Project: Land East of Rugby Road, Clifton upon Dunsmore
Date: 06/08/2025

Daytime Bat Walkover Survey

1 Introduction

1.1.1 Aspect Ecology was commissioned by Richborough Estates in December 2024 to undertake a daytime bat walkover survey in respect of proposed development of land east of Rugby Road, Clifton upon Dunsmore, centred at grid reference SP 52659 75960 (see Plan 6976/ECO1), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

1.1.2 The proposals are for development of the site to provide 160 residential units with associated open space, and infrastructure (see Appendix 6976/1).

1.1.3 Habitats present within the site consist of a single arable field sown with a *Brassica* crop (c1d – non-cereal crops), narrow field margins (1m to 2m wide) comprising g4 modified grassland, areas of h3h mixed scrub, h3d bramble scrub and a dirt track (u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface). Along the site boundary were eleven h2a native hedgerows, two h2b non-native ornamental hedgerows and an adjacent off-site tree line. One building is present within the south of the site, adjacent to the site boundary (see Plan 6976/ECO3).

2 Method

2.1.1 An appraisal of the site's potential suitability for bats in relation to roosting habitats, potential flightpaths and foraging habitats (termed a 'daytime bat walkover') was completed. Features were assessed for their potential suitability for roosting, foraging and commuting in accordance with industry standard methods[1]. Two surveys were completed, one in January 2025 and a second in July 2025. The second survey was undertaken to inspect any trees along the route of the proposed surface water drainage pipeline and outfall that was not designed in January 2025.

2.1.2 All mature trees within the site and within 20m of the site boundary where accessible, were surveyed and assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats based on the presence of features such as holes, cracks, splits or loose bark. Trees were categorised as supporting Potential Roost Features (PRFs), Further Assessment Required (FAR) or supporting no suitable features, in accordance with industry standard guidance[1].

2.1.3 Trees which were categorised as supporting PRFs or as FAR were then subject to a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) with PRFs categorised as PRF-I (only suitable for individual or small numbers of bats) or PRF-M (suitable for multiple bats). Any PRFs identified were inspected using binoculars from ground level for any signs indicating possible use by bats, such as staining, scratch marks or bat droppings. Where accessible from ground level, PRFs were subject to close inspection using a torch.

[1] Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).

2.1.4 Where it was not possible to fully inspect a PRF from ground level, and the tree is considered at risk of direct or indirect impact, recommendations have been made for further inspection, for example using ladders or tree-climbing with ropes.

3 Results

3.1.1 At the time of the Phase 1 survey in January 2025 ten hedgerows were recorded on-site. Native hedgerow **H1** was in a poor condition having been recently flayed to a box shape. Native hedgerows **H2**, **H2a**, **H7** and **H10** had likewise been recently flayed to a box shape. **H3**, **H4** and **H8**, also native hedgerows, had no evidence of being recently managed. Hedgerows **H5** and **H6** are the only non-native hedgerows on-site. **H5** appeared largely unmanaged on the site side, whereas **H6** was managed to a box shape. The hedgerows form limited continuous habitat that is connected to the wider landscape, albeit this largely consists of more arable fields and connectivity is fragmented by residential development and roads.

3.1.2 From the walkover survey, it was recorded that all trees on and adjacent to the site were associated either with scrub, hedgerows or the single line of trees immediately outside the northern boundary of the site. Hedgerow **H1** was associated with two trees which had PRFs (**T1** & **T2**), none of the other hedgerows within the site had any trees with PRFs present.

3.1.3 Subsequently, due to boundary changes, five further trees were recorded on and adjacent to the site in July 2025, due to boundary changes. Trees identified as supporting PRFs or identified as FAR are indicated on Plan 6976/ECO3 and Photographs 1-9. The results of this assessment are summarised in Table 3.1 below. Two trees with PRFs were recorded in the hedgerow **H1**, one tree was recorded outside the site to the south, approximately 7m from the site boundary, four within the south-east of the site and one tree adjacent to the north of the eastern site boundary.

Table 3.1. GLTA survey results.

Tree Ref.	Species	Assessment and potential roosting features	Summary
T1	Ash	Tear and woodpecker hole on western side of main trunk, the east side of the tree is hollow	PRF-M (FAR)
T2	Ash	Tear approximately 3.5m heigh on west side of main trunk	PRF-I (FAR)
T3	Ash	Tear on northern side of main trunk. Tree inaccessible, potential for other features on inaccessible side.	PRF-I (FAR)
T4	Ash	Dense ivy cover	FAR
T5	Ash	Woodpecker hole on north-western extent	PRF-M (FAR)
T6	Ash	Limb tear on south-eastern extent	PRF-M (FAR)
T7	Ash	Dense ivy cover	FAR
T8	Oak	Lifted bark	PRF-I (FAR)

3.1.4 Trees **T1** and **T2** were recorded within the east of the site along hedgerow **H1**. Both are Ash trees recorded as having PRFs for bats with further assessment required. **T1** and **T2** are single stemmed with no signs of recent management. Tree **T3** was recorded off-site adjacent to the south of the site within an area of mixed scrub. **T3** is an Ash tree recorded as having PRFs for bats with further assessment required. **T3** was single stemmed with no signs of recent management. **T3** was inaccessible at the time of survey, and whilst considered unlikely due to

the comparatively young age and physical condition of the tree, there may be unidentified PRFs on the far side of the tree. Trees **T4-T7** are mature Ash trees recorded as requiring further assessment. The trees are single stemmed with no signs of recent management. **T8** is an adjacent Oak tree north of the site boundary, it possessed PRFs with further assessment required should development fall within 20m of the tree.

3.1.5 A single building, labelled **B1** on Plan 6976/ECO3, is present within the site. During the survey the building was subject to an external inspection for PRFs. The building was of half-height concrete panel wall construction, roofed and half-clad in corrugated cement-composite panelling (potentially asbestos containing material). The building was in a damaged condition with numerous missing roof and wall panels, and was light and draughty inside. The structural integrity of the building was uncertain, and the building was filled with agricultural machinery and stores. Therefore, a detailed internal inspection for bats was not conducted for health and safety reasons, but views into the building from the exterior were available.

4 Assessment

4.1.1 The hedgerow network forms a degree of continuous habitat around the large arable field that is connected to the wider landscape, albeit the surrounding landscape predominantly consists of further arable fields and connectivity is fragmented by residential development and roads. The hedgerows are predominantly intensively managed and **H1** is gappy and defunct. As such, it is assessed that the hedgerows provide only moderate potential suitability for commuting bats. The majority of the site consists of arable, non-cereal crop which is unlikely to support significant foraging activity away from boundary hedgerows due to this habitat type typically supporting few invertebrates due to the application of pesticides. As as such, the site is considered to provide low potential foraging suitability.

4.1.2 It is considered that the building **B1** has negligible potential to support significant bat roosts.

4.1.3 It is understood that all trees within the site, including those described above with PRFs, are to be retained within the proposals. The site layout and landscaping have been designed to retain and enhance all the hedgerows, and a bat sensitive lighting scheme will be designed to prevent light spill onto any of the hedgerows or trees with identified PRFs.

4.1.4 All potential commuting routes around the site will be maintained and enhanced. The development proposals will also incorporate large areas of species-rich other neutral grassland, scrub and wet grassland (associated with drainage features) which, combined with the cessation of the application of pesticides, will improve the quality of the foraging habitat at the site (Plan 6976/BNG2).

5 Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1.1 **PRF/aerial inspection surveys.** Should the development proposals change and any of the trees with roosting potential (T1-T8) become at risk of direct or indirect damage or disturbance, then any tree affected should be subject to a full PRF inspection. This comprises close inspection of all identified PRFs and FAR using an endoscope, torch, ladder and tree climbing as required. Should the potential PRF-M's be confirmed as supporting significant bat roosts, or any further PRF-Ms identified, repeat visits to the PRF-M(s) would be undertaken providing a total of three visits per PRF-M during the active bat season, in accordance with the guidance. Should bat roosts be confirmed then a licence may be required from Natural England to permit the works.

5.1.2 **Bat activity surveys.** All potential bat commuting routes are to be preserved and enhanced within the development proposals. Similarly, post-development the site will support improved

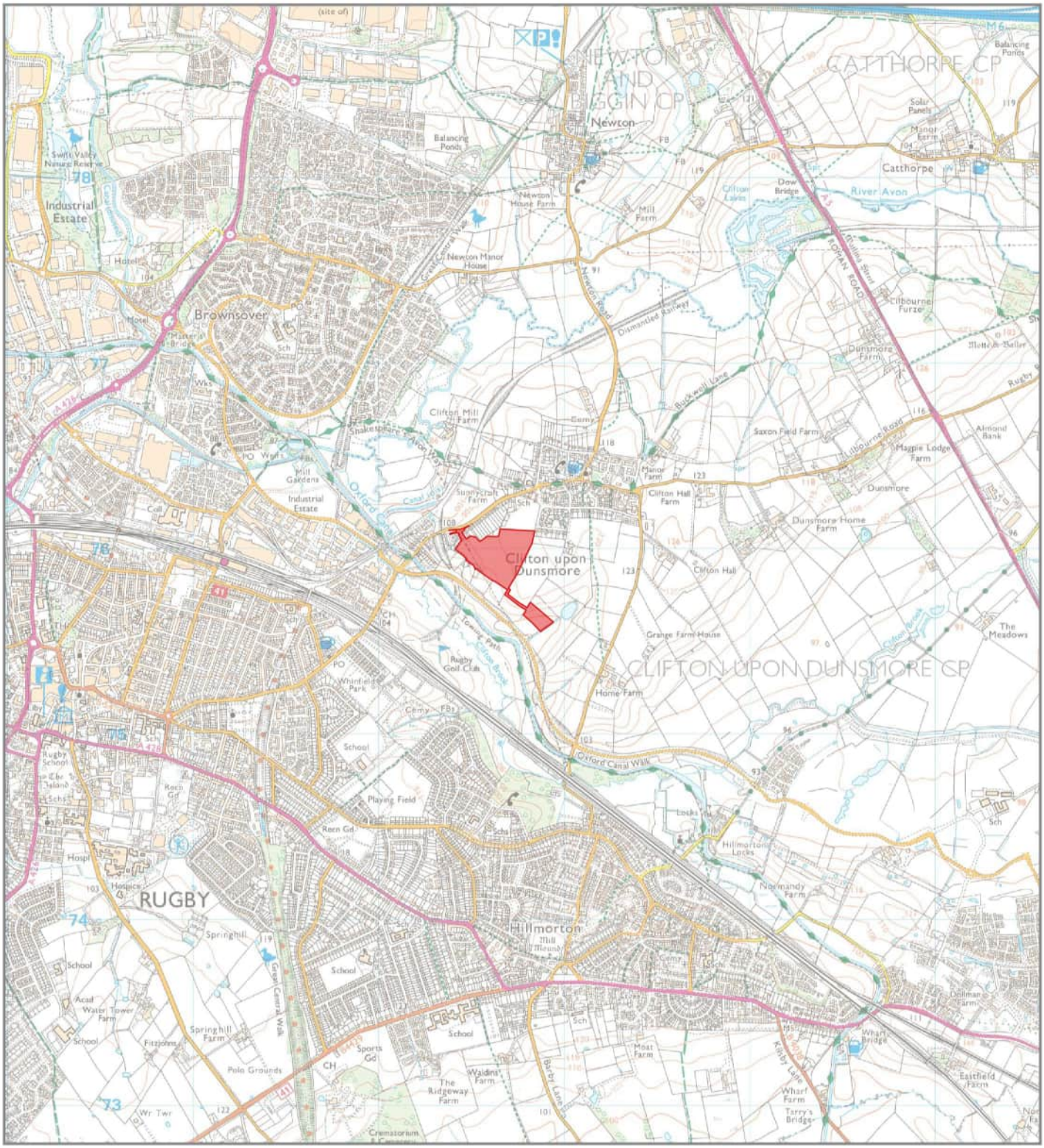
foraging habitat for bats. Therefore, it is considered highly unlikely that the development proposals will have a significant negative impact on the local bat assemblage, and should provide minor positive enhancements once landscaping has matured.

Plans

Plan 6976/ECO1	Site Location
Plan 6976/ECO3	Habitats and Ecological Features
Plan 6976/BNG2	Post Development Habitat Plan
Photographs 1-9	

Plan 6976/ECO1:

Site Location



Key:

Site Location

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Clifton upon Dunsmore	PROJECT
Site Location	TITLE
6976/ECO1	DRAWING NO.
C/JP	REV
August 2025	DATE
JP/OG	QC

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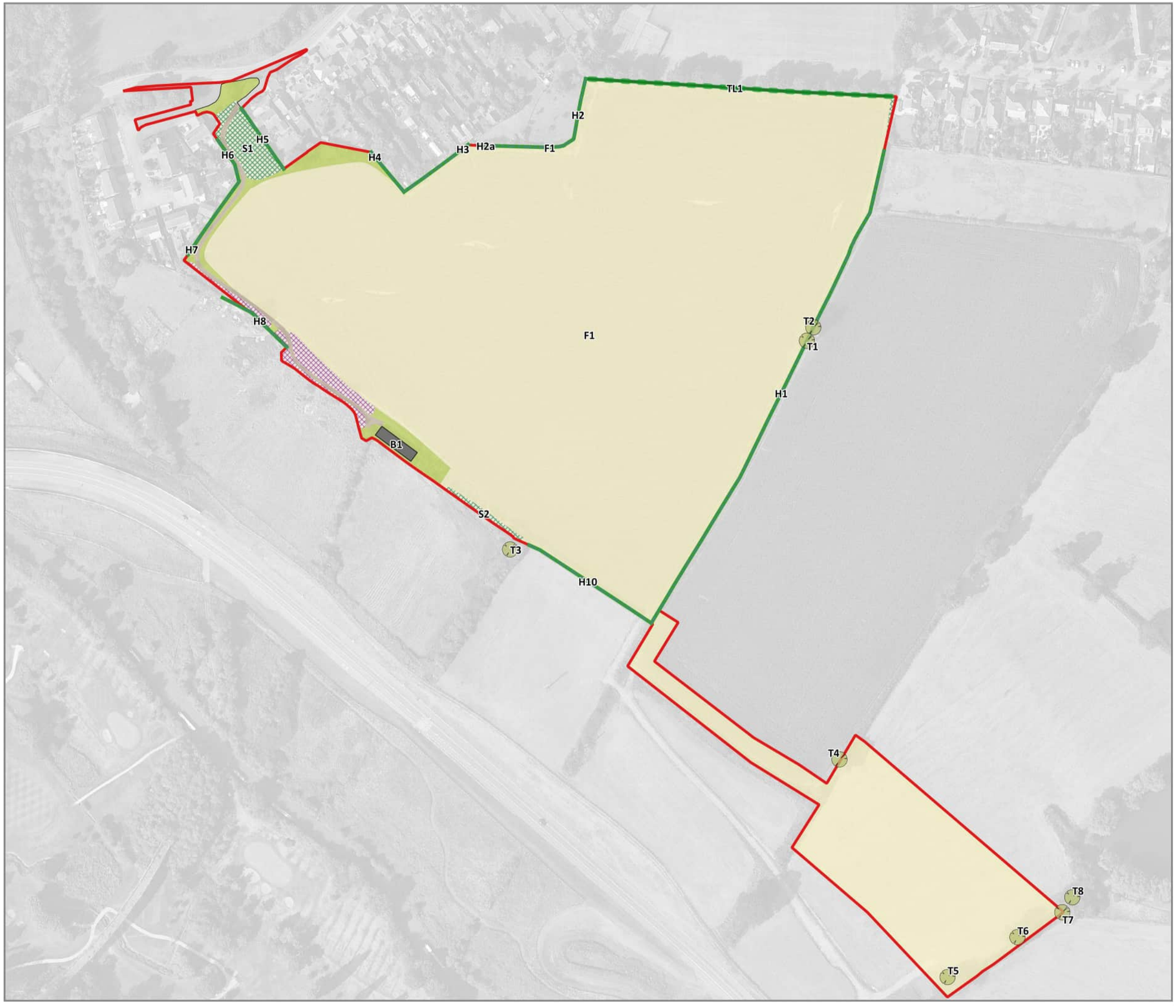
Plan 6976/ECO3:

Habitats and Ecological Features



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Artifical unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Bramble Scrub
- Building
- Hardstanding
- Mixed scrub
- Modified grassland
- Non-cereal crops
- Hedgerow
- Line of Trees
- Tree

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Clifton upon Dunsmore	PROJECT
Habitats and Ecological Features	TITLE
6976/ECO3	DRAWING NO.
E/DO	REV
August 2025	DATE
OG/DO	QC

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Plan 6976/BNG2:

Post Development Habitat Plan

Key:

- Site Boundary
- Proposed Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (0.0075ha)
- Proposed Developed land; development area (2.8475ha)
- Proposed Developed land; sealed surface: Hardstanding (1.6800ha)
- Proposed Mixed scrub (0.1400ha)
- Proposed Modified grassland (1.3800ha)
- Proposed Other neutral grassland - Moderate Condition (1.6975ha)
- Retained Cereal crops (1.2775ha)
- Proposed Other neutral grassland (wet) (0.4350ha)
- Retained Line of trees (0.185km)
- Retained Native hedgerow - Good Condition (0.235km)
- Retained Native hedgerow - Moderate Condition (0.13km)
- Retained Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (0.075km)
- Enhanced Native hedgerow - Good Condition (0.3km)

0 30 60 90 120 m

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Clifton upon Dunsmore	PROJECT
Post-development Habitat Mapping	TITLE
6976/BNG2	DRAWING NO.
H/JP	REV
August 2025	DATE
MM/DO	QC

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Photographs 1-9

Photograph 1: Tree T1 Hollow

Photograph 2: West Side of Tree T1

Photograph 3: Tree T2

Photograph 4: Tree Line

Photograph 5: Tree T4

Photograph 6: Tree T5

Photograph 7: Tree T6

Photograph 8: Tree T7

Photograph 9: Tree T8

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