrates of conservation concern	Negligible	No invertebrates of conservation concern were noted during the survey.
Amphibians including great crested newt	Negligible	The site does not contain any ponds and there are no ponds located within 500 m of the site which could support breeding great crested newts.
Reptiles such as slow-worm- ( <i>Anguis fragilis</i> ) and Viviparous lizard ( <i>Zootoca vivipara</i> )	Negligible	The site does not contain habitats that could support the common species of reptiles, <sup>1</sup> namely coarse, unmanaged grassland, which is located adjacent to areas of coarse grassland and scattered scrub. Therefore, reptiles are not discussed further in this report.
Breeding birds	Negligible/Low	No nesting material or relic nests were observed during the survey. Although unlikely to encounter nesting birds onsite due to the further guidance can be found in chapter 8.
Birds of conservation concern such as black redstart ( <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> )	Negligible	No Schedule 1 bird species were noted during the survey but presence may be plausible although unlikely.
Bats	Negligible	The only conceivable feature which could support opportunistic roosting bats would be the existing open-sided structure. However, internal inspection was undertaken during the survey which highlighted the lack of suitability and confirmed absence. Furthermore, the underneath of the timbers were inspected for insect remains could suggest feeding activity, no remains were found.
Badger	Negligible	No signs of badgers or badger setts were noted during the survey.
European hedgehog	Negligible	No signs of hedgehogs were noted during the survey or suitable hibernation opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Common species of reptile refers to the more commonly observed and wider distributed reptile species within the UK, namely grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), adder (*Vipera berus*), slow-worm and viviparous lizard



## 7. Conclusion

- The site is considered to have negligible potential for all of the protected species discussed within this report due to the lack of suitable habitat.
- No priority habitats were recorded onsite. Numerous priority habitats were noted during the desktop assessment within a close proximity of the site; however due to the low impact of the proposal it can be anticipated that no negative impacts will occur through the proposal.
- It is not anticipated that nesting birds will be present should the proposed scheme progress. Visual checks can be undertaken prior to the works progressing.
- In summary the site demonstrates negligible ecological value in regards to both habitat and suitability for protected species; thus meaning the works could progress without the requirement of further surveys.

Please see the next chapter of this report for the actions now required, including best practice guidance to be followed and ecological enhancement options for this site.

## 8. Recommendations

### 8.1 Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern

### 8.2 Breeding Birds

Visual checks can easily be carried out prior to undertaking any vegetation/structure removal prior to works to determine presence/ likely absence of nesting bird. If any nesting birds are found, then the works will require suspension until the young have hatched and have fledged. It is not anticipated that nesting birds will be present during the proposed works.

### 8.3 Bats

The site has negligible potential for bats; therefore no further surveys are required. If a bat is found at any time during works, all activities must stop and further advice be obtained from a bat licensed ecologist.

### 8.4 Ecological Enhancement

Due to the low impact of the project, negligible ecological value present onsite and subsequent footprint of the works the aspect of lighting only is discussed. The site neighbours favourable foraging habitat for bats; therefore individuals could feasibly be observed onsite, most likely displaying foraging behaviour. If the project is anticipating on utilising external lighting then the recommendations below would offer suitable options for bats.

- Lighting for bats
  - Any lighting near or shining onto any trees or buildings, especially those with bat boxes in should be designed to minimize the impact it has on potential bat roosting and commuting. Lighting should be in-line with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) lighting guidelines (Bats and Lighting in the UK (Bat Conservation Trust, 2008) <sup>2</sup>
  - This lighting should be of low level, be on downward deflectors and ideally be on Passive Infrared (PIR) sensor. Using LED directional lighting can also be a way of minimizing the light spill affecting the habitat. No up-lighting should be used.

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<sup>2</sup>[http://www.bats.org.uk/publications\\_download.php/1136/guidance\\_notes\\_light\\_pollution\\_20111.pdf](http://www.bats.org.uk/publications_download.php/1136/guidance_notes_light_pollution_20111.pdf).



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The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas (<https://nbnatlas.org/>)

Natural England MAGIC map (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/home.htm>)

## 10. Figures



**Figure 2: Site boundary 1 East Heath Road, NW3 1BN**

## 11. Appendix 1 – Site Photographs



Plate 1: Site looking west towards open-sided structure due for removal.



Plate 2: Target structure assessed for bat roosting suitability.





Plate 3: Target structure looking east; minimal eaves/ voids for bat roost suitability.



Plate 4: Internal inspection of target structure demonstrating a lack of voids/ cavities





Plate 5: Adjacent building (1 East Heath Road) displaying uniform structure/ lack of suitability for roosting bats.



Plate 6: Structures in situ due for removal/ footprint of the proposed new garden cabin.





Plate 7: Courtyard area with amenity planting to the north-west of the site.



Plate 8: Amenity grassland with associated planting to the east of the site.