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PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

FIELD HOUSE, CLYFFE PYPARD, WILTSHIRE

By

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INTRODUCTION

Stark Ecology Ltd was asked by David Gagen to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of Field House, Clyffe Pypard, where an extension and other renovations are proposed.

The site is located at OS Grid Reference SU073769, in the village of Clyffe Pypard which is c.5km to the south of Royal Wootton Bassett. It is surrounded by mixed farmland with excellent hedgerow and woodland connectivity.

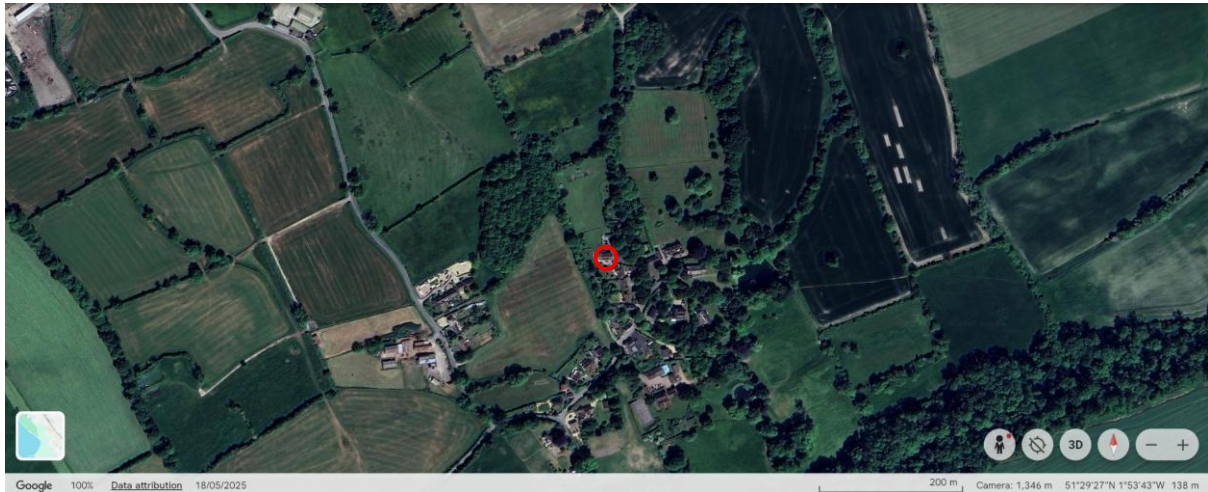


Fig 1: Field House is surrounded by mixed farmland which has excellent connectivity to woodland and hedgerow networks.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out by Georgie Starkie BSc (Hons) MSc MRSB (Natural England Class 2 Bat Licence Number 2015-13123-CLS-CLS) on 16th July 2025, when the weather was clear and dry with a light wind. The temperature was approximately 25°C.

METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was reviewed for records of designated sites within 2km of the survey area and for records of licences granted by Natural England for work affecting European Protected Species within 2km.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site was surveyed according to the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), in which the habitats present on site are classified (according to The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0) and any signs of protected or notable species were also recorded:

Bats: The house was assessed for its potential to support roosting bats. The habitats on site were assessed for their potential to provide commuting and foraging opportunities for bats.

Badgers: Evidence of badgers was sought, in particular badger setts which can be recognised by their characteristic size and shape, with large spoil heaps outside entrances. Other signs such as latrines (small pits in which badgers deposit their faeces), pathways through vegetation, hairs adhering to vegetation or sett entrances and snuffle holes indicating foraging were also noted.

Great crested newts: The habitats on and surrounding the site were assessed for their suitability to support great crested newts.

Reptiles: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support reptile species.

Nesting birds: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support nesting birds.

Limitations

Surveys provide a brief snapshot of the site at the time the work was carried out and while every step is taken to ensure that the results of the survey are accurate, features of ecological value can change and therefore this report is only valid for 12 months.

RESULTS

Desk Study

Habitats

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 2km of Field House.

Natural England has granted no licences for work affecting European Protected Species at locations within 2km of Clyffe Pypard.

Surveys carried out by Stark Ecology Ltd and records received from Wiltshire Bat Group have identified a number of bat roosts in buildings within c.100m of Field House:

- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros* maternity roost
- Brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* maternity roost
- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* resting place
- Soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus* resting place
- Serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* resting place
- Natterer's *Myotis nattereri* resting place

Habitats

The habitats that will be affected by the proposals to extend and renovate Field House are:

- Modified grassland (amenity lawn);
- Introduced shrubs
- Bare ground/hard standing; and
- Buildings.

Modified Grassland

Field House will be extended onto an area of the garden that is tightly mown amenity lawn.



Fig 2: Field House will be extended onto an area of close-mown amenity lawn.

This photo taken facing east on 16th July 2025.

Introduced Shrubs

There are areas of introduced amenity shrubs which surround the house and some will need to be removed to make way for the new extension.



Fig 3: Small areas of introduced shrubs will be removed when the property is extended.

This photo taken 16th July 2025.

Bare Ground/Hard Standing

The extension will also affect an area of patio to the west of the house.



Fig 4: An area of patio to the west of the house will be affected by the extension.

This photo taken facing north on 16th July 2025.

Building

Field House is a rendered two-storey block building which has a clay tile roof. The roof tiles are all tight fitting with none noted to be lifted, slipped, damaged or missing in any area of the property. The ridge is also well sealed in all areas with no missing mortar, cracks, crevices or other gaps noted. The mortar at the roof verges is also in good condition with no gaps identified.



Fig 5: The roof and walls of Field House support no gaps or crevices.

This photo taken from the southwest on 16th July 2025.

The roof of the house is lined with bitumen felt and the loft space, which is boarded in most areas, is insulated with fibreglass material. The loft space is used for storage and is accessed regularly.



Fig 6: The loft space of Field House is boarded and used for storage. The roof is lined with bitumen roofing felt.

This photo taken 16th July 2025.

At the eastern end of the house there is an area of the property which does not have a separate loft space. In this part of the property there is a vaulted ceiling and a mezzanine bedroom.

Bats

Roosting

Externally the house was noted to be well sealed in all areas:

- Roof and ridge tiles are tight fitting with no lifts, missing mortar or other areas which could provide shelter for roosting bats.
- The walls of the house are rendered and there are no crevices in the render which could provide access for bats to cavities or crevices.

Internally no evidence of bats was found in the loft space of the house, including on the floor, wall, roof timbers or stored items.

Commuting and Foraging

The garden of the property supports suitable habitat for bats to use when commuting and foraging through the landscape. The site is well connected to high quality habitat for bats commuting and foraging, including pastoral farmland, woodland and there are good hedgerow networks. Furthermore, there are known to be a number of bat roosts in close proximity to the site, including a lesser horseshoe maternity roost and, as such, the site is likely to be used by a range of bat species when commuting and foraging through the wider landscape.

Badgers

No sett entrances were found within the site boundaries and no other evidence of badgers (eg. latrines, snuffles holes or badger hairs caught on vegetation or fences) were noted. The site supports suitable habitat for badgers to use when commuting and foraging through the landscape and is well connected to other areas of habitat which are suitable for this purpose.

Great Crested Newt

There is a network of ponds in the landscape surrounding Field House, including a fishpond in the northwest corner of the garden (c.80m from the proposed extension). Great crested newts *Triturus cristata* are known to be present in the landscape surrounding Clyffe Pypard but the fishpond in the garden of the property is considered unlikely to support them as it has quite a large fish population and supports limited aquatic vegetation.



Fig 7: The fishpond in the garden of Field House.

This photo taken 16th July 2025.

Two other ponds were identified within 500m of Field House, one is c.190m away and the other c.270m from the site. Neither of these ponds has been assessed for their potential to support great crested newts when breeding as the Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment Tool confirms that an area of construction that is less than 0.1Ha (the footprint of the new extension is c.0.03Ha) and that is 100-250m from a breeding pond is unlikely to result in an offence under the relevant legislation:

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.01
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.01
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

Reptiles

The garden of Field House provides suitable habitat for common reptile species and grass snake *Natrix helvetica* have been recorded around the fishpond in the northwest corner of the site.

Nesting Birds

The amenity shrubs surrounding the house provide suitable habitat for nesting birds between March and August (inclusive).

There was no evidence of birds nesting in or on Field House and as the roof of the house is so well sealed it is considered unsuitable for building nesting species such as house sparrow *Passer domesticus*.

Other Species

Hedgehog

The site is suitable for hedgehogs, which could commute and forage through the garden of the property.

LEGISLATION

Nesting Birds

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 protects bird species in the UK and makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Other offences under this legislation relate to taking and possessing specimens or the eggs of wild birds.

Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are a Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) and should, as such, be conserved through the planning process. Hedgehogs would also fall under the provisions of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996, which prevents certain cruel acts against wild mammals.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Habitats

The on-site habitats are all common garden habitats which have limited intrinsic ecological value but provide some habitat for protected species, as set out below.

This is a Householder planning application so is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements.

Bats

Roosting

Field House is considered to have Negligible potential to support roosting bats. The roof materials are tight fitting in all areas and the walls and other areas of the property are similarly well sealed. No potential access points to roost features were noted and when inspected internally no evidence of bats was found in any part of the loft space.

Roosting bats are not considered to be a constraint to the proposals to extend Field House and no further surveys for them are required.

Commuting and Foraging

The site is surrounded by habitat which is of value to bats when commuting and foraging and is connected to other areas of suitable habitat for this purpose in the surroundings. A number of bat roosts, including a lesser horseshoe maternity roost, are present within 100m of the property and it is assumed that bats associated with these roosts will commute and forage over the garden of Field House when moving through the surrounding landscape.

The proposals for the site will result in the loss of a small area of amenity shrub planting and the loss of an area of tightly mown lawn, but the wider site will remain unaffected by the proposed extension and so will retain connectivity for bats commuting and foraging through the wider landscape.

Lighting of the new extension is to be kept to a minimum but where external lighting is required for the purposes of safety or security, this will comply with ILP Guidance Note 8. Where required, external lighting will be installed to the following specification:

- LED luminaires with a warm white (<2700 kelvin) spectrum
- Peak wavelength higher than 550nm

- External lighting will use motion sensors and be set to a short timer (c.1 minute)
- Luminaires with an upward light ration of 0% will be used.

Badgers and Hedgehogs

No badger setts or other evidence of badgers such as snuffle holes, latrines or pathways was found. However, the site supports suitable habitat for badgers and hedgehog to use when commuting and foraging through the landscape. The following steps should be taken to avoid accidental harm to animals during development works:

- Any trenches that have to be left open overnight must be adapted so that any animal that falls into it is able to escape, either by leaving a gradient at one end, or placing a structure (such as a plank of wood) in the trench to allow animals to climb out;
- Drainage or other pipework should be sealed at both ends overnight; and
- Anything that may present a fire or other hazard (eg. stored chemicals) should be kept securely locked and made inaccessible to wild animals moving around the site at night.

Reptiles

The area of the garden of Field House which will be affected by the proposed extension has limited suitability for reptiles as it is predominantly an area of tightly mown lawn. However, as reptiles have been noted in the garden, the following precautionary working methods should be adopted when carrying out initial site clearance.

Precautionary Working Methods

October – March (Inclusive)

The base of amenity shrubs are suitable for reptiles to use over the winter hibernation period. Where any shrub removal is required, clearance of the roots of the vegetation must be carried out outside the winter hibernation period in order to avoid harm or disturbance. These areas of habitat are also suitable for hedgehogs to use for shelter over the winter months and so steps taken to protect reptiles will also protect hedgehogs from harm.

Nesting Birds

The amenity shrubs are suitable for use by nesting birds so, given the protection afforded to all breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young it is strongly recommended that any removal of, or disturbance to, vegetation that offers potential nesting habitat for breeding birds, should be undertaken between October and February, inclusive, outside of the main bird breeding season (as noted above, the roots should be removed outside the hibernation period).

During this period the vegetation should be cut down to ground level, using hand-held mechanised tools, and the arisings removed from the site. Should this seasonal constraint prove not to be practicable, then suitable surveys for active nests should be undertaken of any vegetation which is to be cleared during the nesting bird season (March to August, inclusive). These surveys should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to the start of any works. If any active nest or nest under construction is found, then a buffer zone of at least 5m (with distance dependent upon species and location) should be created around the nest and maintained until all chicks have fledged. Once the fledglings are no longer dependent upon the nest, works can then re-commence.

It should be noted that significant delays can result to works being undertaken during the breeding bird season and, as such, it is strongly recommended that vegetation clearance works, where possible, are completed during the winter months.

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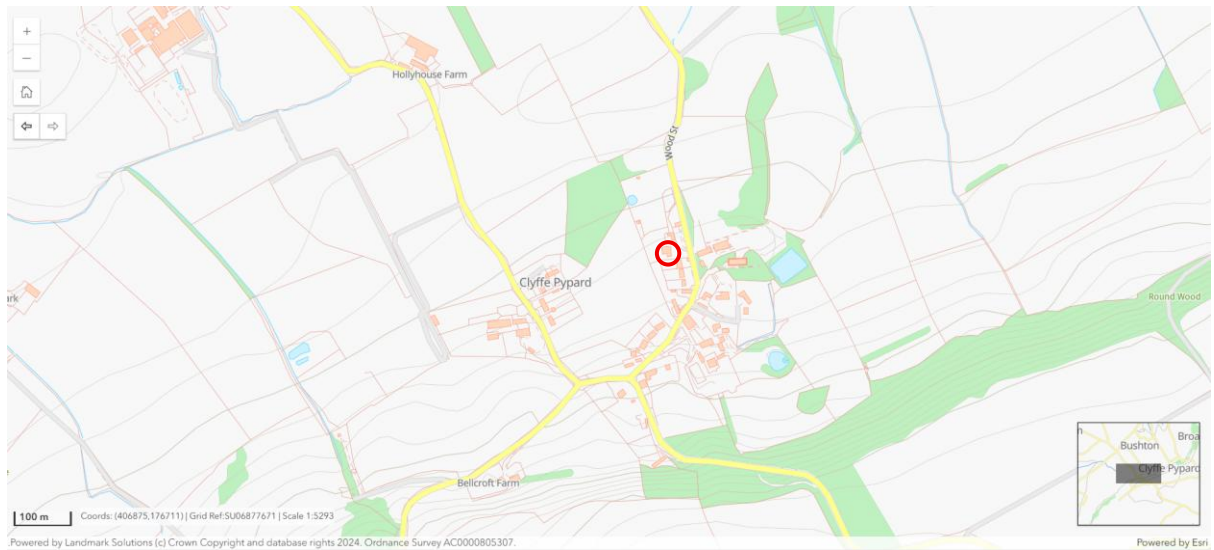
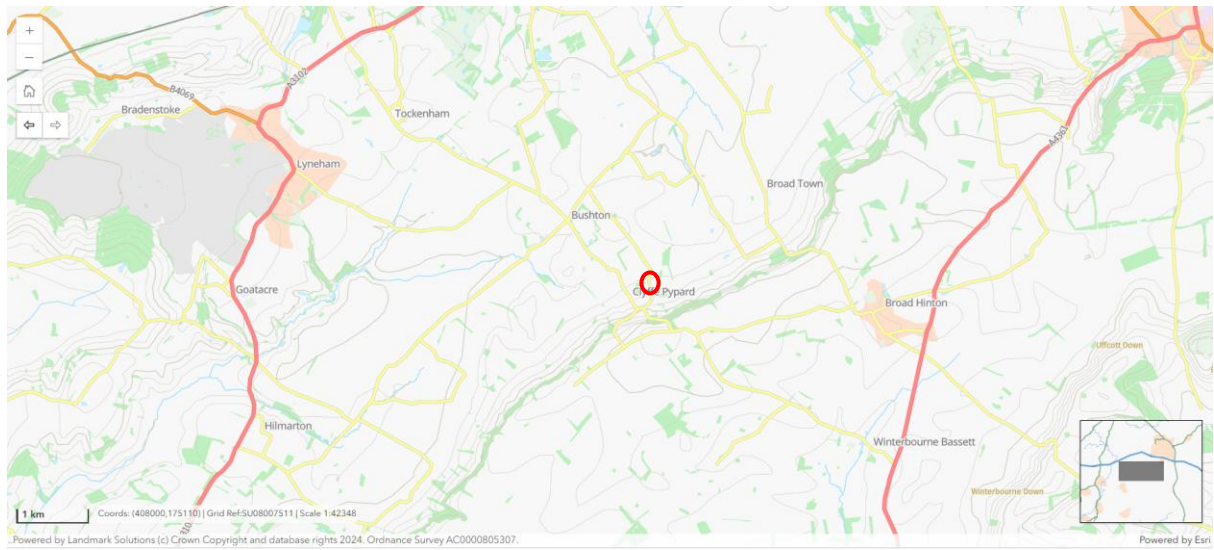
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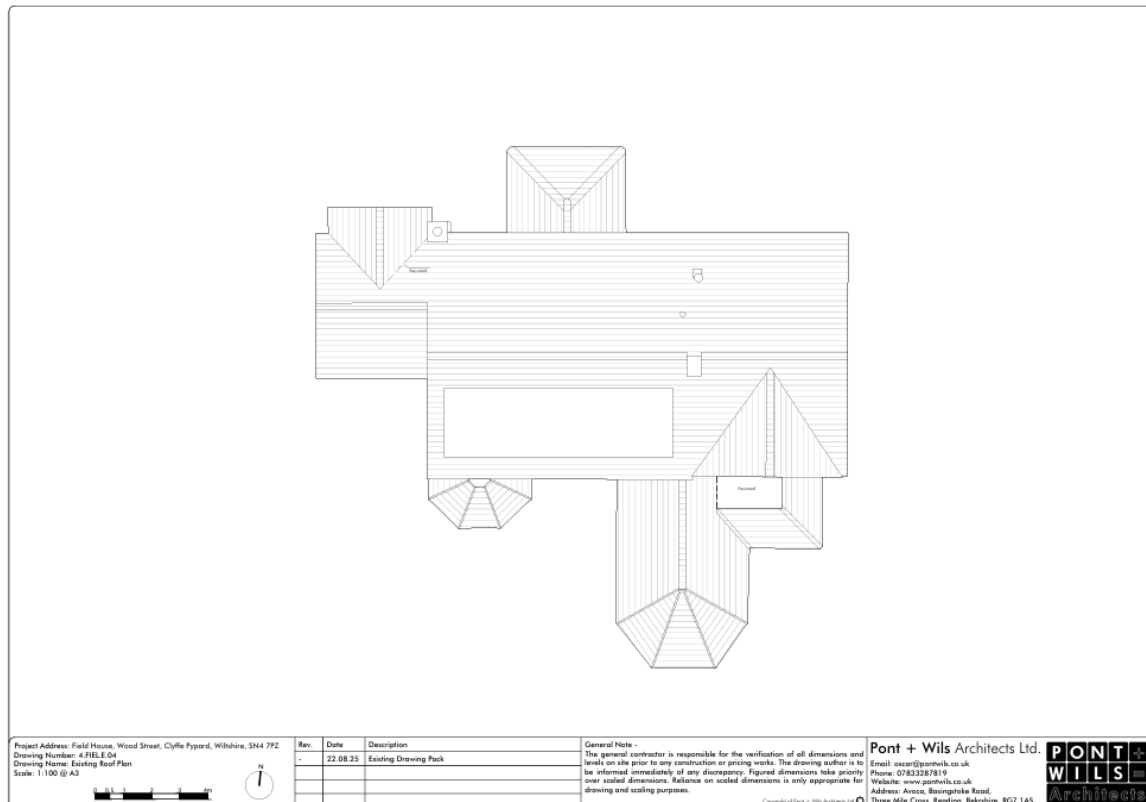
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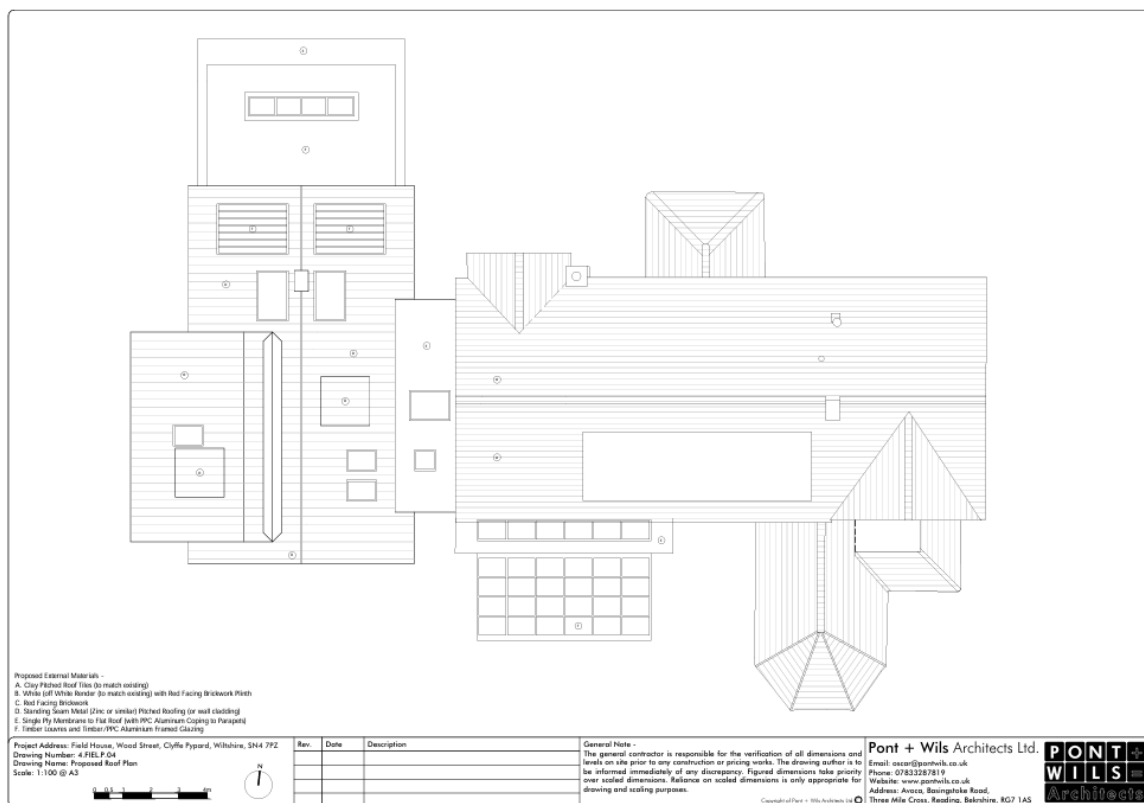
APPENDIX 1: SITE MAPS AND PLANS



Existing Roof Plan



Proposed Roof Plan



Existing Southern Elevation



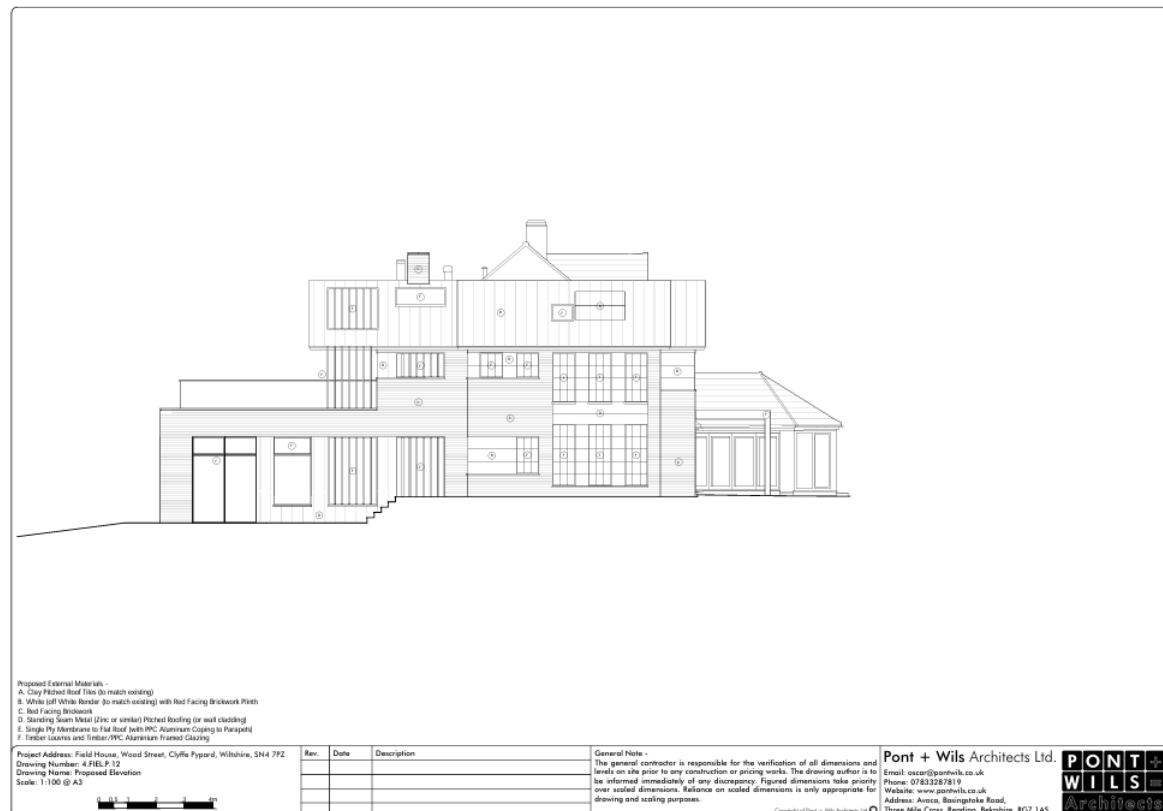
Proposed Southern Elevation



Existing Western Elevation



Proposed Western Elevation



Existing Northern Elevation



Proposed Northern Elevation

