New Totterdown, Temple Farm Estate

Preliminary Ecology Appraisal

April 2023

Client: Richard Parr Associates
Report Ref: SEB2708_01a V2
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Non-Technical Summary

Site Location	New Totterdown, Temple Farm Estate, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1RU (central grid reference: SU 13061 72082)
Scope of Works	Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (PEA) comprising a Habitat Survey and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, supplemented with a desk study.
Survey Methods	The Habitat Survey was undertaken with reference to UKHab Classification (2020) and CIEEM (2018) and the Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment was undertaken with reference to BCT (2016).
Personnel	Kate Hayward MCIEEM, Emma Shaw and Patrick Ryan.
Site Description and Suitability Assessment	The site is approximately 0.6 hectares in size. It primarily consists of a vacant house and garden containing modified grassland, bare ground with scattered ornamental planting, stones, rubble and piles of logs, bounded by a mature treeline, and extending beyond the garden to encompass a small area of adjacent grassland with scrub and shrubs. The site is surrounded by large arable and pasture fields. The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone for Fyfield Down SSSI, Silbury Hill SSSI and Savernake Forest SSSI. With consideration to protected/notable species: • The house is assessed as *High* suitability to roosting bats. Scattered bat feeding remains were found in the internal area. The line of mature trees bordering the garden offer generally *Low* suitability to roosting bats. • The house offers suitability to nesting birds, and the line of mature trees, dense scrub and scattered gorse and elder shrubs on site provide further suitable habitat for nesting birds. • The site has suitability to common and widespread species of reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. • Large stones located along the north and south boundaries of the garden are suitable to support notable lichens, known within the nearby Fyfield Down SSSI. • Variegated yellow archangel was identified in the garden, which is a non-native, invasive species, listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
The Proposal	Seasons Ecology have been informed that works associated with Planning Consent 16/05475/FUL were carried out at the site under previous ownership but were never completed. The current owners, looking to continue the work under the extant planning permission, commissioned the PEA with a look to obtaining any necessary ecological licenses before doing so. Simultaneously they have hired a design team to review and improve the consented designs, following which a new planning application will be made. Works associated with both the extant permission and new planning application involve repairs, refurbishments, alterations and extension to the house, including associated landscaping.
Recommendations	Three bat surveys of the house are recommended between May and September. Any tree removal or management works should be preceded by a bat roost assessment.

	Retention of the large stones on site are recommended. A precautionary approach to works is recommended with habitat management, pre-works checks, and hand searches and appropriate timing of clearance works. Recommendations for the removal of variegated yellow archangel have been provided. A sensitive lighting scheme is recommended. Recommendations for biodiversity enhancements have been provided.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In April 2023, Seasons Ecology was instructed by Richard Parr Associates, on behalf of their client, to undertake a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal of New Totterdown, Temple Farm Estate, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1RU (central grid reference: SU 13061 72082). The site benefits from an extant Planning Consent 16/05475/FUL for which works were commenced but never completed. The site is the subject of a new planning proposal. Both of these can be described as repairs, refurbishments, alterations and extensions to the house including associated landscaping.

1.1.2 The Preliminary Ecology Appraisal consisted of a Habitat Survey and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment. The survey was supplemented with a desk study.

1.2 Scope and Objectives of Survey

1.2.1 The survey was undertaken to identify and record the habitats on site and to assess the potential of the site to support protected/notable species. The purpose of the survey is to make known any ecological constraints or considerations that may be relevant to the proposal and to inform biodiversity enhancements.

1.2.2 This report is based on the findings of a survey undertaken on 18th April 2023.

1.2.3 The report is supported by the following:

- Annex 1: Summary of Legislation and Planning Policy.
- Annex 2: Habitat Plan.
- Annex 3: Site Photographs.

1.3 Personnel

1.3.1 The survey and reporting were led by Principal Ecologist, Kate Hayward. Kate is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and has over 20 years' experience as a professional consultant advising on development projects and protected species and habitats, including acting as the named ecologist on European Protected Species licences.

1.3.2 The survey was assisted by Emma Shaw, Assistant Ecologist. Emma has over two years' experience of protected species surveys.

1.3.3 The survey was also assisted by Patrick Ryan, Assistant Ecologist.

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

2.1.1 This report has been compiled with reference to relevant legislation and national planning policies, which protect wildlife. Annex 1 provides a brief summary of this legislation and policy.

3. Desk Study

3.1 Method

3.1.1 A web-based desk study was undertaken in April 2023 prior to the survey to provide local information that may be relevant to the proposal. The following online resources were consulted:

- The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website[1], to obtain information on:
  - Statutory designations within 2km of the site and within 4km for designations with bats as a primary feature.
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones and Bat Consultation Zones relevant to the site.
  - Habitats on or adjacent to the site listed on the Priority Habitats Inventory.
  - European Protected Species licences issued within 2km.
  - Other species information that may be relevant to the proposal.
- Google Maps[2], to view aerial photographs, maps and mapnik data, to assess the ecological context of the site.

3.2 Results

Statutory Designations

3.2.1 There is one statutory designation within 2km of the site, Fyfield Down Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located approximately 0.3km to the south of the site. Fyfield Down is a large chalk grassland with a nationally important geological feature: a river of sarsen stones deposited by glacial action. The stones are noted for outstanding assemblages of lichens and the grassland includes characteristic chalkland species such as Round-headed Rampion *Phyteuma orbiculare*, Frog Orchid *Coeloglossum viride* and Chalk Milkwort *Polygala calcarea*. Fyfield Down also has important populations of hares *Lepus europaeus*, downland invertebrates and birds such as Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* and Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*.

3.2.2 There are no statutory designations with bats as a primary feature within 4km of the site.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones and Bat Consultation Zones

3.2.3 The site itself is not covered by any statutory designations, but it does lie within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of nearby SSSIs. This requires the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England on certain types of development. This IRZ relates to applications for aviation, livestock and poultry units, slurry lagoons and manure stores and applications that could add phosphate loading. Therefore, consultation may be required.

3.2.4 The site does not lie within a Bat Consultation Zone.

[1] http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx

[2] http://acme.com/planimeter/

European Protected Species Licences

3.2.5 There are no European Protected Species Licences issued for locations within 2km of the site. There are three European Protected Species Licences issued for locations within 4km of the site.

- One location is for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri* and lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, approximately 2.7km east of the site.
- One location is for brown long-eared bat, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii,* Natterer's bat, approximately 2.8km east of the site.
- One location is for brown long-eared bat and common pipistrelle, approximately 3km north-west of the site.

Other Species Information

3.2.6 There are three Natural England great crested newt pond surveys which have been carried out within 1km of the site (2017-2019). These are for locations approximately 540m to the north-west, approximately 775m to the south-east and approximately 800m to the east of the site. All three surveys recorded absence of great crested newt.

Ecological Context

3.2.7 The site lies in a rural area, approximately 6.1km north-west of Marlborough and approximately 8km to the south of Swindon. The immediate surroundings of the site in all directions are large arable and pasture grassland fields divided by mature hedgerows with occasional mature trees and fences, interspersed with scattered patches of woodland. To the south, approximately 0.3km from the site, lies Fyfield Down SSSI. There are four woodlands in the vicinity of the site, New Totterdown Wood located approximately 0.4km to the east, Temple Covert located approximately 1km to the north-east, The Beeches located approximately 1.5km to the east and Middledown Wood located approximately 1.6km to the north-east of the site.

3.2.8 There are no ponds within 500m of the site, the closest pond evident being located approximately 540m to the north-west of the site.

4. Survey

4.1 Method

Habitat Survey

4.1.1 A systematic walkover of the site was undertaken on 18th April 2023. Notes were taken on the habitats present, and their suitability to support protected and notable species. Any incidental evidence of protected and notable species was noted. The survey was carried out with reference to UKHab Classification (2020)[3], CIEEM 2018[4] and BS 42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development* (BSI 2013).

Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

4.1.2 The house and any trees on site were assessed for their suitability to roosting bats. This assessment considers the presence of potential roosting features on the building, such as cracks in walls, gaps under tiles and gaps at the roofline and the internal conditions. Features on the trees, such as fissures, rot holes, hollow branches and ivy cover, were noted. The building and trees are then assessed as *Negligible, Low, Moderate* or *High* suitability based on the presence of suitable features. The assessment was undertaken with reference to BCT (2016)[5].

4.1.3 The house was inspected internally for evidence of roosting bats with the aid of a high-powered torch. Evidence of bats includes droppings, staining, scratch marks, feeding remains and actual bats.

Constraints to Survey

4.1.4 The survey is not able to record flora or fauna that may appear on the site at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of the survey.

4.1.5 The first floor and roof space of the house was not accessed for an internal inspection at the time of survey due to the unknown structural integrity of the building.

4.2 Site Description

4.2.1 The site is approximately 0.6 hectares in size. It primarily consists of a vacant house and garden containing modified grassland, bare ground with scattered ornamental planting, stones, rubble and piles of logs, bounded by a mature treeline, and extending beyond the garden to encompass a small area of adjacent grassland with scrub and shrubs.

4.2.2 Habitats are mapped on the habitat plan at Annex 2. Site photographs are provided at Annex 3. Habitat descriptions are provided below with the building description provided in the subsequent Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, Section 4.4.

[3] The UK Habitat Classification Version 1.1 (UKHab) (2020). Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J.

[4] CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

[5] Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2016). Collins. Third Edition.

4.3 Habitat Descriptions

Modified Grassland

4.3.1 Modified grassland is the dominant habitat across the site, covering the entire site and a central area within the garden. The modified grassland within the garden is relatively short, all other areas being taller with a tussocky sward. There were sheep grazing on the grassland within the garden at the time of the survey. Species diversity appears low, with rye-grasses *Lolium* species dominant and frequent cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata,* and a low herb content comprising dandelion *Taraxacum* species, white dead-nettle *Lamium album*, red dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum*, greater plantain *Plantago major*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, snowdrop *Galanthus* species and cleavers *Galium aparine.*

4.3.2 Ruderal vegetation is present, growing predominantly along the site boundaries, with species including common nettle *Urtica dioica*, docks *Rumex* species, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* and hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*.

Bare Ground

4.3.3 Bare ground is present within the garden surrounding the house, including along the boundaries beneath the mature treeline. Bare ground is sparsely vegetated with ornamental plants and ruderal vegetation. Species include common nettle, snowdrop species, daffodil *Narcissus* species and ground-elder *Aegopodium podagraria*.

4.3.4 A dense patch of the non-native invasive species variegated yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum* listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) was identified directly south of the house (Target Note 1, Annex 2).

Dense Scrub and Shrubs

4.3.5 Dense scrub is located along the north-east fringe of the site. Gorse *Ulex europaeus* is dominant with elder *Sambucus nigra*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg. and* hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. Dense scrub is encroaching into the modified grassland on site due to a lack of management.

4.3.6 There are five mature hawthorn shrubs spaced evenly along the eastern fenced boundary. Further scattered young, semi-mature and mature gorse, elder and hawthorn shrubs grow along all boundaries of the site.

Mature Trees

4.3.7 A line of mature trees forms all four boundaries of the garden. Trees are predominantly beech *Fagus sylvatica*, which form a continuous canopy cover, with an understorey of scattered gorse and elder. The trees grow on a bank, which runs the length of the boundary of the garden.

4.3.8 There are no other mature trees on site.

Stones, Scattered Rubble and Log Piles

4.3.9 The banks along the north and south boundaries of the garden feature large stones amongst the mature trees (Sarsen Stones). The stones are vegetated with bryophytes (Target Note 2, Annex 2). Scattered log piles are located across the west boundary and the interior of the garden and scattered rubble is located along the east boundary (Target Note 3, Annex 2).

4.4 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment

House

4.4.1 A vacant house is located in the approximate centre of the site. It is two-storeys and constructed of stone with a gabled, slate-tiled roof. The corners of each elevation and the sections of wall at the roofline are constructed of brick. There is one brick chimney central to the roof at the apex. Timber fascia boarding surrounds the roofline at the north and south gable ends. The east and west elevations have overhanging eaves of approximately 30cm. There are timber-framed windows across the east and west elevations and four timber-framed doors, two on the east elevation and two on the west elevation. All windows and doors have brickwork surrounds. The windows are boarded with MDF panels. There are two arrow slits present, one on each of the gable ends. Both appear boarded from the inside.

4.4.2 There are gaps in the stonework of the external walls at the roofline of the north and south gable ends (Target Note 4, Annex 2). Both roof pitches are in good condition with only a very low number of raised or misplaced tiles (Target Note 5, Annex 2). The chimney is in good condition with no gaps evident within the brickwork. Sections of the timber fascia boarding are missing across both the north and south gable ends leaving gaps at the roofline (Target Note 6, Annex 2). The doors are in poor condition with gaps evident below all doors (Target Note 7, Annex 2). The timber-framed windows are well-sealed, being boarded, except both ground floor windows on the west elevation, which contain gaps below the boarding (Target Note 8, Annex 2).

4.4.3 The internal area of the house is dilapidated with the ceiling and floorboards partially collapsing. Approximately five butterfly wings, possible bat feeding remains, were found scattered across the ground floor of the house (Target Note 9, Annex 2). The first floor and the roof space(s) were not accessed due to the poor condition of the stairs and floors.

4.4.4 No evidence of nesting birds was recorded within or on the house.

Trees

4.4.5 A low number of the mature beech trees bordering the garden offer *Low* suitability to roosting bats. Two of the mature beech trees contain attached bat boxes further increasing the suitability of the trees to roosting bats.

5. Evaluation

5.1.1 The site consists of a vacant house and garden containing modified grassland, bare ground (with scattered ornamental planting), stones, rubble and piles of logs, bounded by a mature treeline, and extending beyond the garden to encompass adjacent grassland with scrub and shrubs. The site is small in size (approximately 0.6 hectares) and supports a moderate diversity of habitats, with generally good connectivity to suitable habitats within the wider area. The line of mature trees, dense scrub, ruderal vegetation and large stones on site, offer elements of naturalness, permanence and fragility, which is otherwise absent.

5.1.2 The site has value beyond the immediate zone of influence and is assessed as ecologically valuable at a Local Level.

5.2 Statutory Designations

5.2.1 The site has one statutory designation within 2km. This is Fyfield Down SSSI, which is located approximately 0.3km to the south and is designated for a unique combination of geomorphological, biological and archaeological features. The site has one of the finest collections of sarsen stones in Britain, supporting a rich lichen and moss flora. Many of these lichen species are very rare in southern Britain, and some are found only on this particular type of stone. Fyfield Down also supports a range of grassland communities; the majority of these are neutral, but pockets of both calcareous and acid grassland are present.

5.2.2 The site has no statutory designations within 4km with bats as a primary feature. However, the site lies within the IRZ for Fyfield Down SSSI, as well as Silbury Hill SSSI and Savernake Forest SSSI, located 4.5km south-west and 7.3km south-east of the site, respectively. Considering the small scale of the development and distance to these designations, no direct or indirect impacts on these three SSSIs are likely to occur.

5.3 Habitats

5.3.1 The interior of the site supports a low diversity of low-quality habitats, being dominated by modified grassland and bare ground. The dense gorse scrub and line of mature beech trees on site provide higher-quality habitats, which add intrinsic value to the site. The line of mature trees contribute to the connectivity of habitats across the wider rural area of Wiltshire.

5.3.2 The large stones (Sarsen Stones) are a feature of the local landscape.

5.4 Suitability to Protected and Notable Species

5.4.1 The site offers suitable habitats to the following species/species groups:

Flora – The site supports an invasive, non-native plant, variegated yellow archangel, which is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. No other notable plants or communities were recorded on site and considering the previous function of the majority of the site as a residential garden, there is low potential for notable plant species to occur, including round-headed rampion, frog orchid and chalk milkwort, which are recorded at Fyfield Down SSSI located approximately 0.3km to the south.

The site contains large stones along the north and south boundaries of the garden. Similar stones are known at Fyfield Down SSSI, which are noted for their outstanding assemblages of lichens. Therefore, the stones on site could support notable lichens.

Bats – The house is assessed as *High* suitability to roosting bats. It is of suitable construction for roosting bats with stone walls and flat slate roof tiles present. There are access points into

the internal area provided by the gaps below the doors and windows, gaps in the stonework at the roofline and the gaps at the eaves. There are also a low number of external roosting features including raised and misplaced roof tiles and gaps within the stonework at the roofline. The interior of the house is undisturbed, with an inaccessible roof space(s). The presence of possible bat feeding remains (butterfly wings) scattered across the ground floor of the house suggest low numbers of bats are utilising the building as a day and/or night roost. The house does not contain any suitably wide access points for horseshoe bat species, for which there are a low number of records within 4km, but the house is suitable to both void-dwelling and crevice-dwelling species of bat.

The interior of the site offers a small area of low-quality foraging habitat for bats, being dominated by modified grassland, with patches of dense scrub, ruderal vegetation and bare ground also present. The line of mature beech trees on site provides high-quality commuting and foraging habitat for bats, being connected to the wider network of linear features such as hedgerows and further tree lines. The wider landscape, however, contains large arable and pasture fields with scattered, small patches of habitats and linear features.

- *Nesting birds* – The house offers suitability to nesting birds with suitable nest-building habitat present at the eaves on the east and west elevations. The line of mature beech trees, dense scrub and scattered gorse and elder shrubs on site provide optimal nest-building habitat for birds. A number of the mature beech trees contain attached bird boxes of varying sizes, further increasing the suitable nest-building habitat on site.

  The nearby statutory designation of Fyfield Down SSSI is known to support important populations of birds such as Eurasian Skylark and Yellowhammer. The site is largely unsuitable to these bird species, but the wider open countryside surrounding the site offers suitable habitats.

- *Badger* – No evidence of badger using the site was identified during the survey. The site provides a small area of moderate-quality foraging habitat for badgers being dominated by modified grassland and bare ground with the areas of dense scrub and line of mature trees located on a bank providing higher quality habitat for sett building and foraging. The site has moderate connectivity to the wider rural area which supports better-quality sett-building and foraging and commuting habitats.

- *Reptiles and amphibians* – The site offers a small area of moderate-quality habitats to low numbers of common and widespread species of reptiles and amphibians, such as such as common *frog Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo* and slow worm *Anguis fragilis*. The modified grassland, bare ground, dense scrub, ruderal vegetation, scattered rubble and log piles, and notably the large, vegetated stones and line of mature trees on site offer refuge, foraging and basking habitats for reptiles and amphibians.

  With consideration to great crested newt, there are no ponds located within 500m of the site and no records of great crested newt presence within 2km of the site (licence records). There are three Natural England great crested newt surveys which have been carried out within 1km of the site, for locations approximately 540m to the north-west, 775m to the south-east and 800m to the east of the site. All three surveys recorded absence of the species. With consideration to the moderate-quality terrestrial habitats present on site for great crested newts, small area of the site, the lack of records within 2km, and the lack of ponds within 500m of the site, it is considered that there is negligible likelihood of great crested newt utilising the terrestrial habitats on site.

- *Other mammals* – The site provides small areas of refuge for common and widespread species of small mammals, namely the mature tree line, dense scrub, large stones, scattered rubble

and log piles. There are accesses for hedgehogs into the site provided by the gaps beneath the wire-post fencing across all site boundaries.

With consideration to dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, there are no hedgerows on site and an absence of a continuous understorey, with patches of scattered dense scrub. Therefore, the site provides a small area of low-quality habitat for this species and whilst the site is connected to the wider landscape, it is surrounded by large arable and pasture fields, with scattered pockets of woodland evident. With consideration to the small area of low-quality habitat on site and the presence of scattered areas of suitable habitats in the wider landscape, it is considered that there is negligible likelihood of dormouse utilising the site.

Fyfield Down SSSI is known to support important populations of hare. The site is generally unsuitable to this open countryside species, but individuals may cross through the site.

6. Recommendations

6.1.1 The site is the subject of a planning proposal for major repairs, refurbishments and alterations to the house, and associated landscaping.

6.1.2 With consideration to the proposal, the following is recommended:

6.2 Further Surveys

Roosting Bats

6.2.1 The house is assessed as *High* suitability to roosting bats. Therefore, it is recommended that three bat surveys are undertaken of the house between May and September, to assess the presence of bat roosts, the status of any roosts found, and the numbers and species of bats.

6.2.2 Any trees requiring removal or management works should first be individually assessed for their suitability to roosting bats. The assessment will inform the requirement for Climb and Inspect surveys of the trees.

Nesting Birds

6.2.3 The house offers moderate suitability to nesting birds. Therefore, works to the house should commence outside of the nesting bird season (usually this is March to August, inclusive).

6.2.4 Removal of trees, shrubs, and scrub, where required, should also occur outside of the nesting bird season.

6.2.5 If the nesting bird season cannot be avoided, then a pre-works nesting bird check should be carried out by an experienced Ecological Clerk of Works.

6.3 Management/Removal of Invasive Species

6.3.1 Variegated yellow archangel is a non-native, invasive species, listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); therefore, it is an offence to plant it in the wild or otherwise cause it to grow. Disturbance of and construction on the site could allow this species to spread into the wider rural surroundings if not contained and removed before works commence. The plant spreads vegetatively from stolon (root) nodes and can spread up to 2m per year.

6.3.2 It is recommended that the plant should be eradicated chemically using glyphosate herbicide. The herbicide should be selectively applied in spring when the plant is actively growing and before the species starts to flower. The application should encompass all the areas where the species is visible and adjacent areas to ensure any seedlings potentially hidden in associated vegetation are treated. Personnel should hold a certificate of technical competence for herbicide use or work under the direct supervision of a certificate holder.

6.3.3 All plant material removed from the infected area should be placed in suitable hard wearing, sealed bags and removed to an appropriate landfill site. This site must be licensed to receive invasive species waste. The area should be monitored during the year immediately after the initial treatment and additional treatments of glyphosate applied if monitoring identifies that areas of the plant have been missed.

6.4 Retention of Habitats

6.4.1 The large stones located along the north and south boundaries of the garden should be retained.

6.5 Precautionary Protection Measures

6.5.1 The following general protection measures are recommended.

- Habitat Protection – All retained trees across the site should be protected throughout the works. The large stones located along the boundaries of the garden should be retained as these are a characteristic feature of the local area.
- Habitat Removal – Vegetation clearance should occur outside of the nesting bird season (generally this is considered to be from March to August) or a pre-works nesting bird check should be undertaken prior to works.
- Removal of vegetation/modified grassland should be managed in advance to deter reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals. Initially, a phased cutting approach should be taken with the vegetation cut to 15cm height, then 48 hours later a second cut to around 5cm. This phased approach should be undertaken under a watching brief by an Ecological Clerk of Works, to protect reptiles, amphibians and small mammals during any vegetation removal and then deter these animals from the works areas whilst works are underway.
- Dismantling and removal of the scattered rubble and log piles (if necessary) should be undertaken by hand by an Ecological Clerk of Works and should occur between March and October to avoid the reptile and amphibian hibernation season.
- Fauna - In the event of any reptiles, amphibians or small mammals being found during the clearance works, a suitable receptor site should be identified, such as the adjacent grassland field.
- Should a protected species be discovered at any stage during the works then works should stop immediately and advice sought from an Ecologist.
- During construction works across the site, any trenches left open overnight should include a means of escape for animals. A plank angled from the bottom to the top of the trench, will allow animals (such as badger and hedgehogs) to escape.

6.6 Lighting

6.6.1 The site lies in a rural location; therefore, a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented. Lighting should not spill onto surrounding habitats and should avoid illuminating the mature tree line and dense scrub on site.

6.7 Biodiversity Enhancements

6.7.1 The following biodiversity features are considered appropriate to the type and scale of the proposal:

- Roosting bats – Two bat boxes could be attached to the south-facing elevation of the house on completion of the works or on boundary trees, located between 3m and 5m off the ground. This would enhance the bat roosting habitat provided by the site. Further recommendations will be provided following the bat surveys of the house.
- Nesting birds - Two attached swift boxes could be incorporated into the house under the eaves on the north or east-facing elevations, to provide additional nesting habitat. These should be sited at least 5 metres off the ground, where possible.
- Common and widespread species of reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals – A refuge/hibernaculum could be created, partially buried and filled with soil and rocks, to offer refuge and hibernation habitat.

- Beneficial planting scheme – Landscape planting should include species of benefit to wildlife. Mountain ash *Sorbus acuparia,* and crab apple *Malus sylvestris* would offer resources for wildlife on site. Honeysuckle *Lonicera* species, is night-scented, attracting night-flying insects, which in turn would enhance foraging on site for bats. Sowing of a wildflower grassland seed mix would enhance the areas of modified grassland on site.

7. Annexes

Annex 1: Legislation and Planning Policy

A summary of relevant legislation and national policy is provided below. For each individual case, it is advised to consult the relevant documents in full and obtain legal advice, where appropriate.

There are several UK legislation tools, which are listed below. European legislation has not been included as it is incorporated in UK legislation by domestic provisions.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit)

In 1992, the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)[6] came into force. This provides for the creation of a network of protected wildlife sites across the European Union, known as 'Natura 2000'. This network consists of designated sites, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC)[7]. These sites form part of a series of measures aimed at conserving important and threatened habitats and species.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 commonly known as 'the Habitat Regulations' transpose the Habitats Directive into national law and set out the provisions for the protection and management of species and habitats of European importance, including Natura 2000 sites. The Regulations have been amended in England in relation to candidate SACs and SPAs. These are sites submitted by the Government for consideration as part of the Natura 2000 network, and are also now defined as European Sites. All European Sites are of national importance and have been notified as SSSIs.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as Amended in Quinquennial Review and by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000[8]

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981[9] provides the foundation for much of the statutory wildlife protection in the UK. Part I deals with the protection of plants, birds and other animals and Part II deals with the designation of SSSIs.

The following broad areas are covered by the Act:

Nature Conservation - Protecting those sites which are National Nature Reserves (NNR) and SSSIs.

Wildlife - Listing endangered or rare species in need of protection and creating offences for killing, disturbing or injuring such species. The disturbance of any nesting bird during the breeding season is also noted as an offence.

The Act also makes it an offence to cause to grow in the wild certain plant species or to release certain fauna into the wild. The Act is enforced by local authorities.

[6] European Commission (1992). Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. European Commission, Brussels.

[7] European Commission (1979). Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds, European Commission, Brussels.

[8] Secretary of State, 2000. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

[9] Secretary of State, 1981. Wildlife and Countryside Act. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

The Environment Act, 2021

The Environment Act 2021 aims to protect and enhance the natural environment. Its main scope includes setting legally binding targets for air and water quality, reducing plastic pollution, improving waste management, and increasing biodiversity. One of the Act's significant provisions is the introduction of "biodiversity net gain," which requires developers to leave habitats in a better condition than before development took place. This will help to improve the UK's biodiversity and ensure that new development does not harm the environment. Additionally, the Act seeks to address climate change by introducing measures to reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency in buildings.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides a new statutory right of access to the countryside and improves upon the rights of way system, providing stronger protection for both wildlife and countryside.

Part III of the Act - Nature Conservation and Wildlife Protection: A number of measures to promote and enhance wildlife conservation are detailed, including improving protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and increasing penalties for deliberate damage to SSSIs. The Act affords statutory protection to Ramsar Sites which are wetlands designated under the International Convention on Wetlands.

National Planning Policy Framework, 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and revised in July 2021. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system and how these are expected to be addressed. The NPPF is a material consideration for the purposes of planning decision-making.

The NPPF places a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The NPPF has an environmental objective to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The presence of a legally protected species is a material consideration for a local authority dealing with planning applications for any development that would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and geological conservation[10], prepared in support of the former PPS9, is still relevant and provides more guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation.

Biodiversity Action Plans

In 1994, the Government produced the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)[11], a national strategy for the conservation of biodiversity. Regional and District/Borough BAPs apply the UK BAP at a local level. The 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' succeeded the UK BAP in July 2012[12]. The UK BAP lists of

[10] *ODPM Circular 06/2005* Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Importance within the Planning System. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7692/147570.pdf

[11] Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1994. Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan. London.

[12] JNCC and Defra (on behalf of the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group). 2012. UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. July 2012. Available from: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189

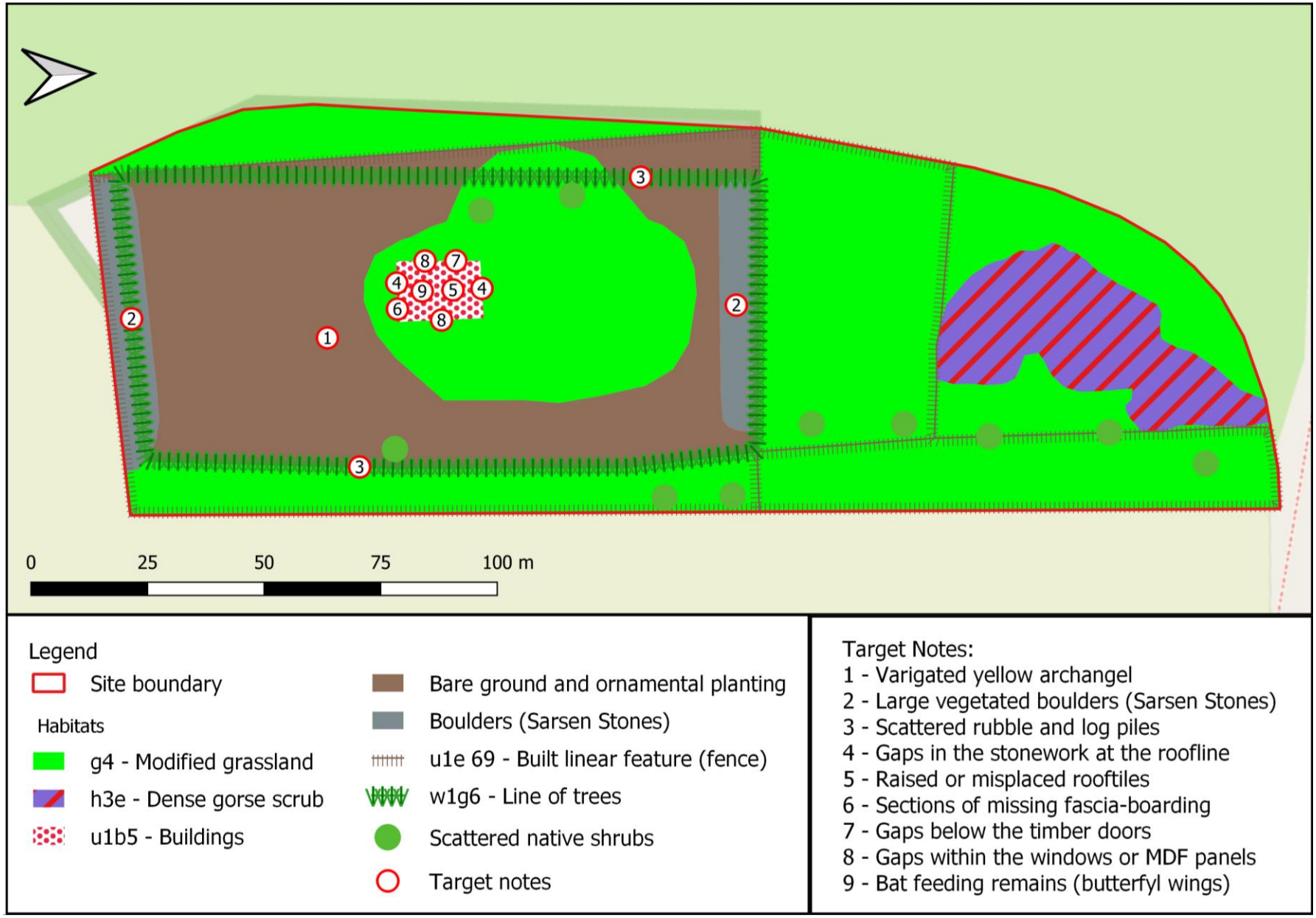
priority species and habitats remain, however, important and valuable reference sources. Notably, they have been used to help draw up statutory lists of priorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, there are 56 habitats of principal importance and 943 species of principal importance.

Species/species group	**Legal protection and policy**
Flora	A number of plant species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (amended). It is an offence to deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy these wild plants. It is also an offence for any purpose to possess, sell or exchange such a plant. In addition, a number of plant species are species of principal importance in England (formerly referred to as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species), LBAP priority species and/or notable species that are a material consideration in planning.
Bats	Bat species in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill bats; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which bats use for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Seven of the 18 species of bats occurring in the UK are species of principal importance in England and many are also included in LBAPs.
Badgers	Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1979. Under this legislation it is illegal to kill, injure or take badgers or to interfere with a badger sett in any way.
Otters	Otters in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill an otter; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb otter; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which an otter uses for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Otter is a species of principal importance in England.
Water voles	Water voles in England and Wales are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a water vole; • Intentionally disturb water vole in their breeding or resting places; and • Deliberately damage, destroy or obstruct of a breeding site or resting place.

	Water vole is a species of principal importance in England.
Dormice	Dormice in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a dormouse; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb dormice; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a dormouse uses for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Dormouse is a species of principal importance in England.
Other mammals	Several other species of mammals, whilst not afforded specific legal protection, are of note and consideration to such species is necessary in respect to planning in accordance with national and often local policy. Such species are typically identified as species of principal importance in England and/or LBAPs. Species of principal importance in England include brown hare and hedgehog.
Birds	All wild birds in England and Wales are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Kill, injure or take any wild bird; • Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and, • Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird. Bird species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act are afforded further protection and it is illegal to disturb such species while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird. A number of bird species are also included as species of principal importance in England and LBAPs.
Reptiles	Smooth snakes and sand lizards in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a smooth snake or sand lizard; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb a smooth snake or sand lizard; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a smooth snake or sand lizard use for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Widespread species of reptile (slow worm, common lizard, grass snake and adder) are protected against killing, injury and sale. Reptile species are also species of principal importance in England and often LBAP species.
Amphibians	Great crested newts and natterjack toads in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended)

	and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a great crested newt or natterjack toad; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt or natterjack toad; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a great crested newt or natterjack toad use for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Great crested newt, pool frog, natterjack toad and common toad are species of principal importance in England. These and other amphibian species are also often included in LBAPs.
Invertebrates	45 species of invertebrate are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Intentional kill, injure or take such species; • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place used by such species; and, • Disturb such species when occupying such a structure or place. A further 24 species are only afforded partial protection (typically only against sale). Stag beetle for instance is only protected against sale. Eight species and their habitats are also afforded further protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended). 398 species of invertebrate are included as species of principal importance in England and such species are often also included within LBAPs.

Annex 2: Habitat Map (April 2023)



Annex 3: Site Photographs (April 2023)

Photograph 1. The house, showing the south and west elevations.



Photograph 2. The house, showing the south and east elevations.



Photograph 3. The house, showing the south elevation with gaps in the stonework at the roofline (Target Note 4) and missing sections of fascia-boarding (Target Note 6).



Photograph 4. The interior of the house, showing the partially collapsed ceiling of the ground floor.



Photograph 5. The interior of the Main House, showing bat feeding remains (butterfly wings) scattered across the floor (Target Note 9).



Photograph 6. View of the south end of the site, facing east, showing the house, modified grassland, bare ground and line of mature trees.



Photograph 7. View of the eastern fringe of the site, showing bare ground beneath the line of trees.



Photograph 8. View of the north end of the site, facing south, showing modified grassland, dense gorse scrub, and the mature line of trees in the background.

