



49-53 Rowden Hill, Chippenham Hospital
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)
For Artel31

12th August 2025

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1. Introduction

1.1 Commission

Ellendale Environmental Limited was commissioned by Artel 31, on behalf of their client, to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for an area of land and buildings at 49, 51 & 53 Rowden Hill, Chippenham Hospital, Chippenham, SN15 2AJ ('the site'). It is proposed to develop the site for housing including the redevelopment of the existing buildings ('the proposed development').

This report has been undertaken taking cognisance of previous surveys at the site, namely:

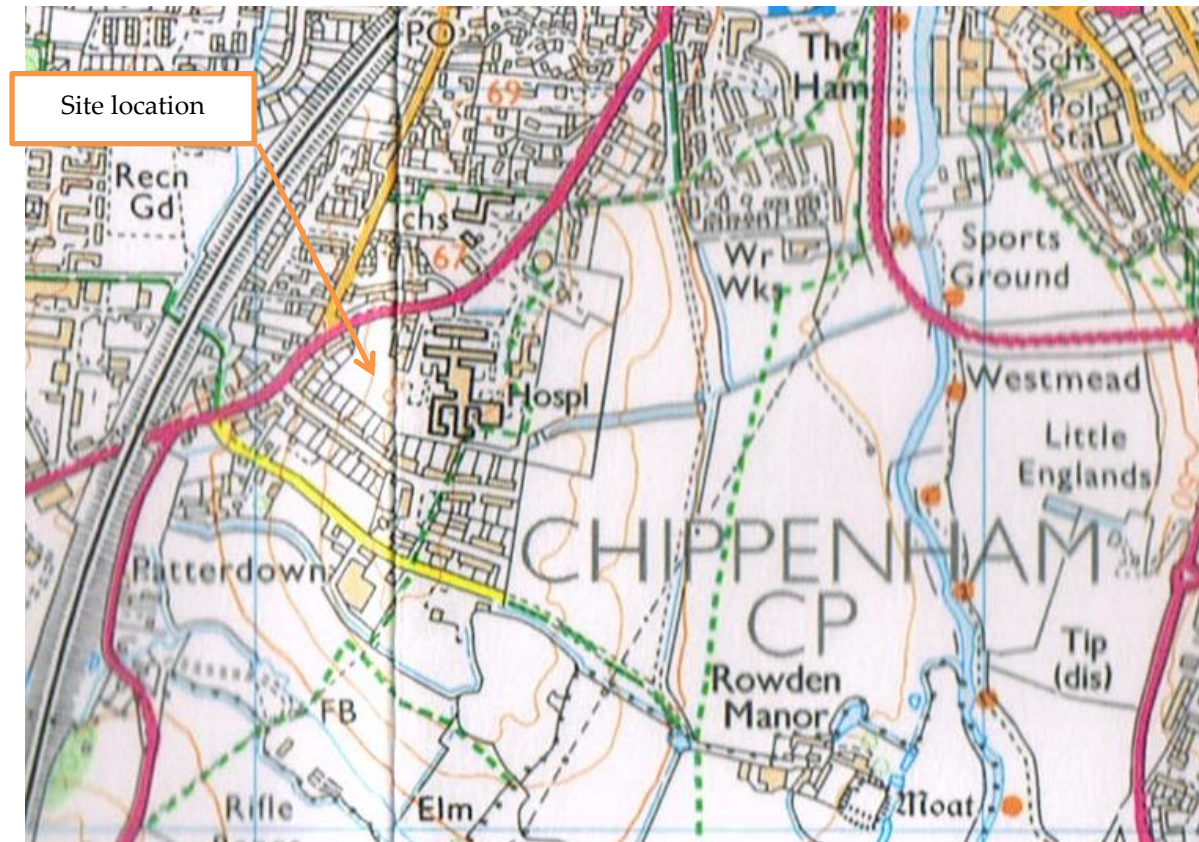
- *Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment, 49-53 Rowden Hill, Chippenham Hospital* – Wildwood Ecology, 2020.

1.2 Site Details

The site is located at Rowden Hill and comprises of the former Chippenham Hospital buildings and associated former amenity land, which is 2.62 acres (1.06 hectares) in size, located at OS grid reference ST 91182 72634.



Figure 1: Site location



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1.3 Survey Objectives

On the basis of the brief provided by the client, Ellendale Environmental conducted an ecological survey of the site and a 50m buffer (where accessible and appropriate) to fulfil the following needs:

- Obtain baseline information on the current habitats and ecological features in and around the site;
- Identify any further specialist surveys that may be required;
- Identify the presence (or potential presence) of any protected species whose disturbance may require consent under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) or the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended); and
- Identify any species or habitats which may require special mitigation during the development of the site.



2. Methodology

2.1 Data Search

Publicly available databases, including MAGIC and the NBN Atlas, were consulted for historical evidence of:

- Statutory land-based designations;
- Non-statutory land-based designations; and
- Protected and notable species.

The data search was conducted within a 2km (5km for bats) radius of the site boundaries.

2.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

A Phase 1 Habitat survey of the site was undertaken, and the habitats present on the site were mapped following the Phase 1 survey methodology (JNCC, 2010), listing the plant species associated with each habitat. This methodology was a Phase 1 habitat survey, whereby all habitats were surveyed and recorded onto a base plan, and any habitats that were considered to be of potential interest to nature conservation were recorded through the use of target notes to annotate a Phase 1 habitat map.

2.3 Preliminary Protected Species Walkover

The site and surrounding areas were examined for signs of protected species. The presence/potential presence of protected or notable species of conservation concern was recorded using target notes, following the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management guidance (CIEEM, 2012).

2.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

An inspection of the buildings was undertaken, looking for evidence of bats, bat roosting sites and possible bat access/egress points.



In examining the building for bats, particular attention was given to any crevice in which bats may roost. These were inspected for bat droppings, bat urine, feeding remains, oil staining from the fur of bats (indication of frequent use of a particular site), and wear of substrates caused by the movement of bats in and out over a long period of time

2.5 Survey Area

The survey covered the entire site and areas within 50m (where accessible and appropriate).

2.6 Survey Limitations

The aim of this survey was not to record every species present on the site, as one survey acts as a snapshot, recording only those species which are present at the time or whose presence can be indicated through the occurrence of field signs, such as feeding remains, droppings or places used for shelter or foraging.

Evidence collected has been used to draw conclusions about the flora and fauna within the boundary of the site and to provide an assessment of their ecological and nature conservation value.

Weather was not a limiting factor to the survey. The prevailing conditions at the time of the survey are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey weather conditions

SURVEY DATE	TEMPERATURE (°C)	WIND SPEED (MPH)	CLOUD COVER / PRECIPITATION
20/07/25	24.4	Min 0.0 Ave. 0.5 Max. 2.7	30% cloud cover, dry and warm with a light breeze.
21/07/25	23.3	Min 0.0 Ave. 1.6 Max. 4.4	20% cloud cover, dry and warm with a light breeze.



2.7 Surveyor

The survey was undertaken by Stewart Parsons, Director and Principal Ecologist of Ellendale Environmental, who is a full member of CIEEM and a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) with over 20 years' professional experience of ecological and bat surveys across the UK.

Stewart holds a Natural England bat survey licence with (Bat Survey Class Licence CL18 (Bat Survey Level 2), Registration number CLS01683), with respect to the Conservation Regulations 1994. The licence is valid for all counties of England, until 31st October 2025. Stewart has over 20 years' professional experience of working with bat species across the UK.



3. Results

3.1 Data Search

A 2km data search for existing designated sites, priority/notable habitats and biological records was undertaken using MAGIC¹ and the NBN Atlas².

Statutory designated sites

There is one statutory designated site found to be within 2km of the site, namely Mortimers Wood Local Nature Reserve which is located 1km to the south-east.

Non-statutory designated sites

The Bristol Avon River County Wildlife Site (CWS) is located approximately 674m to the east of the site.

Protected and notable species

The following terrestrial protected and notable species were identified within 2km of the site boundaries by the data search:

- Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*³ (five records, located 1.8km south-east of the site, most recently recorded in 2022);
- West European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*⁴ (346 records, located 1.3km south-west of the site, most recently recorded in 2024); and

¹ Magic database. <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> Accessed on 07/07/25

² NBN atlas database. [NBN Atlas - UK's largest collection of biodiversity information](https://nbnatlas.org/). Accessed on 07/07/25

³ NBN Trust (2025). *Triturus cristatus* on the NBN Atlas: [Triturus cristatus](https://nbnatlas.org/species/Triturus_cristatus) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].

⁴ NBN Trust (2025). *Erinaceus europaeus* on the NBN Atlas: [Erinaceus europaeus](https://nbnatlas.org/species/Erinaceus_europaeus) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].



- Brown hare *Lepus europaeus*⁵ (one record, located 1.7km west of the site, recorded in 2021).

A further five protected and notable species (excluding bats) were identified within 2km of the site boundaries; however, due to licencing restrictions, the names and locations of these species cannot be included in this report.

The following bat species were identified within 5km of the site boundaries by the data search:

- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*⁶ (53 records, the closest of which is located 4.7km west of the site, most recently recorded in 2024);
- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*⁷ (35 records, the closest of which is located 4.7km west of the site, most recently recorded in 2025);
- Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*⁸ (16 records, the closest of which is located 4.7km west of the site, most recently recorded in 2025);
- Noctule bat *Nyctalus noctule*⁹ (16 records, located 4.7km west of the site, most recently recorded in 2025);
- Serotine bat *Eptesicus serotinus*¹⁰ (12 records, the closest of which is located 4.7km west of the site, most recently recorded in 2024);

⁵ NBN Trust (2025). *Lepus europaeus* on the NBN Atlas: [Lepus europaeus](https://ror.org/00mcxye41) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].

⁶ NBN Trust (2025). *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* on the NBN Atlas: [Pipistrellus pygmaeus](https://ror.org/00mcxye41) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].

⁷ NBN Trust (2025). *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* on the NBN Atlas: [Pipistrellus pipistrellus](https://ror.org/00mcxye41) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].

⁸ NBN Trust (2025). *Myotis daubentonii* on the NBN Atlas: [Myotis daubentonii](https://ror.org/00mcxye41) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].

⁹ NBN Trust (2025). *Nyctalus noctula* on the NBN Atlas: [Nyctalus noctula](https://ror.org/00mcxye41) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].

¹⁰ NBN Trust (2025). *Eptesicus serotinus* on the NBN Atlas: [Eptesicus serotinus](https://ror.org/00mcxye41) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].



- Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*¹¹ (six records, the closest of which is located 4.4km south-west of the site, most recently recorded in 2016); and
- Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*¹² (two records, the closest of which is located 0.5km north-west of the site, most recently recorded in 2013).

An additional two species of bats have been present within 5km of the site; however, due to licencing restrictions, the names and locations of these species cannot be included in this report.

Bird species

Approximately 105 bird species have been recorded within 2km of the site and are shown on the NBN Atlas. None of these species are located within the site boundary.

3.2 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

The site is located at Rowden Hill in Chippenham, Wiltshire and comprises four buildings on the western edge of the former Chippenham Hospital site, with an area of former amenity/garden land and associated planting. To the north of the site there is Rowden Hill with the former hospital to the east. Residential properties are located to the south and west of the site separated by a fence.

There are ten Phase 1 habitat types recorded on the site, including boundary features, namely:

- J.3.6 Building(s);
- J.4 Hardstanding/bare earth;
- J.1.2 Amenity grassland;
- B.6 Poor semi-improved grassland;
- J.3.2 Hedgerow (species-poor);
- A.3.1 Parkland/scattered trees (broad-leaved);

¹¹ NBN Trust (2025). *Rhinolophus hipposideros* on the NBN Atlas: [Rhinolophus hipposideros](https://ror.org/00mcxye41) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].

¹² NBN Trust (2025). *Myotis mystacinus* on the NBN Atlas: [Myotis mystacinus](https://ror.org/00mcxye41) on The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Atlas. <https://ror.org/00mcxye41> [Page visited 07/07/25].



- A.3.1 Parkland/scattered trees (coniferous);
- A.2 Scrub (dense/continuous);
- J.2.4 Fence; and
- J.3.5 Wall.

J.3.6 Building(s)

Three former Chippenham Hospital buildings, namely 49, 51 and 53 Rowden Hill, are located to the north-east of the site. All of the buildings were disused at the time of the survey and are further discussed in Section 3.4.

J.4 Hardstanding/bare earth

An area of hardstanding is located around the eastern side of the buildings, leading from an access on the north-east of the site and providing access along the eastern boundary. Some ruderal vegetation was found to be growing through the edges of the hardstanding, such as buddleia *Buddleia davidii*, ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, pendulous sedge *Carex pendula* and willowherb *Epilobium sp.*

J.1.2 Amenity grassland

A small area of former amenity grassland is located around the building present to the north-east of the site. The grassland did not show any signs of recent management; however, piles of grass cuttings were found, indicating that some management is still being undertaken within the site. Species present here included perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, ragwort and common vetch *Vicia sativa*.



Photography 1: showing a view of the amenity grassland



B.6 Poor semi-improved grassland

A large area of poor semi-improved grassland is present around the western side of the site and dominated the survey area. The grassland is species-poor with cock's-foot grass *Dactylis glomerata*, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, ribwort plantain, common vetch, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., red clover *Trifolium pratense* and white clover found here. At the south-western end of the grassland there are large stands of common nettle, and more tall ruderal species such as broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* was found to be present.

No signs of recent management was found at the time of the survey; however, it is understood that the grassland was previously managed through mowing. Whilst the sward height was tall at the time of the survey, the grassland was found to be species-poor throughout.



Photograph 2: showing a view of the poor semi-improved grassland (looking south)



J.3.2 Hedgerow (species-poor)

A hedgerow is located along the northern boundary of the site which was found to be species-poor and gappy. Species present here included hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, dog-rose *Rosa canina* and bay tree *Laurus nobilis*.

A.3.1 Parkland/scattered trees (broad-leaved)

Scattered broad-leaved trees are located around the site and included ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, white poplar *Populus alba*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, hawthorn, hazel and white oak *Quercus alba*. The trees showed some signs of management with limbs having been removed.

In places, these trees form small wooded areas where the canopies are dense through a lack of recent management.



A.3.1 Parkland/scattered trees (coniferous)

Scattered coniferous trees are located around the site and include Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, leylandii *Cupressus × leylandii* and yew *Taxus baccata*.

Photograph 3: showing a view of the scattered trees within the site



A.2 Scrub (dense/continuous)

Patches of scrub are located around the site where trees have overgrown and include saplings of self-seeded trees and shrubs and some non-native planting along the former amenity areas/access routes. Species here included bramble *Rubus fruticosus* L. agg., dog-rose, hazel, common grape vine *Vitis vinifera*, ivy *Hedera helix*, willowherb, buddleia, Himalayan honeysuckle *Leycesteria Formosa*, cherry laurel and saplings of sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, beech and ash.



Photograph 4: showing a view of scrub within the site



J.2.4 Fence

A wooden fence is located along the northern, western and southern boundaries of the site.

J.3.5 Wall

A wall is located along the north-eastern boundary of the site along the access to the buildings, separating the site from the adjacent hospital grounds.



Photograph 5: showing a view of the wall at the east of the site



3.3 Preliminary Protected Species Walkover

The site and surrounding habitats were examined for signs of protected and notable species, and the following assessment has been made for the potential for these species to be present.

3.3.1 Protected Species

Birds

The hedgerows, scattered trees and scrub habitat provide suitable nesting and foraging for bird species, particularly common passerine species.

Old nests were observed in the trees to the north-east of the site during the survey; however, these were not active at the time of the survey.



Gaps were found in the soffit of Building 51 and old nesting material was noted in these gaps. From the evidence collected at the site this is likely to be associated with wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*.

Photograph 6: showing old nesting material in the soffit of Building 51



Badger

The grassland habitat within the site provides suitable foraging for badger *Meles meles* as well as suitable habitat for sett building along the hedgerows; however, no evidence of badger such as snuffle holes, tracks or digging was found.

The site is isolated with roads and residential properties on all four sides, thus restricting access into and out of the site with no suitable connectivity to more suitable habitat for this species. In addition, the site has been previously heavily managed, further reducing the suitability for this species which is not considered to be present here.



Great crested newt

There are no ponds or waterbodies within the site that could support the breeding stage for great crested newt (GCN); however, the grassland and scrub habitat within the site provides some suitable terrestrial habitat for this species for foraging. Log piles and old grass cuttings could also provide some suitable refugia for GCN; however, no evidence was found at the time of the survey.

The site is isolated with roads and residential properties on all four sides, thus restricting access into and out of the site with no suitable connectivity to more suitable habitat for this species. In addition, the site has been previously heavily managed, further reducing the suitability for this species. The site is considered to be sub-optimal for this species, and they are not anticipated to be present here.

Water vole & otter

There is no habitat present on the site to support water vole *Arvicola amphibius* or otter *Lutra lutra*, and these species are not considered to be present.

Dormouse

The hedgerow along the northern boundary of the site is sub-optimal for dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* and has poor connectivity to other suitable habitat for dormouse that would allow animals to commute between habitats. The hedgerow is gappy in places, with few suitable trees and/or shrubs to support dormouse and this species is therefore not considered to be present.

3.3.2 Notable Species

Common amphibians & reptiles

There are no ponds or waterbodies within the site that could support the breeding stage for common amphibian species; however, the grassland and scrub habitat within the site provides some suitable terrestrial habitat for foraging. Log piles and old grass cuttings could also provide some suitable refugia for common amphibians; however, no evidence was found at the time of the survey.



Dense scrub, grassland, log piles and piles of old grass cuttings provide cover for foraging and commuting reptiles, such as slow worm *Anguis fragilis*; however, no evidence was found of common reptiles under the accessible refugia on the site.

The site is isolated with roads and residential properties on all four sides restricting access into and out of the site with no suitable connectivity to more suitable habitat for common amphibians or reptile species. In addition, the site has been previously heavily managed, thus further reducing the suitability for these species. The site is therefore considered to be sub-optimal for these species, and they are not anticipated to be present here.

West European hedgehog

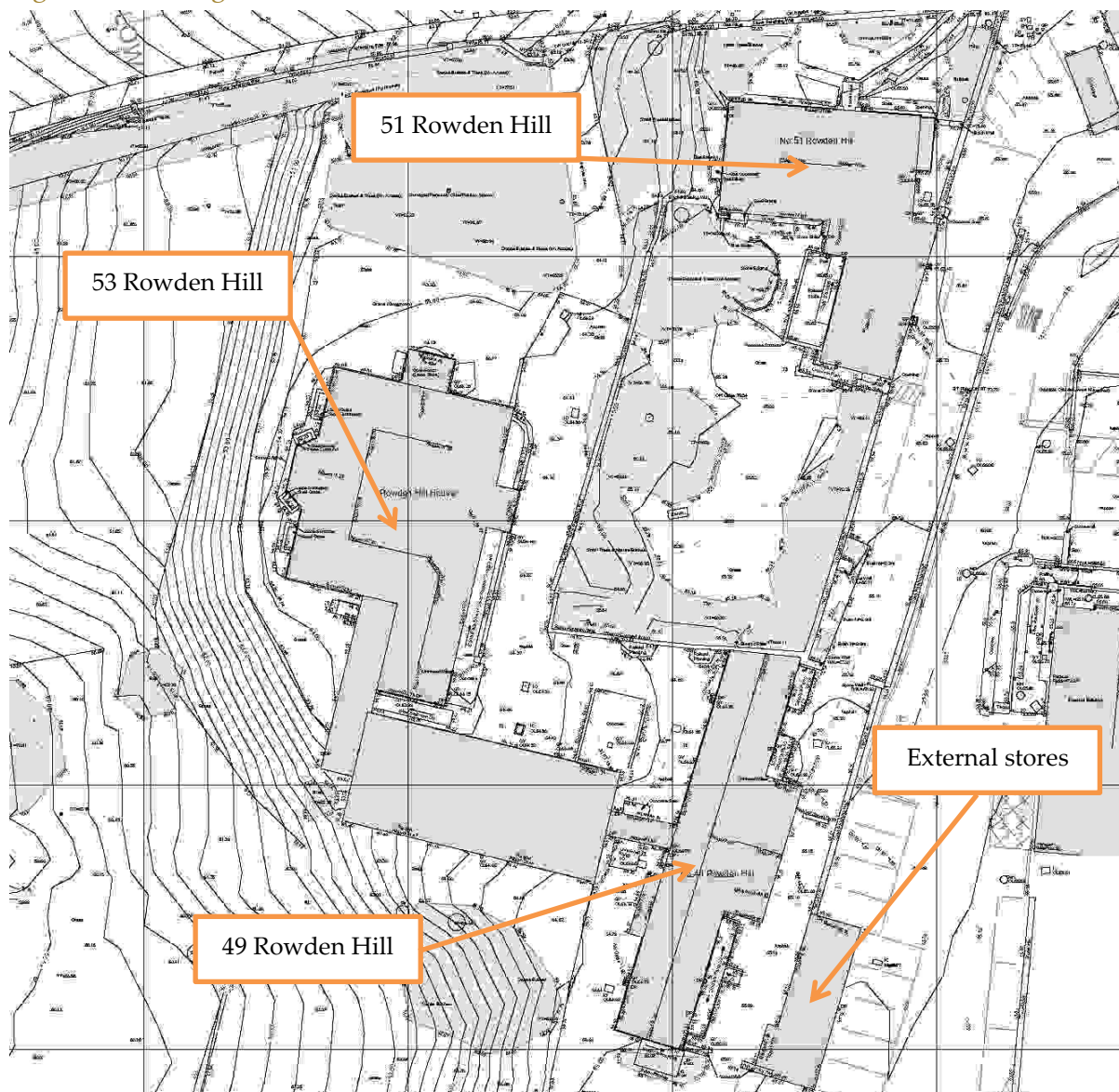
The site provides some suitable foraging, breeding and commuting habitat for hedgehog given the scrub, treelines, grassland and woodland present around the site; however, no evidence was found during the survey. Multiple records of the species were identified via the data search, within the locality of the site; therefore, it is considered likely that hedgehog is present.

3.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

There are three buildings on the site, namely numbers 49, 51 and 53 Rowden Hill, and two external storage sheds which were inspected for signs of bats. It is understood that the buildings have been vacant for a number of years; however, they have been maintained by the NHS trust during this time.



Figure 2: building locations



49 Rowden Hill

This building is located to the south of the site and is a brick building with a pitched roof covered in slates. Externally the walls of the building were found to be in a good condition with few gaps, crevices or missing mortar where bats could gain access for roosting. Some drill holes in the eastern wall of the building were noted and were inspected for evidence of bats; however, no evidence was found to indicate that these are being used for roosting.



Photograph 7: showing a view of 49 Rowden Hill



The windows, doors and soffits were also found to be in a good condition, with no broken panes or open areas which would allow bats to gain access to the internal spaces of the building for roosting.

Externally the roof of the building was found to be in a good condition with no missing, loose or lifted tiles. Some moss was present on the roof, indicating that it may be wet at certain times of the year. No evidence of bat activity was found on the external roof structure of the building.

There are no large roof voids within the building, with much of the upper floors having been converted to usable space; however, small voids were inspected for evidence of bat activity where water tanks were found and small areas where the plaster had been removed from the walls.



Bitumen felt was found to be present and in a good condition with no rips or tears which would allow bats to gain access. Some water damage was noted on the timbers with evidence of damp, thus reducing the suitability for bats which prefer dry and stable conditions for roosting.

No evidence of bat activity such as droppings or feeding remains was found during the inspection of 49 Rowden Hill.

External storage sheds

Two external storage sheds are located to the south-east of the buildings and are wooden structures approximately 30m long by 5m wide and 3m tall.

The sheds are constructed from brick and timber with a shallow pitch roof coved with corrugated metal sheets. Externally the walls of the sheds were found to be in a good condition and no gaps were found. Doors on the buildings were tight-fitting with no gaps around the top which would allow bats into the internal spaces. The roofs were found to be covered with a single layer of corrugated metal sheeting with some insulation found at the southern end of the buildings, some of which had fallen down.

Internally the buildings are used for storage of maintenance equipment for both the former hospital buildings and the amenity grassland areas and are regularly used. No evidence of bat activity such as droppings or feeding remains was found during the survey to indicate that bats are using the sheds for roosting. The sheds are considered to have low thermal properties which will deter bats from roosting and the high level of disturbance makes them less suitable for bats as they will be regularly disturbed when roosting.



Photograph 8: showing a view inside of the storage sheds



51 Rowden Hill

The building is a listed stone-built building located to the north-east of the site and is a two-storey structure. Externally the walls of the building were found to be in a good condition with no gaps, crevices or missing mortar where bats could gain access for roosting. No evidence of roosting bats was found on the external surface of the building such as droppings or staining.

Windows and doors were found to be in a good condition with no gaps where bats could gain access for roosting or gain access to the internal spaces of the building. Some gaps were noted in the soffits of the building where external plaster had fallen off. These gaps were filled with twigs indicating that nesting birds are present. This will make these areas unsuitable for bats, as bird species will deter bats and potentially predate them.



Photograph 9: showing a view of 51 Rowden Hill



The roof is pitched with slate tiles on the outer surface, and no loose, lifted or missing tiles were noted. Externally no evidence of roosting bats was noted on the accessible areas of the roof areas.

Internally a loft space is present and this was searched for evidence of bats. Roof felt was found to be in a good condition throughout the loft space with no rips or tears present that would allow bats to gain access to the internal space. Dense cobwebs were found on roof timbers, and some water damage was noted on the timbers indicating that water ingress occurs within the loft.

No evidence of bat activity such as droppings or feeding remains was found during the search of the loft spaces to indicate that bats are present. Mouse *Mus musculus* droppings were found within the loft spaces; however, these were not in large number.



Photograph 10: showing a view of a loft space within 51 Rowden Hill



53 Rowden Hill

The building is a listed stone-built building located to the north of the site and is a two-storey structure. Some Heras fencing was noted around the building with sealed doors and windows on the ground floor due to some vandalism.

Externally the walls of the building were found to be in a good condition with no gaps, crevices or missing mortar where bats could gain access for roosting, and no evidence of roosting bats was found on the external surface of the building such as droppings or staining. Windows and doors were found to be in a good condition with no gaps where bats could gain access for roosting or gain access to the internal spaces of the building.



Photograph 11: showing a view of 53 Rowden Hill



The roof is pitched with slate tiles on the outer surface, and no loose, lifted or missing tiles were noted. Externally no evidence of roosting bats was noted on the accessible areas of the roof areas.

Internally loft spaces are present and these were searched for evidence of bats. Roof felt was found to be in a good condition throughout the loft spaces with no rips or tears present that would allow bats to gain access to the internal space. Dense cobwebs were found on roof timbers and some water damage was noted on the timbers indicating that water ingress occurs within the loft.

No evidence of bat activity such as droppings or feeding remains was found during the search of the loft spaces to indicate that bats are present. Mouse droppings were found within the loft spaces; however, these were not in large number.



A cellar is present under the building and was closed at the time of the survey with dense vegetation blocking the access. Due to the cellar being locked and the vegetation blocking access it is not considered to be suitable to support roosting bats and no evidence was found on the external surfaces to suggest bats are present here.

Summary of buildings

Whilst the buildings have been vacant for a number of years, they have been well maintained throughout that period and were found to be in a good condition with only a few areas of missing mortar on the soffits of 51 Rowden hill noted externally. The walls, windows and doors are all tight-fitting and in good condition, restricting bat access to the internal spaces; the roof structure was also found to be in good condition. No evidence of roosting bats was found on the external areas of the buildings where these were accessible.

Loft spaces within the buildings were inspected for evidence of bats; however, none such as droppings, feeding remains or live bats was found. Cobwebs were found through the spaces indicating that bats are not present internally and some water ingress was noted with wet joists and rafters which will deter bats.

Externally there is lighting present which will further deter bats which use dark areas for foraging and commuting.

Overall the buildings are assessed as providing negligible roost potential for roosting bats.

Trees

Trees within the site were found to be semi-mature and lacked suitable features for roosting bats such as cracks and crevices where bats could gain access for roosting. The site has been well managed for a number of years and the trees show signs of management with limbs having been removed for health and safety reasons. This has likely removed any suitable bats roosting features. The trees are not considered to be suitable to provide roosting habitat for bats and no further surveys are recommended.



4. Conclusions

4.1 Conclusion

The main area of the site is dominated by poor semi-improved grassland which is present around the western side of the site and dominated the survey area. The grassland is species-poor and had been previously heavily managed, although at the time of the survey the sward height was tall. Three former hospital buildings are present at the north-east of the site, with external storage sheds located to the south-east of the buildings.

The grassland habitat within the site provides suitable foraging for badger as well as suitable habitat for sett building along the hedgerows; however, no evidence of badger such as snuffle holes, tracks or digging was found. The site is isolated with roads and residential properties on all four sides, thus restricting access into and out of the site with no suitable connectivity to more suitable habitat for this species. In addition, the site has been previously heavily managed, further reducing the suitability for this species which is not considered to be present here.

The hedgerow, scattered trees and scrub habitat provide suitable nesting and foraging for birds and old nests were observed during the survey; however, these were not active. In addition, nests were found in the soffits of 51 Rowden Hill and are most likely wood pigeon.

There are no ponds or waterbodies within the site that could support the breeding stage for amphibian species, including GCN; however, the grassland and scrub habitat within the site provides some suitable terrestrial habitat for this species for foraging. Log piles and old grass cuttings could also provide some suitable refugia for GCN; however, no evidence was found at the time of the survey.

Grassland, log piles and old grass cuttings could also provide some suitable refugia for common reptile species such as slow worm; however, no evidence of reptile species was found at the time of the survey.



The site is isolated with roads and residential properties on all four sides restricting access into and out of the site with no suitable connectivity to more suitable habitat for common amphibians or reptile species. In addition, the site has been previously heavily managed, thus further reducing the suitability for these species. The site is therefore considered to be sub-optimal for these species, and they are not anticipated to be present here.

Whilst the buildings have been vacant for a number of years, they have been well maintained throughout that period and were found to be in a good condition with only a few areas of missing mortar on the soffits of 51 Rowden hill noted externally. The walls, windows and doors are all tight-fitting and in good condition, restricting bat access to the internal spaces and the roof structures were found to be in good condition. No evidence of roosting bats was found on the external areas of the buildings where these were accessible.

Loft spaces within the buildings were inspected for evidence of bats; however, none such as droppings, feeding remains or live bats was found. Cobwebs were found through the spaces indicating that bats are not present internally and some water ingress was noted with wet joists and rafters which will deter bats. Externally there is lighting present which will further deter bats which use dark areas for foraging and commuting. Overall the buildings are assessed as providing negligible potential for roosting bats.

The site is assessed as providing low suitability to support protected species and no evidence of protected species was found during the survey.

Recommendations have been made for modest post-construction ecological enhancements at the site that are proportionate with the low level of environmental impact from the proposed development.



4.2 Mitigation

General

Site personnel should be made aware of protected species and if any are recorded on site, all works should stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted.

Nesting birds

Should any vegetation of the site require removing, this should be undertaken out with the breeding bird season (March – August, inclusive), as all nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

If works are undertaken within this period, a nesting bird survey would be required no more than 24 hours prior to the works. If nesting birds were found, these areas of the site would need to be protected from disturbance until the young have fledged naturally.

Bats

Given the findings of the survey, it is very unlikely that bats are roosting in the buildings. Notwithstanding this, it is advised that precautionary working methods are undertaken during works to the buildings, including:

- Site personnel will be made aware of the potential presence of bats through a toolbox talk;
- If a bat is found, or the presence of bats is suspected, all work must stop immediately, and a licensed bat worker must be contacted for advice;
- Bats must not be handled under any circumstances; and
- An ecologist will assess a potential roost space (if identified/found) and inform Natural England of the proposed actions to be undertaken.



4.3 Suggested Biodiversity Enhancements

The following recommendations are made for modest post-construction ecological enhancements at the site which are proportionate with the low level of environmental impact from the proposed development:

- Bird nesting boxes (both small-hole and open-fronted) should be placed within the site to create nesting opportunities for small bird species;
- Bat boxes should be placed on or around the site boundaries or incorporated within the buildings, if possible, to create roosting opportunities for bat species; and
- Invertebrate features (e.g. hibernacula, bee boxes and mounds) should be placed within suitable locations within the site to create further opportunities for species.

It is important that, where possible, opportunities to create new ecological features or enhance existing ones are fully explored. The following measures would benefit the development by introducing ecological enhancements and should be encouraged:

- Planting and retention of native shrubs in appropriate areas of the site (woodland, scrub and treelines) will continue to bolster the existing habitat and provide connectivity between existing habitats. Species beneficial to wildlife include hawthorn, hazel, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and cherry *Prunus avium*;
- Climbers can be incorporated within the woodland edges once shrubs have been established. They will provide resources for pollinators and birds, as well as shelter for numerous species. Species beneficial to wildlife include native honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, dog rose and bittersweet *Solanum dulcamara*; and
- The creation of new ponds with native planting will provide resources for amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates.

It is recommended that an ecologist contributes to any detailed landscape designs, planting lists and post-construction management to ensure a biodiversity net gain for the site.



5. Target Notes

5.1 Botanical Target Notes (TN)

TN1 – An area of woodland which has overgrown at the entrance to the site. Species here are mainly broad-leaved with occasional coniferous trees, namely Scot's pine.

TN2 – Former hospital building.

TN3 – An area of former amenity grassland which had a tall sward height at the time of the survey.

TN4 – An area of introduced shrub surrounding the former amenity grassland habitat. This habitat was noted to be overgrown with a lack of recent management.

TN5 – Hardstanding along the site access.

TN6 – Storage sheds along the eastern site boundary.

TN7 – Former hospital building.

TN8 – Former hospital building.

TN9 – Species-poor hedgerow along the roadside boundary to the north of the site.

TN10 – An area of poor semi-improved grassland which is species-poor. Scattered trees are present within the former landscaped area.

TN11 – An area of poor semi-improved grassland which is species-poor with occasional ruderal species. Scattered trees are present within the former landscaped area.

5.2 Animal Target Notes (AN)

AN1 – Woodland habitat provides cover for nesting and foraging birds. Old nests were identified in the trees present.

AN2 – Dense scrub may provide habitat for nesting and foraging bird species.



AN3 – Dense scrub may provide habitat for nesting and foraging bird species.

AN4 – Overgrown introduced shrub provides habitat for nesting and foraging birds.

AN5 – Woodland habitat provides cover for nesting and foraging birds.

AN6 – The hedgerow is gappy in places and provides some foraging for birds; however, it is of poor quality for nesting birds.

AN7 – Scattered trees provide habitat for nesting and foraging birds; however, no nests were identified at the time of the survey.

AN8 – Scattered trees provide habitat for nesting and foraging birds; however, no nests were identified at the time of the survey.

AN9 – Scattered trees provide habitat for nesting and foraging birds; however, no nests were identified at the time of the survey.

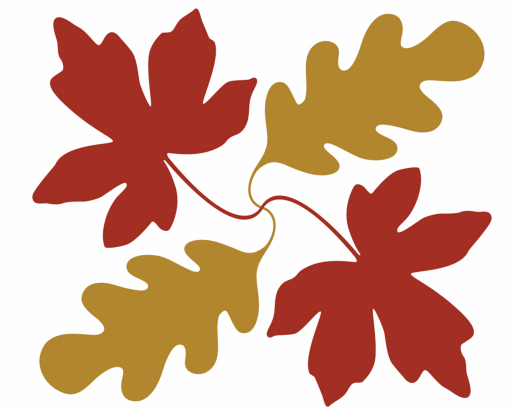
AN10 – Scattered trees provide habitat for nesting and foraging birds; however, no nests were identified at the time of the survey.

AN11 – Woodland habitat provides cover for nesting and foraging birds. Some piles of grass cuttings were found which may provide habitat for common amphibians and reptiles, although no evidence of either species was found.

AN12 – Woodland habitat provides cover for nesting and foraging birds. Some piles of grass cuttings were found which may provide habitat for common amphibians and reptiles, although no evidence of either species was found.



6. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Map



ELLENDALE
ENVIRONMENTAL

Drawing Title;
Rowden Hill, Chippenham
Extended Phase 1 Map

Client;
Artel31

Date;
11/08/25

Drawn By;
SP

Project Number;
EEL997

Version Number;
v1.0

Target Note

● TN

Animal Note

● AN

Woodland and Scrub

● Parkland/Scattered Tree (Broad-leaved)
● Parkland/Scattered Tree (Conifer)

Woodland (Broad-leaved)

Scrub (Dense and Continuous)

Miscellaneous

— Wall
+ Fence
— Hedgerow (Species-poor)

Hard Standing

Building/Structure

A Amenity Grassland

Introduced Shrub

Grassland

SI Poor Semi-Improved Grassland

Neutral Grassland

