

Ecological Impact Assessment

Fives Court Mere

October 2024

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

Unit 1, Brassmill Lane Enterprise Centre | Bath | BA1 3JN

01225444114 | info@ethosep.co.uk

www.ethosep.co.uk



Report Produced for Wiltshire Council

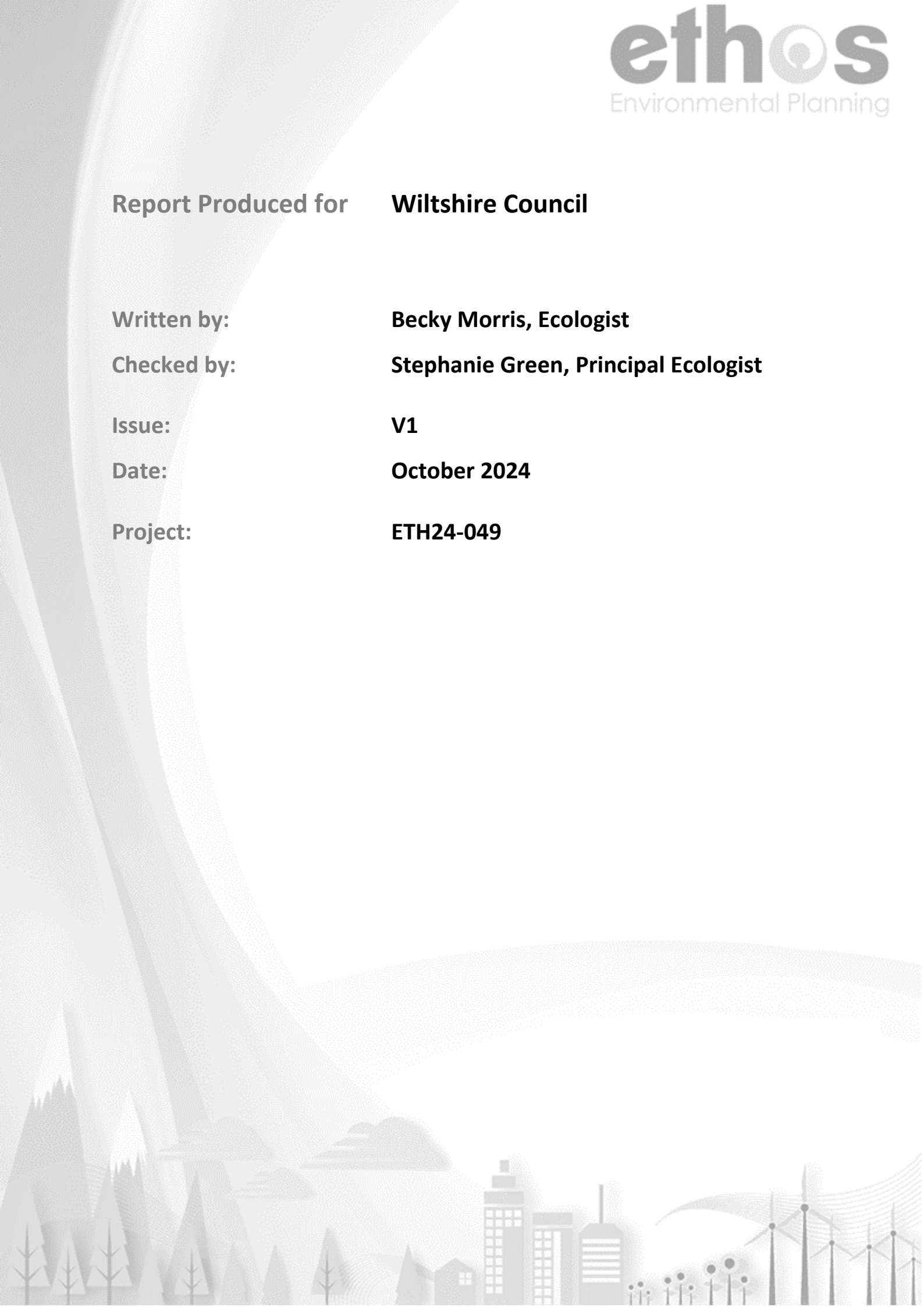
Written by: Becky Morris, Ecologist

Checked by: Stephanie Green, Principal Ecologist

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SUMMARY

Purpose of the Report	This Report has been produced by Ethos Environmental Planning on behalf of Wiltshire Council. It provides an assessment of the likely ecological effects associated with the proposed residential development of an area of land known as 'Fives Court, Mere'.
Description of the scheme	The development proposals for the site include the extension and refurbishment of the former Fives Court care home in Mere, Wiltshire, to provide a housing scheme for 20 independent living apartments.
Methodology	A desk study and UK Habitat Classification survey were undertaken for the site in March 2024. Detailed surveys for bats were undertaken in 2024. This was an update to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by Ethos in 2022.
Baseline Ecological Conditions	The site comprises 0.34 hectares and includes vegetated garden with grassland, introduced shrub, vegetated garden, several trees, and an assisted living building with associated garage and access. The structure inspection assessed the two buildings (B1 and B2) to contain moderate potential for bats. The bat emergence surveys identified five single common pipistrelle bat day roosts within the main structure and garage structure under barge boards and an alarm box. These roosts are individual roosts with a single bat was found in all but one of the five locations. One roost under a barge board had two common pipistrelle bats.
Key impacts and mitigation	The development layout has been designed to retain, protect and enhance the most valuable ecological features, namely the boundary hedgerows and trees. Mitigation measures are described to ensure compliance with protected species legislation for hedgehog, bats, birds and great crested newt (GCN), details of which will be provided within a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP). A low conservation status bat licence will be required to allow the works to proceed, and compensation roosts will be required in the final structure.
Conclusion	Assuming the implementation of effective mitigation measures, as set out in this report, no significant adverse ecological effects are predicted. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with relevant national and local planning policies in relation to nature conservation and relevant wildlife legislation.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) report has been prepared by Ethos Environmental Planning (Ethos) on behalf of Wiltshire Council. The EclA was written by Becky Morris Ecologist, and reviewed by Stephanie Green MSc BSc (Hons), Principal Ecologist at Ethos. The details and experience of the authors and field survey team are provided in Section 3.14.
- 1.2 The report provides the results of an EclA in relation to the proposed development of Fives Court Mere (Central Grid Reference ST 81292 32289), hereafter referred to as 'the site' and shown in Figure 1. The site is located in the town of Mere, Wiltshire.
- 1.3 The site comprises 0.34 hectares and includes vegetated garden with grassland, introduced shrub, vegetated garden, several trees, and an assisted living building with associated garage and access. The wider environment consists of a small, sub-urban town and agricultural land with interconnecting hedgerows.



Figure 1 Site location

- 1.4 The site is proposed for the extension and refurbishment of the former Fives Court care home in Mere, Wiltshire to provide a housing scheme for 20 independent living apartments and associated facilities.
- 1.5 The aims of this EclA report are to:

- provide an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on ecological features on site;
- identify the measures required to mitigate impacts on site biodiversity;
- identify opportunities to deliver ecological enhancements and measurable gains for biodiversity as part of the development proposals; and
- to enable the Local Planning Authority to assess whether the proposals comply with relevant planning policy or legislation.

1.6 This report has been produced following the approach set out in CIEEM's 'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' (CIEEM, 2017).

2 POLICY AND LEGISLATION

2.1 National Policy

- 2.1.1 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** sets out national planning policy, including policies of relevance to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policies of relevance to the proposed development (parts of paragraphs 180, 185, 186 and 191) have been summarised below:

Para 180: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles, notably:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.*

Para 185: To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

Para 186: if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Para 191: c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

2.2 Local Policy

- 2.2.1 Wiltshire Council's Core Strategy (2015) contains the following policies related to biodiversity and development:

Core Policy 50

- 2.2.2 **Biodiversity and Geodiversity Protection:** Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term.

2.2.2 *Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.*

2.2.3 *All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.*

Biodiversity Enhancement

2.2.4 *All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:*

- 1) cannot reasonably be avoided*
- 2) are reduced as far as possible*
- 3) are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest, and*
- 4) where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements.*

2.2.5 *Development proposals affecting local sites must make a reasonable contribution to their favourable management in the long-term*

Wiltshire Local Plan 2026 (Under Consultation)

2.2.3 Wiltshire Council is reviewing the Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted in January 2015 (to be recast as the Wiltshire Local Plan), which identifies land for development for the period to 2026.

2.3 Relevant Legislation

2.3.1 The following pieces of legislation have been considered within this assessment with an explanation of their relevance provided.

Table 1 Relevant legislation

Legislation	Relevance
The Habitats Directive (together with the Birds Directive) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two pillars: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. All in all, the Directive protects over 1,000 animals and plant species and over 200 "habitat types" (e.g. special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance. The Habitats Directive	Presence of roosting, foraging and commuting bats on site. Potential presence of great crested newt (GCN) on site.

Legislation	Relevance
and parts of the Birds Directive are transposed into legislation by The Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended) .	
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which provides legislative protection for certain species. The Act also prohibits the spread of invasive plant species, as well as providing the mechanism for the designation and protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;	Potential for nesting birds on site.
The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the NERC act) places a duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities, to consider biodiversity in their work. Local planning authorities are to ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity on a site, no net loss in habitat connectivity and aims to enhance biodiversity.	Potential presence of hedgehog on site. Enhancements for biodiversity

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of Assessment

3.1.1 This assessment has been undertaken following the approach set out in the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' (CIEEM, 2018) (Version 1.2 updated April 2022). The assessment has considered 'Important Ecological Features' that are present within the 'Zone of Influence' of the project. Important Ecological Features for this project comprise¹:

- Designated nature conservation sites;
- Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England;
- Legally protected species; and
- Red Listed or rare species (based on Red Data Book lists, Birds of Conservation Concern and species considered to be nationally rare / scarce).

3.1.2 The Zone of Influence (Zoi) is the area over which the project could have an influence on ecological features. The Zoi is likely to vary for different features. However, in general terms the Zoi for this development proposal is considered to comprise the land within the red line boundary as well as immediate adjacent habitat features. It also includes designated nature conservation sites in the surrounding area.

3.1.3 The scope of the assessment was informed by an ecological walkover and a desktop assessment undertaken in March 2024. The purpose of this was to identify the habitats on site, their potential for protected species and to establish the scope of surveys that would be required to inform a future planning application at the site.

3.1.4 The overall assessment has been informed by guidelines provided in CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing.

3.2 Background Data Search

3.2.1 A background data search was received from Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre on 15th March 2024. The search area included records of non-statutory designated sites and protected and notable species within 1km of the proposed development site.

3.2.2 An additional search for statutory designated sites within 1km of the development site and granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences within 1km of the site boundary was undertaken using publicly available information (DEFRA Magic map).

¹ Box 14 in CIEEM's ECiA Guidelines (2018)

3.3 UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.3.1 A UKHab survey was undertaken on 13th March 2024. The survey incorporated detailed assessment of the land within the development boundary, including a description and mapping of all key features and habitat types. The survey was carried out to identify the range of habitats within the site and the predominant and notable species of flora. This survey was informed by the UKHab classification Version 2 (UKHab Ltd., 2023).

3.4 NERC S. 41 Mammals

- 3.4.1 The survey included an assessment of the habitats on site for their potential to support NERC Section 41 species such as hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), polecat (*Mustela putorius*), harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*) and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*). This included a search for nests, runs, latrines, paw prints, and live specimens.

3.5 Badger

- 3.5.1 The survey for badger (*Meles meles*) included a search of the development site and surrounding habitats (up to 30metres where feasible) for any evidence including setts, foraging signs (snuffle holes), runs and latrines.

3.6 Riparian Mammals

- 3.6.1 The survey included an assessment of the site to support riparian mammals such as otter (*Lutra lutra*) and water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*). This included an assessment of the riparian habitats on site or within the wider environment to support these species.

3.7 Bats

- 3.7.1 The methodology for the bat survey has been informed by the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition* (Collins, 2023).
- 3.7.2 The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats. This assessment was also contextualized through examination of suitable habitat and features in the wider landscape and possible flight-lines across the proposed site following natural linear features such as hedgerows.

Preliminary roost inspection

- 3.7.3 Physical external and internal inspection of the buildings were undertaken on 13th March 2024 using the equipment described below to assist the inspection. Approximately four hours of search effort were expended.
- 3.7.4 The physical search includes a search for live animals and a search for other signs that give an indication of past or present occupancy as outlined below. In the case of bats, typical indicators include droppings (which are characteristic and can often be

speciated or at least be indicative of species type), signs of staining, urine splashing, characteristic odours, and accumulations of discarded prey remains.

- 3.7.5 Where required, the search included an endoscope search of features with potential for bats. Equipment included a Rigid micro-CA-350 Inspection Camera with micro 6mm extension, camera, laser measure, and binoculars.

Dusk emergence surveys

- 3.7.6 Three dusk emergence surveys were undertaken on 1st May, 20th June and 30th July 2024.
- 3.7.7 The emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes before sunset and finished 1.5 hours after sunset.
- 3.7.8 Three surveyors were positioned to view all aspects of the structure where potential roost features have been observed.
- 3.7.9 Echo Meter Touch (EMT) bat detectors were used for the survey. All calls recorded were analysed using the Echo Meter Touch app software. All calls recorded were cross referenced to a call reference collection library of known bat species to confirm species presence.
- 3.7.10 Thermal imaging cameras were used as a survey aid on all surveys, in accordance with the Thermal Imaging Bat Survey Guidelines (Fawcett Williams, 2021), as demonstrated in Photos 1-6. The survey personnel were trained in the use of thermal imaging by Jim Philips and Matt Attrill, who are both licensed bat surveyors who have attended two training courses on the use of thermal imaging cameras for bat surveys (Wildlifetek, 2020, 2022) and are considered to be 'suitably qualified' in the use of the cameras as both a survey aid and method.
- 3.7.11 Flir T540 thermal imaging cameras were used and videos were recorded as non-radiometric files. This camera has a thermal resolution of 464 × 348 with a 42° lens which allows for the detection of bats up to a distance of 51m.
- 3.7.12 A Flir E54 Thermal Camera was used and videos were recorded as non-radiometric files. This camera has a thermal resolution of 320 x 240 Pixels with a 24° lens which allows for the detection of bats up to a distance of 62m.
- 3.7.13 The video files were transferred into standard video analysis software for later analysis.



Photo 1 View from Position 1, May 2024



Photo 2 View from Position 1, July 2024



Photo 3 View from Position 2, July 2024



Photo 4 View from Position 2, May 2024



Photo 5 View from Position 2, June 2024

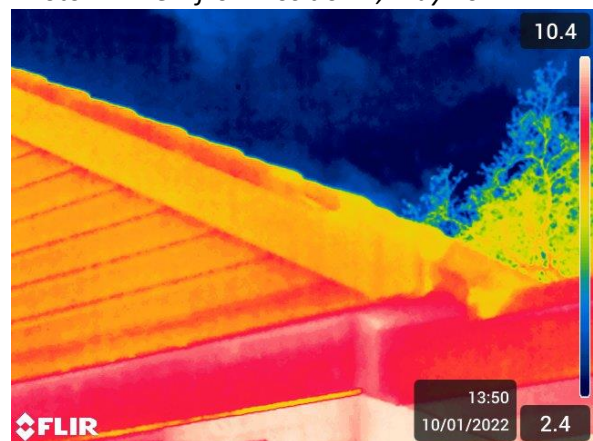


Photo 6 View from Position 3, July 2024

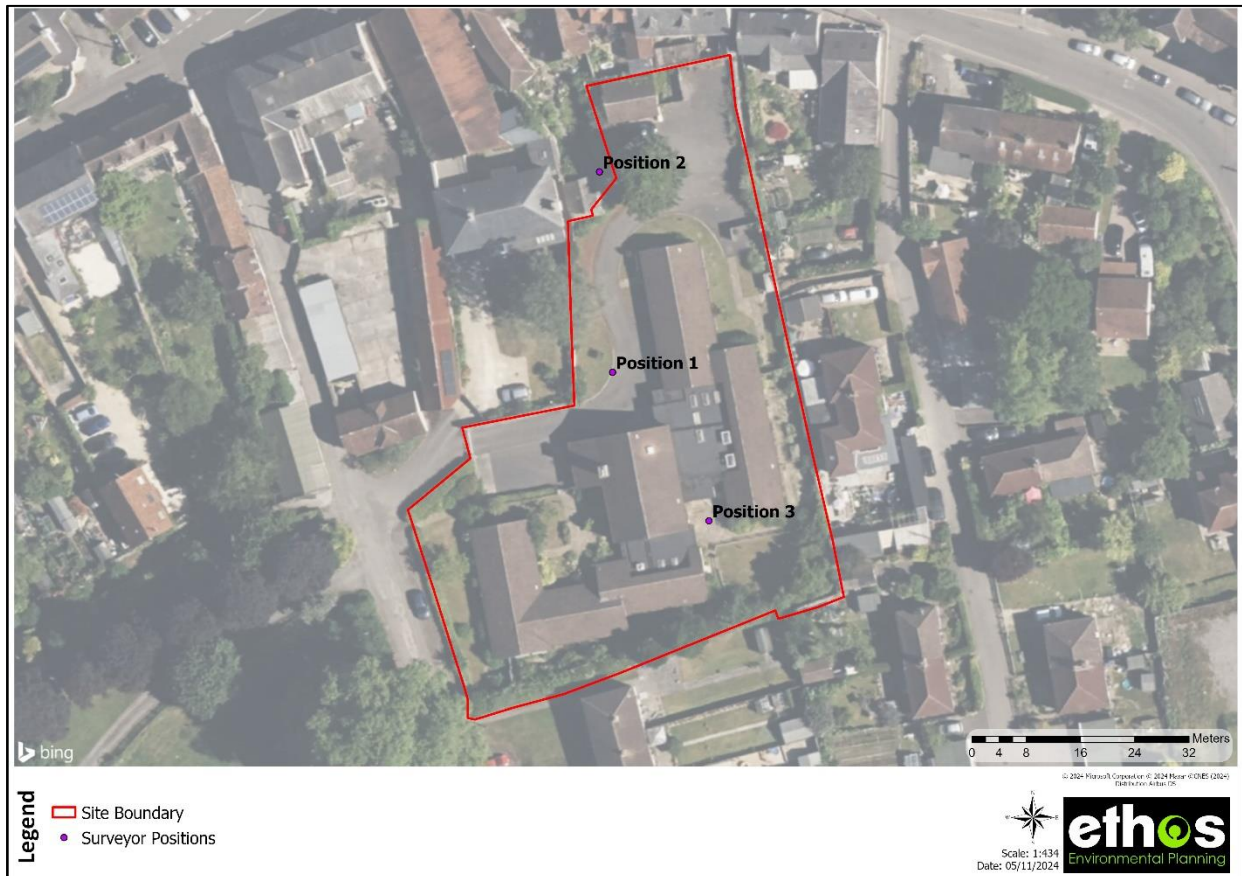


Figure 2 Emergence surveyor locations

3.8 Birds

- 3.8.1 The methodology for the bird surveys have been informed by the Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group (2023).
- 3.8.2 The bird survey included an assessment of the habitats on site for their potential to support protected and notable species of bird as well as their potential to support breeding birds.

3.9 Reptiles

- 3.9.1 The potential presence of reptiles on site was assessed considering the habitats present (availability of refugia and basking areas) and suitability of surrounding environment. The assessment of habitats was informed by the *Herpetofauna Workers Manual* (Gent and Gibson, 2003). Where possible, attempts to confirm reptile presence on site were made following *Froglife Advice Sheet 10 – Surveying for Reptiles* through direct observation in reptile “hotspots” and checking of any existing refugia.

3.10 Amphibians

- 3.10.1 Surveys for GCN were informed by the *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*, Froglife 2001.

- 3.10.2 The site was examined for suitable waterbodies and for breeding terrestrial habitat. Terrestrial habitats providing sufficiently structured vegetation in which amphibians may forage or hibernate over winter were also surveyed for.
- 3.10.3 In addition to the on-site assessment, *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines* (English Nature, 2001) recommend that a desktop analysis of ponds within 500m of the site be undertaken, to identify any potential breeding ponds which may require further survey. Ponds within 500m of the site were mapped on GIS with an OS OpenData base map at 1:10,000 resolution.
- 3.10.4 Access was sought to survey three ponds within 250m of site, however access to the ponds was denied by landowners. An example of the letter sent is provided in Appendix 2.

3.11 Invertebrates

- 3.11.1 Due to the many invertebrate taxonomic groups that exist, the often-large differences in invertebrate diversity between habitats and the many survey techniques available, invertebrate surveys are highly specific to individual sites. Therefore, an assessment of the site's potential for invertebrates was undertaken, including the need for targeted surveys, as recommended in *Considering Invertebrates in Preliminary Ecological Appraisals* (Jukes, 2021).

3.12 Limitations

- 3.12.1 Access to three ponds within 250m of the site to assess their suitability for GCN was denied. This is not considered to be a significant limitation to the assessment, as the assessment of habitats on site concluded the site to be unlikely to provide good habitat opportunities for GCN.

3.13 Evaluation of Ecological Features

- 3.13.1 In line with CIEEMs guidelines on EcIA, this assessment has focused on relevant Important Ecological Features. The scale of importance of these features has been determined based on available contextual information, which for this project are considered only to include:
- **International** – of internationally and protected through international legislation;
 - **National** – of importance in England and protected through national legislation;
 - **County** – of importance to the county (Wiltshire) but not sufficiently important to warrant 'National' scale of importance; and
 - **Local** – of importance to the local area (Mere Parish), but not sufficiently important to warrant County scale of importance.

- **Site** – This scale of importance relates specifically to the nature conservation importance of bat roosts in line with Table 3.2 of the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (2023).

3.13.2 Potential impacts on Important Ecological Features are identified and assessed; likely significant effects are those likely to result in a change to the conservation status of a habitat or species population or undermine/support nature conservation policy. Mitigation measures have been devised following the mitigation hierarchy; appropriate mechanisms for securing mitigation measures have been identified.

3.14 Personnel

3.14.1 The surveyors on site have been detailed below in Table 2.

Table 2 Site surveyors

Ecologist	Position	Qualifications/ Licences	Experience	Role in assessment
Sarah Forsyth	Principal Ecologist	MSc DIC BSc (Hons), ACIEEM Class 1 GCN Licence Tree Climbing and Rescue, City and Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award (206 and 306)	Sarah has over 15 years' experience in ecological management and assessment, both in consultancy and the public sector. Sarah is responsible for leading on ecological assessments and overseeing projects through various stages of planning and implementation.	Bat emergence Survey Roost assessment
Becky Morris	Ecologist	PhD, DIC, MSc, BSc, MCIEEM Class 1 GCN Licence	Becky has 16 years' experience working as an Ecological Consultant, specialising in botanical surveys. She holds a great crested newt survey licence.	Bat emergence survey Report author
Joe Bamforth	Senior Ecologist	MSc, BSc (Hons) Class 1 Bat Licence 2022-10148-CL17-BAT Tree Climbing and Rescue, City and Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award (206 and 306)	Joe has over three years' experience in ecological consultancy and assists with habitat assessments, protected species surveys and data analysis.	Bat emergence survey
Sophie Thompson	Assistant Ecologist	MSc, BSc (Hons)	Sophie assists with habitat surveys, protected species surveys and ecological reports. She has over two seasons of experience with assisting with protected species surveys and UKHabs. Sophie has also worked with her local community to enhance wildlife by contributing to nature reserve management	Bat emergence survey

Ecologist	Position	Qualifications/ Licences	Experience	Role in assessment
			plans and by attending habitat management days.	
Ollie Sowler	Assistant Ecologist	BSc (Hons)	Ollie assists with bat surveying and data analysis. He also has experience with different ecological field surveys, including protected species surveys and habitat assessments.	Bat emergence survey

4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Designated Sites

Statutory designated sites

- 4.1.1 Two statutory designated sites are present within 1km of the site, namely Dead Maid Quarry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Whitesheet Hill SSSI, as shown in Figure 3.
- 4.1.2 Dead Maid Quarry is located 840m west of the site and is important for the Chalk and Upper Grassland units of the Cretaceous.
- 4.1.3 Whitesheet Hill SSSI is located 900m north of the site and is designated for its extensive area of botanically rich chalk grassland predominantly on the west-facing slopes of the Middle Chalk. The site supports nationally restricted species of animals and plants and is one of the most westerly areas of downland in Britain.
- 4.1.4 The SSSI's are all of 'National' importance for nature conservation in line with their designations. Due to the small scale of the works proposed as well as distance between the proposed development site and the designated sites, no significant impacts are anticipated and these sites are therefore not considered further in this assessment.



Figure 3 Statutory sites within 1km

Non-statutory designated sites

- 4.1.5 Long Hill and Castle Hill Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located approximately 500m northwest of the site and is designated for unimproved calcareous grassland, scrub and broadleaved woodland on an outlying chalk hill overlooking the village of Mere as (Figure 4).
- 4.1.6 West Swainsford Farm Meadows LWS is located approximately 900m southwest of the site and comprises three discrete blocks of unimproved neutral meadows.
- 4.1.7 Chetcombe Farm, Reservoir Field LWS is located approximately 900m south of the site and is a small area of grassland buffering the adjacent SSSI, designated for areas of unimproved grassland on the steeper slopes and the sides of an underground reservoir.
- 4.1.8 These LWS's are all of 'County' importance for nature conservation. Due to the small scale of the works proposed as well as distance between the proposed development site and the designated sites, no significant impacts are anticipated and these sites are therefore not considered further in this assessment.

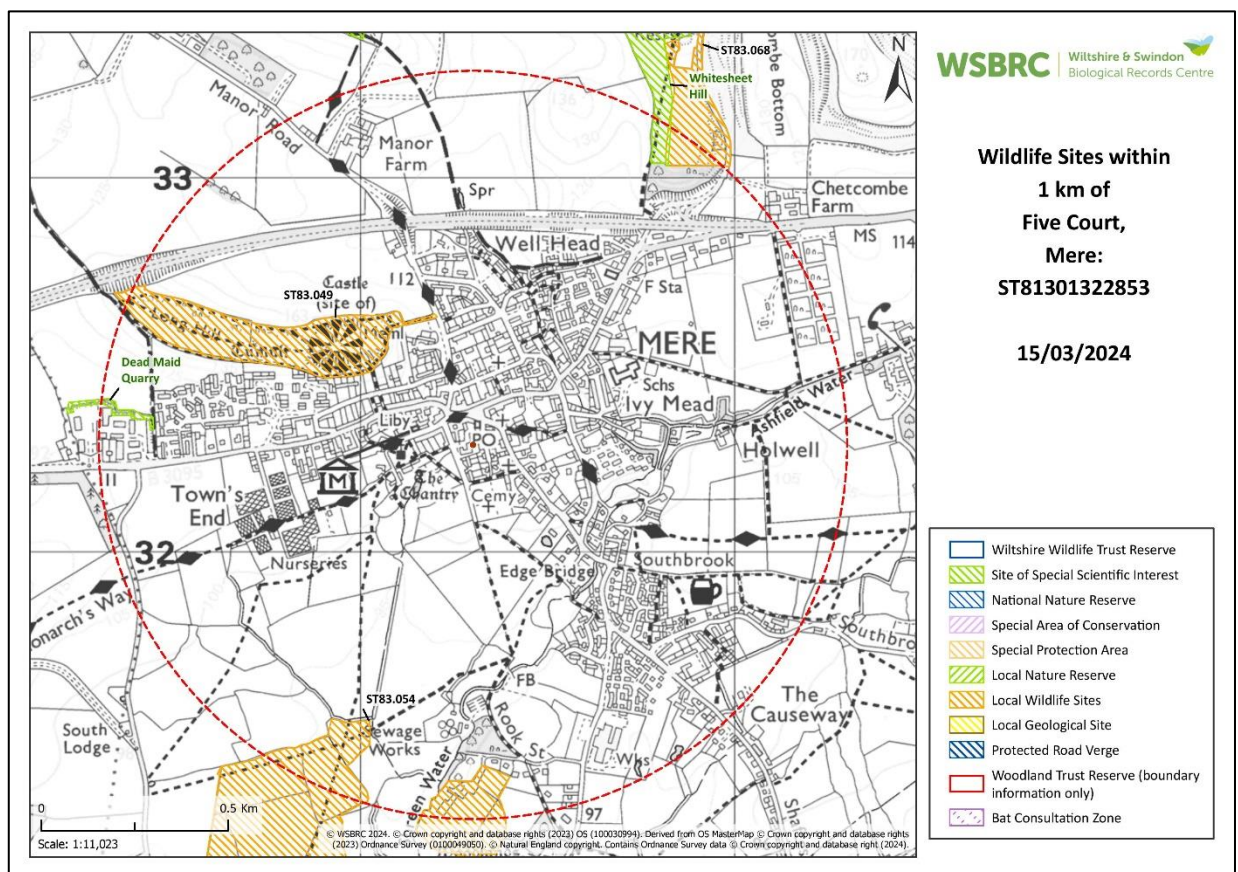


Figure 4 Non-Statutory sites within 1km

4.2 Habitats

General site description

- 4.2.1 The site is bordered by residential gardens on the north, east and south with grassland and trees to the west. The site itself includes two structures which comprise assisted living accommodation and a garage. In addition, there is a small gas storage structure. There are multiple areas of hardstanding, with vegetated garden of modified grassland and introduced shrub in borders around the structure.

UKHab survey

- 4.2.2 Figure 3 displays the key habitats using the UK Habitat classifications. Descriptions of the habitats are provided in the following section and comprise:
- Urban – Developed land; sealed surface;
 - Urban – Vegetated garden; and
 - Urban tree.



Figure 5 UK Habitat survey

Developed land; Sealed surface

4.2.3 The site is dominated by developed land; sealed surface (Photo 7 and 8) in the form of two main structures, car parking and access on to the site. The hardstanding is in good structural condition and provides negligible potential for wildlife. This habitat is therefore not considered further in this assessment.



Photo 7 Developed land, sealed surface on site.



Photo 8 Developed land, sealed surface on site.

Vegetated garden

- 4.2.4 There are several sections of vegetated garden that include amenity grassland and introduced shrub that surrounded the main building on site (B1). The grassland was maintained to a short sward at the time of survey, as seen in Photo 9 and 10. Several sections of the garden are bordered by small, well-maintained ornamental beech hedgerows, as shown in Photo 11. There are also several young trees on site.



Photo 9 Vegetated Garden



Photo 10 Vegetated Garden



Photo 11 Beech hedgerow

- 4.2.5 The vegetated garden is not assessed to be of particular importance for nature conservation and is not considered further in this assessment.

Urban tree

- 4.2.6 There is a single mature yew tree within the car parking area. This tree is covered around its trunk by ivy (*Hedera helix*) (Photo 12).
- 4.2.7 This yew tree is not assessed to be of particular importance for nature conservation and is only considered further in relation to its potential to support protected species.

Photo 12, Mature yew tree



4.3 NERC S. 41 Mammals

- 4.3.1 The data search identified 54 records of hedgehog within 1km of the site. Many of the records were from approximately 500m north east of the site and dated 2020-2021. The closest record related to an area 50m south east of the site in 2016.
- 4.3.2 The site is dominated by developed land, sealed surface with areas of vegetated garden. These habitats were assessed to hold low potential for hedgehog, as the garden includes small areas of grassland, hedgerows and introduced shrub. There are also suitable areas for hedgehog within proximity to the site in the form of vegetated gardens, however the brick wall boundaries currently present on site are barriers likely to impede hedgehog's movement across the site.
- 4.3.3 There were no records of brown hare, pole cat or harvest mouse within 1km of the site identified by the data search and there is no suitable habitat on site to support these species on or within the vicinity of the site. It is therefore considered that the site holds negligible potential for these species, and they are not considered further within this assessment.
- 4.3.4 Hedgehog are listed as Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. As hedgehog have been assessed as potentially present on site, they are considered further on a precautionary basis.

4.4 Badger

- 4.4.1 There were eight records of badger identified by the data search. One record was located 900m west of the site, comprising a road casualty along the B3095. Additional records included one from Long Hill, 900m north of the site and dated 2006, badger activity in a garden 150m east of the site, and all other records comprised withheld locations.

- 4.4.2 The site is dominated by developed land, sealed surface, with areas of amenity grassland within the vegetated garden, which are poor habitats for badger. The site has limited connection to suitable habitats within the wider environment such as grassland, hedgerows and trees to the west of the site. No evidence of badgers was identified on site and it is assessed that this species is likely absent. Therefore, badgers are not considered further in this assessment.

4.5 Hazel Dormouse

- 4.5.1 There were no records of hazel dormouse identified by the data search.
- 4.5.2 The hedgerows within the vegetated garden on site are ornamental and species-poor, with no species known to be used by dormice. Therefore, it was considered that the site contains no suitable habitat for dormouse.
- 4.5.3 Overall, dormice are considered absent from the site, therefore this species is not considered further in this assessment.

4.6 Riparian Mammals

- 4.6.1 There were five records of otter within 1km of the site. These are all from the Shrean Water and dated between 1999 and 2003, with records located between 700m south of the site and 500m south east of the site.
- 4.6.2 There were 13 records of water vole identified by the data search, dated between 1997 and 2022. Most records were located along the Shrean Water, 500m SE of the site. Records were also identified 500m north east of the site and dated 2019. The most recent record was approximately 450m east-north-east of the site, also along the Shrean Water.
- 4.6.3 The nearest substantial waterbody is Ashfield Water, situated 300m east of the site, with Shrean Water located 440m south of the site. Both watercourses are tributaries of the River Stour, with no terrestrial link between them. There is no riparian habitat on site or adjacent to the site suitable to support these species. Therefore, in the absence of suitable habitat, it is assessed that riparian mammals are likely absent from the site, and they are not considered further in this assessment.

4.7 Bats

Data search

- 4.7.1 Records identified by the data search include bats from Woodland Road, located 700m south-southeast of the site, namely serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*), long-eared bat (*Plecotus* spp.), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*). All records were dated 2023. All other

bat records had locations withheld, with the only other species recorded being Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*).

Habitats

- 4.7.2 The habitats on site are isolated and not well-connected to suitable habitat for bats within the wider area. There are gardens to the north, south and east of the site, and a road adjacent to the western boundary of the site. There are areas of trees, hedgerows and grassland to the south west of the site however, these areas have poor connectivity to the site itself. Overall, the site is assessed to hold low suitability for commuting and foraging bats and would not be suitable for light-sensitive species of bat due to existing lighting levels.

Structures inspection - Buildings

- 4.7.2 There are three structures on site; the main structure (B1) and a garage (B2) as shown in Figure 4, which are assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. There is also a small storage structure on the eastern boundary (B3).



Figure 6 Structures on site

Building 1 (B1)

- 4.7.3 The building is an unoccupied assisted living home, constructed of stone walls with plastic cladding, all in good condition (Photos 13 and 14). The roof is a gable structure

with concrete tiles, chimneys and lead flashing that are all in good structural condition. There are sections of the roof that are pitched with interconnecting composite tiles. Soffit boxes are overall in good condition but damaged in isolated places (see Section 4.7.5). The walls are in good condition.



Photo 13 Northern elevation of two storey section of B1



Photo 14 Eastern elevation of northern wing B1

- 4.7.4 Two potential roost features have been identified in this building, which are described below.
- 4.7.5 The first is a flat roof void cavity above the entrance way and small front room of the building, located on the western elevation. In this location there is a potential exit/ re-entry gap created from damage to the soffit (shown in Photos 15 and 16). This feature was surveyed in part with an endoscope, which identified it was extensive and could not be fully investigated. No evidence of bats was observed within the accessible area of the void by the access gap.
- 4.7.6 The second feature on the south east elevation is situated between the tiles and the main roof structure lining (Photos 17 and 18). The loft space extends approximately 2.5m across the roof and then upwards towards the apex of the roof. The void could be explored using the endoscope to view across the horizontal space, but not up into the space extending up the roof. No evidence of bats was found during the survey.



Photo 15 Western elevation of building with entry/ exit feature in the soffit (PRF – flat roof void over ground floor room)



Photo 16 Damage to soffit, creating potential access gap into PRF1



Photo 17 Location of gap into PRF on east elevation of building



Photo 18 Internal cavity of PRF2. Feature extends along the length of the lower eave

- 4.7.7 There are six loft voids (Figure 6) within the single main structure. The internal loft voids are constructed of wooden timber a-frames and bitumen felt sarking, with rafters in good condition.

Figure 7 Loft voids

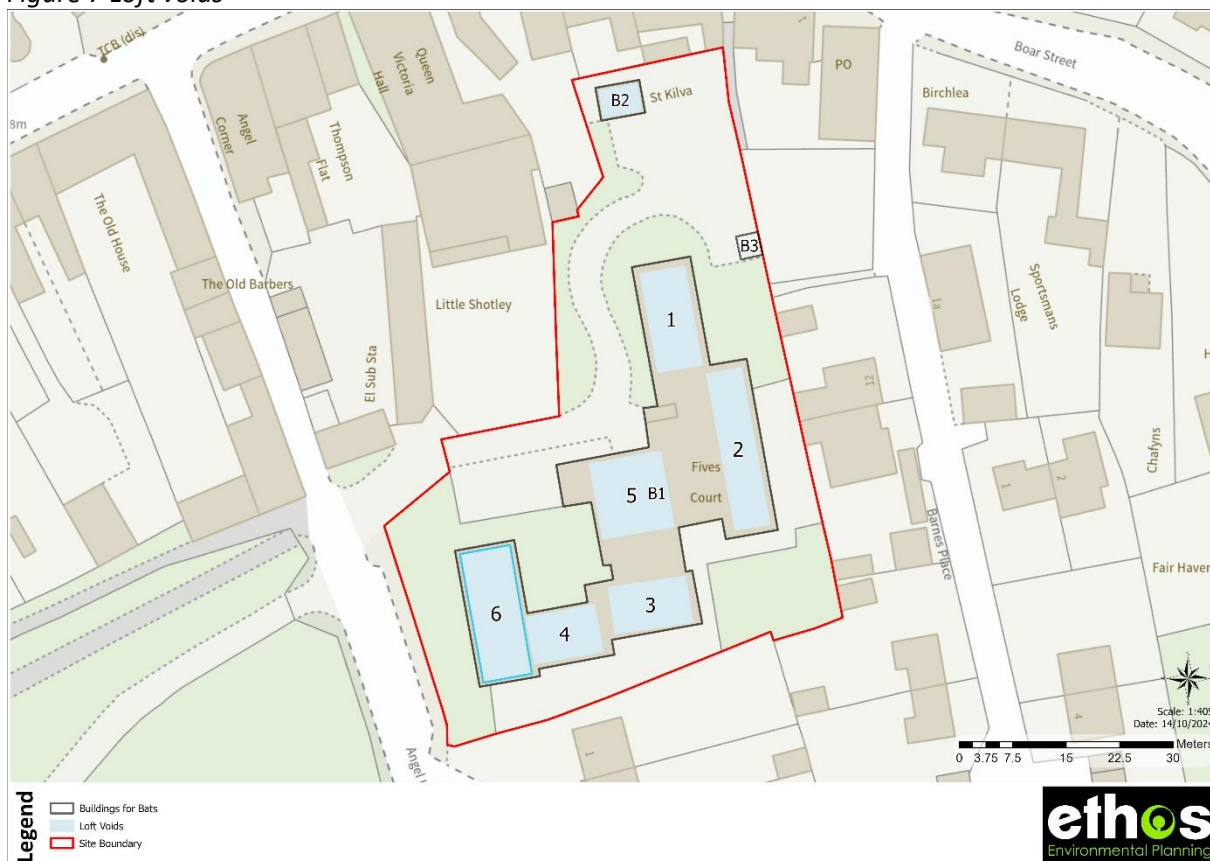


Table 3 Loft voids descriptions within B1

Loft Void Number	Internal Structure Description	Photos
1	Timber a-frame structure with bitumen felt sarking in rafters. No gaps present in the sarking, only light ingress from the floor below through gaps in the ceiling. No external light ingress. Loft is split into two sections; one larger and one smaller. Exposed breezeblock at gable ends with mortar in good condition. Rock wall insulation in loft which is thick and likely to cover any gaps. No evidence of bats (or birds).	

Loft Void Number	Internal Structure Description	Photos
2	Timber a-frame structure approximately 3m high, with bitumen felt sarking in rafters, in good condition. Part of the ceiling has been removed. No evidence of bats (or birds).	
3	Timber a-frame structure with bitumen felt sarking in rafters. Three small tears in sarking and some sarking sagging, with slight light ingress but the area behind comprises tight tiles. Adjoins larger loft area with the ceiling removed, however this still forms the internal of building, with no external access. No evidence of bats (or birds). A few scattered mouse droppings were present.	
4	Timber a-frame structure with bitumen felt sarking in rafters. Some sagging sarking present. There was no safe access into this loft and so, a full inspection could not be completed. The area is likely sealed under eaves similar to the other lofts, as thick insulation present would cover any gaps. Good condition bitumen felting present. In the areas able to be inspected there was no evidence of bats.	

Loft Void Number	Internal Structure Description	Photos
5	Timber a-frame structure with bitumen felt sarking with rafters in the two storey section. Good condition lining with one small tear, with tight tiles behind. The eaves are tightly sealed. There is a boiler and water tank present in the void. Breezeblocks walls are present on both ends of the void. No evidence of bats (or birds).	
6	Internally connected with loft voids 3 and 4. Unsafe to enter (fragile ceiling joists). Bitumen felt sarking in good condition, tight no visible gaps or any ingress of light. In the areas able to be inspected there was no evidence of bats .	

4.7.6 B1 was assessed to hold **moderate potential for roosting bats**, in line with best practice guidance (Table 4.1 BCT, 2023). Moderate suitability is '*a structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to its size, shelter, protection, conditions and surround habitat, but is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status, such as maternity or hibernation*'. There has been no evidence of historic or recent evidence of use in the accessible areas of the PRFs. Whilst the roost features are quite extensive, one of these features located between loft voids 5 and 3 is recently formed since the previous surveys (Ethos, 2022) and the surrounding habitats do not provide particularly good foraging or commuting opportunities for bats. Therefore, the building is considered unlikely to be of high suitability, defined as '*a structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of o bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.*'

Building 2 (B2)

- 4.7.8 B2 is a disused garage, with one elevation having an up-and-over garage door. There is no longer a loft void as the ceiling has been removed between Ethos visits in 2022 and 2024 (Photo 19 and 20). The structure is comprised of modern brick walls and wooden beams. The structure is open and exposed, providing poor and unstable conditions for roosting bats. The soffit on the southwest elevation of the building is warped, allowing potential access for bats into this feature. The cavity extends along the length of the garage, approximately 7.5m x 10cm (see Photos 21 and 22).



Photo 19 Garage void



Photo 20 Garage with up-and-over door



Photo 21 Southern elevation of the garage



Photo 22 Damage to soffit on south west elevation

- 4.7.9 This building is assessed to have **moderate suitability** for bats, with the PRF limited to the soffit. This roost feature is again quite extensive but recently formed since the previous Ethos survey visit (Ethos, 2022) and the surrounding habitats do not provide particularly good foraging opportunities for bats and therefore, it is not considered likely to be of high suitability.

External gas building (B3)

- 4.7.10 This structure (Photos 23 and 24) has a door with wooden slats which has gaps large enough for bats to access, however internally the building is light and exposed as well as damp, with **no evidence of bats** seen. There are no external crevice features suitable for bats. Therefore, the building is assessed to contain **negligible potential** for bats.



Photo 23 External of the gas building



Photo 24 Internal of the gas building

Roosts - Trees

- 4.7.11 One mature yew (*Taxus baccata*) tree is on site (Photo 25), in the northern section by the car park. Ivy was growing up the stem, and the crown was not visible from ground level. Overall, the tree was assessed to be in good health. No evidence of roosting bats or roosting features were recorded during the survey from ground level. The ivy on the trunk was not thick or dense enough to be considered suitable as a potential bat roost as is assessed to have **negligible potential** for roosting bats.



Photo 25 Mature yew tree

Emergence surveys

- 4.7.12 Following the structure inspection which identified Buildings 1 and 2 to contain moderate potential for roosting bats, these buildings were subject to further emergence surveys, which were focused on the identified PRFs.
- 4.7.13 Detailed results of the emergence surveys are provided in Appendix 1, alongside environmental variables recorded during the surveys. A summary of the survey results is provided below:
- Five species of bat recorded on site, namely common pipistrelle, serotine, noctule and brown long-eared bats. Only common pipistrelle bats were recorded as roosting within the structures.
 - In general, activity was low across the site, with a few foraging common pipistrelle flying around the structures and noctule bat foraging overhead.

Roosting bats

- Five emergence locations were identified during the emergence surveys (locations shown in Figure 7).
- These were single common pipistrelle bats from each location except the barge board on 27th July, where two common pipistrelle bats emerged.
- A single common pipistrelle emerged from under a security light on the northern elevation of the second story section of B1 (Photo 26)
- A single common pipistrelle emerged from behind the barge board on the apex of the roof on the northern side of B1 (Photo 27)
- A single common pipistrelle emerged from the apex of the second storey section on the southern side of B1 (Photo 28)
- Two common pipistrelles emerged from two location on the garage structure (B2) (Photo 29).
- The highest number of emergences were recorded on 30th July, when five bats emerged from four separate locations.



Photo 26, Emergence location behind security light June.



Photo 27, emergence location on northern elevation of two storey section - July.

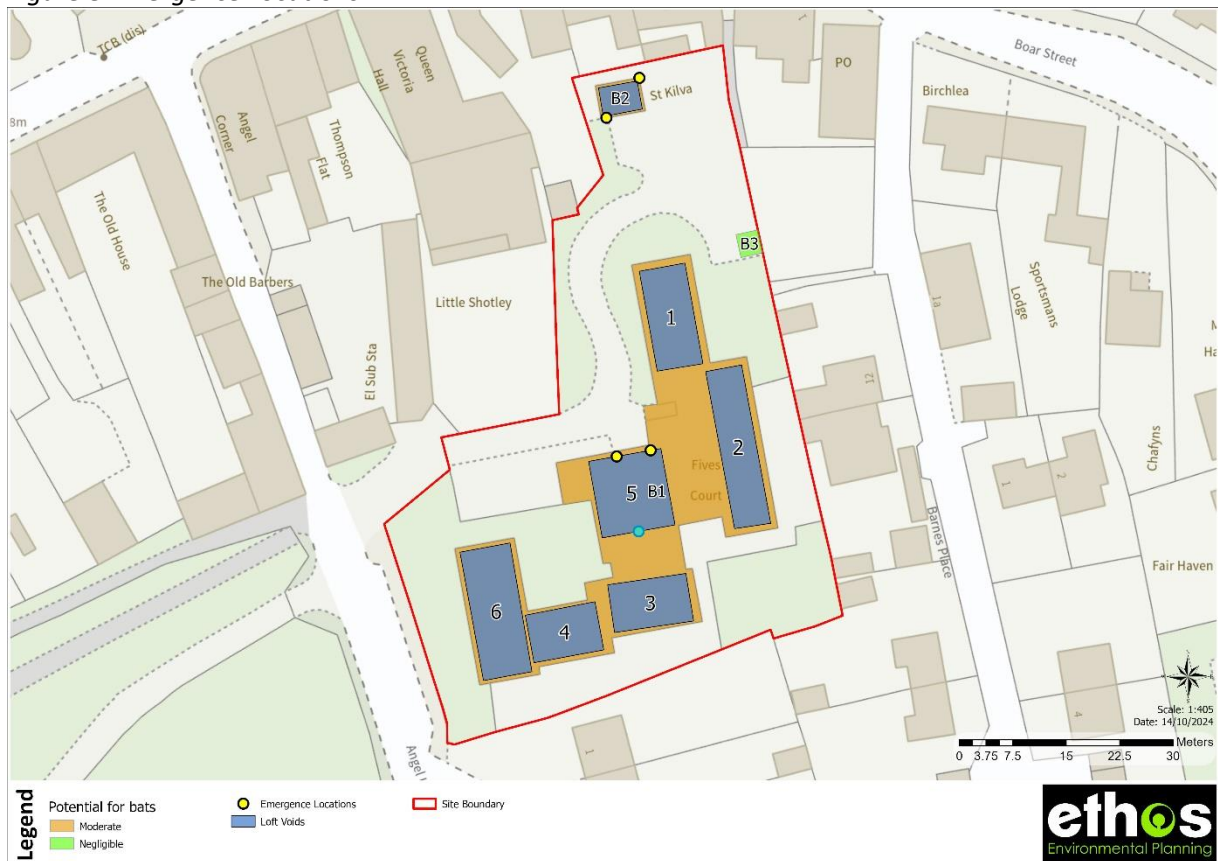


Photo 28, emergence location on southern elevation of two storey section - July.



Photo 29, emergence positions on garage July.

Figure 8 Emergence Locations



Assessment of Nature Conservation Importance

- 4.7.14 Building 1 is assessed to support a common pipistrelle day roost for a maximum of three bats. Building 2 is assessed to support a common pipistrelle day roost for a maximum of two bats.
- 4.7.15 In line with the Bat Mitigation Guidelines Table 3.2 (shown below), the common pipistrelle day roosts are assessed to be of **'site' importance for nature conservation**. As these roosts will be impacted by the development, bats are considered further in this assessment.

Table 3.2: Assessing importance of roosts^a

Roost category: note this table relates to VALUATION and does not mean that all such sites are 'places of shelter' as referenced in the W6CA or Habitats Regulations. Inclusion in this table does not indicate that a licence <i>would</i> be required; this would be driven by roost status, any impacts and the likelihood of an offence.							
Conservation status/ distribution	Feeding perches; night-roosts; Individual or very small occasional/ transitional/ opportunistic roosts	Non-breeding day roosts (small numbers of species)	Mating sites (excluding individual trees and larger swarming sites); small numbers of hibernating bats	Larger transitional roosts	Hibernation sites ^d	Autumn swarming sites [largely, vesper species which hibernate underground]	Maternity sites ^e
Widespread all geographies	Site	Site	Site	Site/Local	District/County [Larger hibernation sites rare in the UK]	District/County [Very large pipistrelle swarming sites appear uncommon in the UK ^f , but see Section 6.7.]	Unlikely to exceed District importance unless colonies are atypically large; importance increased for assemblages.
Widespread in many geographies, but not as abundant in all	Site	Site	Site, dependent on local distribution [For <i>Myotis</i> , see swarming site column]	District	District/County importance dependent on size ^g and number of species	County/Regional importance dependent on size ^g ; importance increased for larger sites that serve larger numbers/species	Unlikely to exceed County importance unless colonies are atypically large; importance increased for assemblages.
Rarer or restricted distribution	Site (very well-used night roosts may be of District importance for some species)	Site/Local/District, dependent on local distribution	Site/Local/District, dependent on local distribution	District	District/County importance dependent on size ^g and local distribution; increased value for assemblages.	County/Regional importance on size ^g and local distribution; increased value for assemblages.	County/Regional importance on size ^g and local distribution; increased value for assemblages.
Rarest Annex II species and very rare	Site (very well-used night roosts may be of District importance for some species)	Site/Local/District, dependent on local distribution	Site/Local/District, dependent on local distribution	District	County/Regional importance on size ^g and local distribution; increased value for assemblages	County/Regional importance on size ^g and local distribution; increased value for assemblages.	County/Regional importance on size ^g and local distribution; increased value for assemblages.

4.8 Birds

Data search

- 4.8.1 The data search identified 158 records of birds, which included red kite, kingfisher, hobby, brambling, black redstart and redwing Which are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act and house sparrow, starlings and greenfinches on the Red List. The full table of results is shown in Appendix 3.
- 4.8.2 From the identified list of bird records, there is assessed to be potential habitat on site for nesting or foraging house martins, starling, house sparrow, greenfinch and swift.

Habitats

- 4.8.3 The hedgerows and trees on site are assessed as suitable nesting habitat for common and widespread species of bird. The remainder of the site comprises hard standing with amenity grassland that is maintained to a short sward, with introduced shrub and vegetated garden; these habitats are assessed to contain low value to common and widespread birds.
- 4.8.4 Wren, robins and house sparrows were observed during the ecological surveys. No evidence of breeding birds was identified during the internal structure inspection. On an outside wall, there is a bird box which appeared to have nesting material inside (Photos 30 and 31). Therefore, this is likely to be an active bird nest.

- 4.8.5 During the survey pigeons were noted roosting within the crown of the yew tree situated within the car park.



Photo 30, Bird box on western elevation of building.



Photo 31, bird box showing nesting material.

- 4.8.6 The assemblage of bird species on site is assessed to be common and widespread species only, not of particular importance for nature conservation. Birds are considered further on a precautionary basis during construction.

4.9 Reptiles

- 4.9.1 The desk study identified six records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), from the verge of the A303 to the north and 400m east/ south east of the site by the Shread Water. Grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) were also recorded along the Shread water, 400m east of the site. Common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) were recorded from the A303, 700m north east of the site, in 2004. There was also a single historic record of adder (*Vipera berus*) from 1976, located at long hill approximately 800m north west of the site.
- 4.9.2 The majority of the site comprises developed land; sealed surface, which is assessed to hold negligible potential for reptiles. The amenity grassland is maintained to a short sward and is assessed to contain low potential for reptiles, due to a lack of suitable cover opportunities. The hedgerows and trees on site are also determined to not contain habitat suitable for reptiles to disperse within the local area as the area surrounding the features were of low or negligible value. Therefore, reptiles are assessed as likely to be absent from the site and are not considered further in this assessment.

4.10 Amphibians

Data search

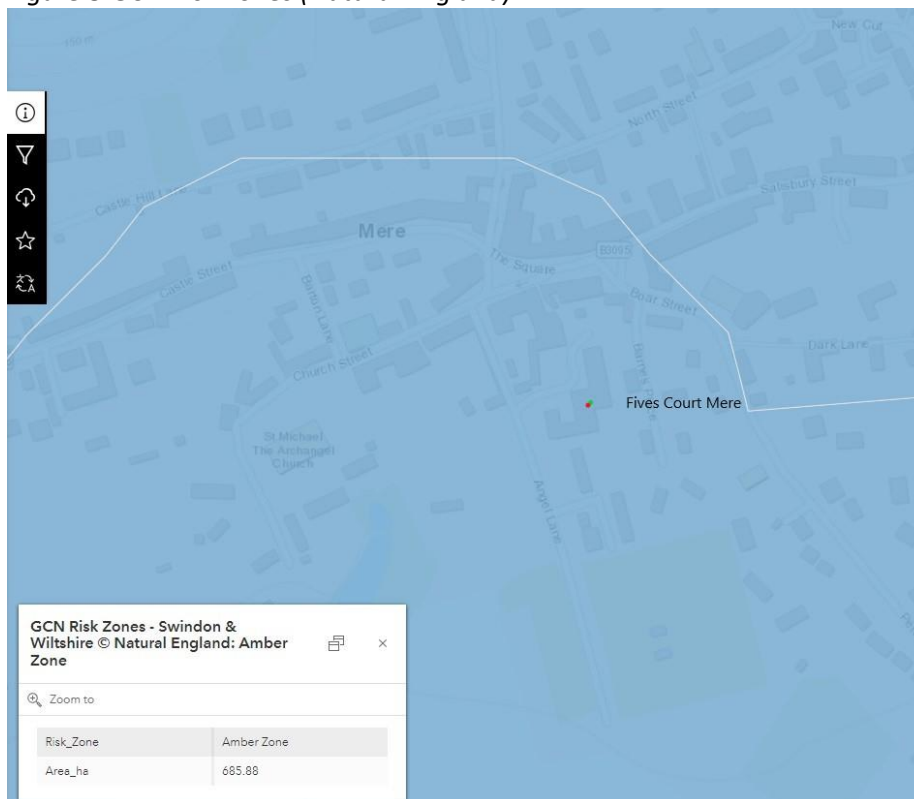
- 4.10.1 There was one EPS licence recorded within 1km of the site relating to GCN (records 925m S of the site):

- (2018-33331-EPS-MIT) granted for GCN in 2018 to June 2023.

4.10.2 There were eight records of GCN within 1km of the site. In 2018, records were identified 900m southeast of the site, as well as 550m east of the site in 2006. The six records from 2021 were all approximately 900m south of the site.

4.10.3 Figure 8 shows the site to be in an Amber risk zone for GCN. This means that the within the site, GCN are potentially present within areas of suitable habitat.

Figure 9 GCN Risk Zones (Natural England)



Habitats

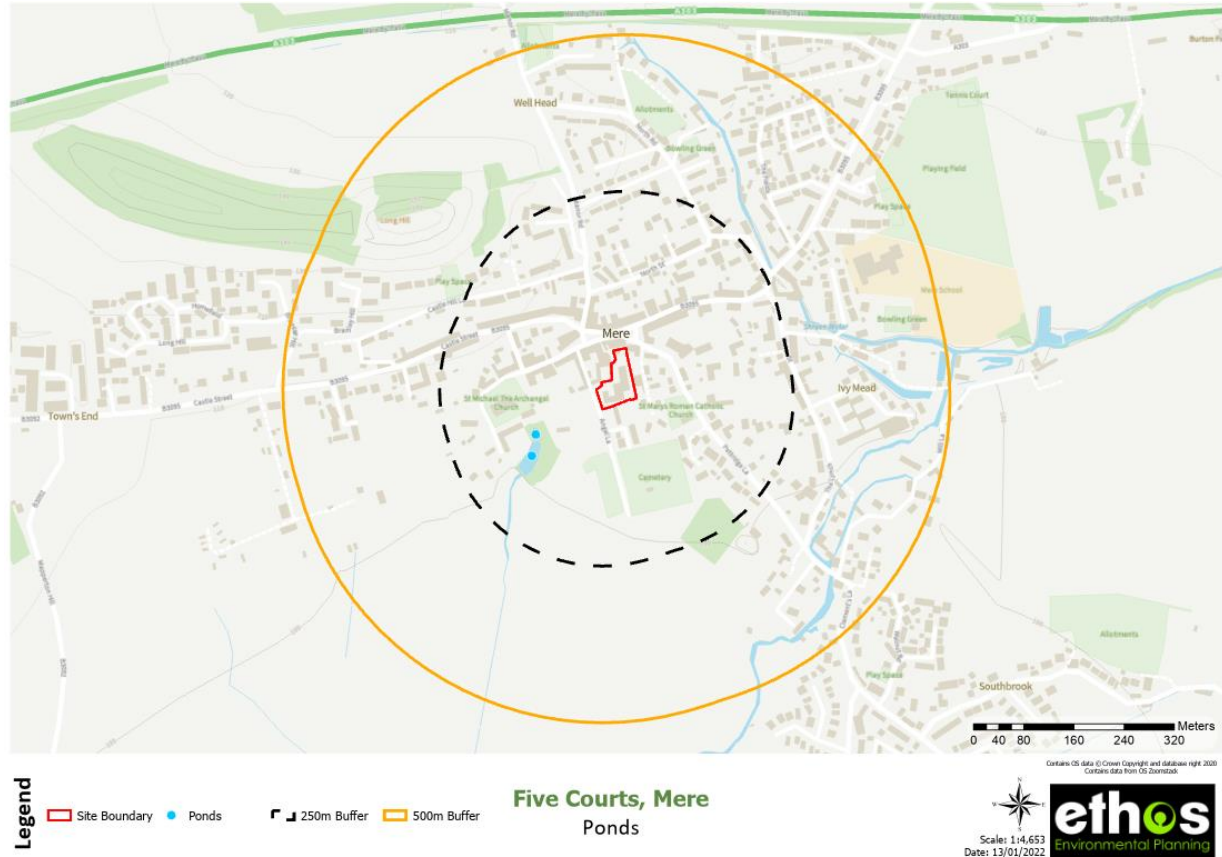
4.10.4 The majority of the site is assessed as unsuitable for amphibians, as it contains developed land; sealed surface, amenity grassland and buildings. The hedgerows and shrubs provide some low potential opportunities for shelter and foraging.

4.10.5 There are no waterbodies present on site and the closest pond is located 110m southwest of the site, which is located in a residential garden (as seen in Figure 9) across a small road from the site. The ponds in this location are connected to an unnamed watercourse which connects to Shreen Water, therefore they may contain flowing water and be unsuitable for GCN and other amphibians.

4.10.6 Angel Lane, which separates the site and the ponds, is considered to form a minor barrier to amphibian dispersal. There are no ponds to the east of the site and therefore,

the site is highly unlikely to form part of an important dispersal route for amphibians between ponds. Overall, it is therefore assessed that the site has very low potential for amphibians. GCN are only considered further on a precautionary basis during vegetation clearance.

Figure 10 Ponds within 500m



4.11 Invertebrates

- 4.11.1 The majority of the site comprised hard standing, building, and introduced shrub, which were considered to contain low value to invertebrates. The amenity grassland, hedgerows and trees were assessed to be the most valuable habitat for invertebrates on site however, these habitats were considered suitable for common and widespread species only.
- 4.11.2 Overall, the assemblage of invertebrates is not assessed as likely to be of particular importance for nature conservation, and invertebrates are not considered further in this assessment.

4.12 Invasive Species

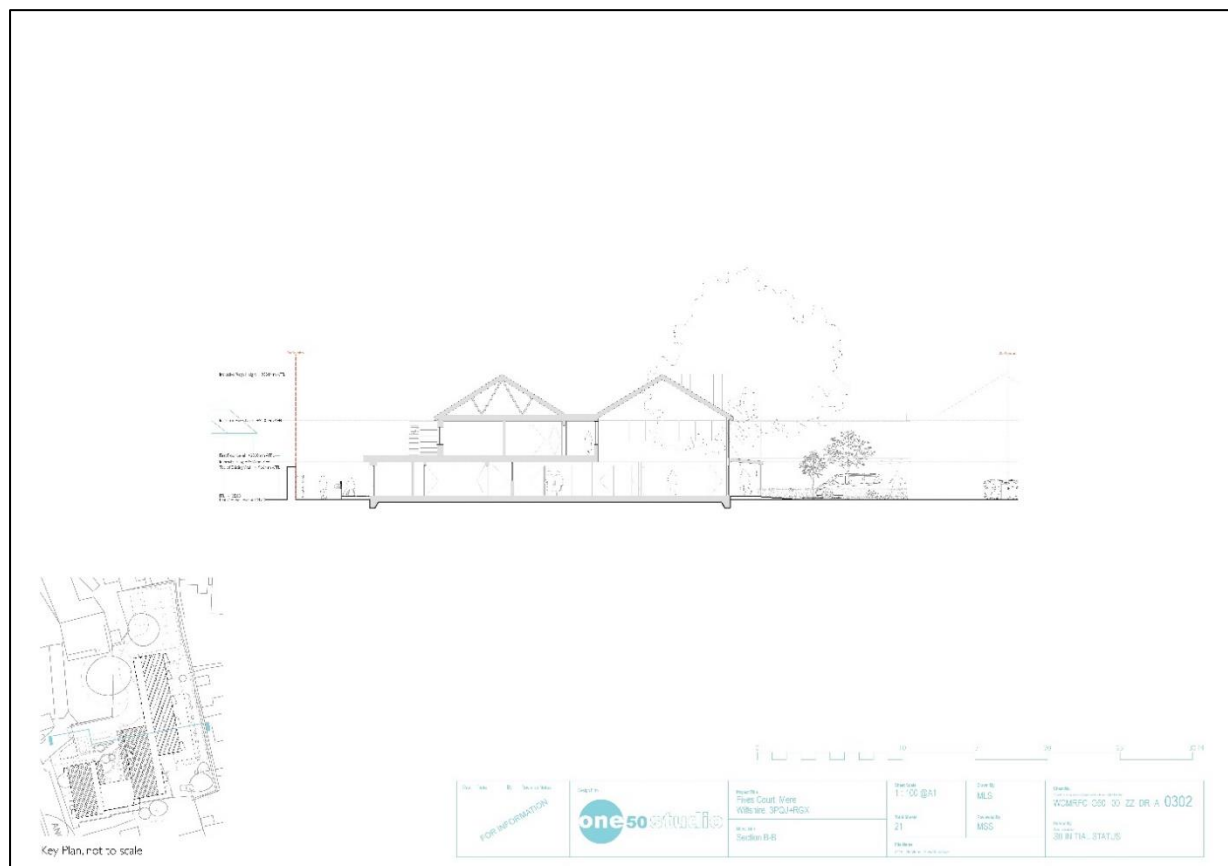
- 4.12.1 There were no records of invasive species identified in the data search, and no invasive species were identified during the site visit. Therefore, invasive species are assessed to be likely absent from the site and are not considered further in this assessment.

4.13 Summary

4.13.1 Table 5 details the important ecological features identified on site.

Table 4 Important ecological features present on site

Important Ecological Features	Scale of Importance
Common pipistrelle day roosts	Site
Hedgehog	N/a – Precautionary only
Birds	N/a – Precautionary only
GCN	N/a – Precautionary only



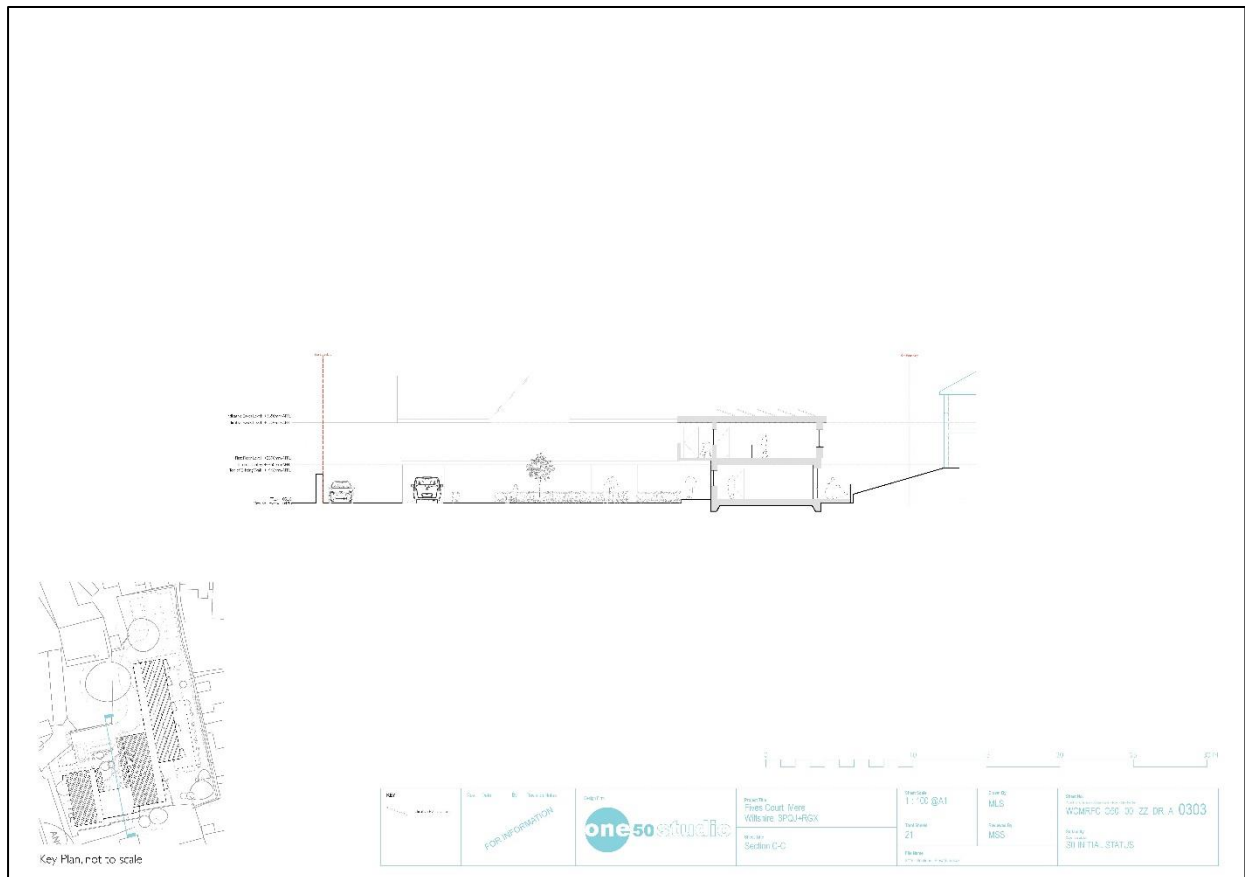


Figure 14 Site development (WCMRFC-050-00-ZZ-DR-A-0303- Section C-C -page-001)

6 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

6.1 Bats – Common Pipistrelle Roosts

Construction impacts

6.1.1 The works to the roof are likely to result in disturbance and destruction of the five roost locations for common pipistrelle bats. The roosts are located under gaps in fascia boards and under a security alarm. In order for these works to proceed lawfully, a licence from Natural England will be required. Considering the low conservation status of these roosts, these works can proceed under a low conservation status licence.

6.1.2 In order to secure a licence, the development proposals must demonstrate that the 'three legal tests' are met, these are:

- the activity must be for a certain purpose - for example, for scientific research or in the public interest;
- there must be no satisfactory alternative that will cause less harm to the species; and
- the activity must not harm the long-term conservation status of the species – you may need to create new habitats to offset any damage.

Test 1 - the activity must be for a certain purpose - for example, for scientific research or in the public interest.

6.1.3 The works proposed are deemed to fall into the category of 'in the public interest', in this case, providing social housing. Considering the low conservation status of the roost present this is considered to be sufficient to meet this test.

Test 2 - there must be no satisfactory alternative that will cause less harm to the species.

6.1.4 It is not feasible to undertake the works without the potential disturbance of bats or the destruction of the roosts. Considering the low conservation status of the roost present, this is considered to be sufficient to meet this test.

Test 3 - the activity must not harm the long-term conservation status of the species – you may need to create new habitats to offset any damage.

6.1.5 The roosts being impacted are of low conservation status. To ensure the conservation status of the common pipistrelle bats roosting in the structure is maintained, five bat boxes suitable for pipistrelle bats will be installed after the works have been completed. These will be installed within the property.

Mitigation

- 6.1.6 Works to the roof cannot commence until the licence is in place, this can only be secured once planning permission has been granted.
- 6.1.7 Due to the type of roost identified on the site, there will be no timing constraints for works.
- 6.1.8 Prior to works commencing, the structure will be checked by the licenced bat ecologist and contractors provided with a 'toolbox talk'. A temporary bat box suitable for crevice-dwelling species will be installed by the licensed bat ecologist. Any animals found prior to works commencing will be moved to this temporary bat box by the licensed bat ecologist.
- 6.1.9 A controlled 'soft-strip' of any alarm boxes or barge boards on all elevations will be undertaken under direct supervision of the licensed bat worker. The materials will be removed by hand in areas of bat interest. Any animals found during the 'soft-strip' will be moved by the licensed bat ecologist into the temporary bat box.

Operational impacts

- 6.1.1 The plans will require new bat roosting features to be provided within the new roof. A lighting plan will be required to ensure the new roost features are not near security lights, or other lighting features and there are movement corridors for bats to these features.
- 6.1.2 Overall, with the implementation of works under bat licence, with suitable compensation features installed and managed as per the licence conditions, **no significant impacts** on roosting common pipistrelle bats are predicted as a result of the development.

6.2 Birds

Construction impacts

- 6.2.1 Precautionary measures will be required to avoid impacts on nesting birds, such as sensitive timings of works or a pre-works check for nesting birds. These measures will be set out within the Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), secured by planning condition.

6.3 Hedgehog

Construction impacts

- 6.3.1 The site has low potential to support hedgehog and in the absence of mitigation, impacts on hedgehog could occur during site clearance, comprising injury or mortality of hedgehog foraging over site. Good practice measures to avoid impacts on hedgehog

comprise appropriate storage of materials to avoid creating refugia and a sensitive construction lighting plan. These measures will be set out within the CEMP, which can be secured by planning condition.

Operational impacts

- 6.3.2 To ensure hedgehog can continue to forage and commute over site post-construction, non-permeable lines of fencing (e.g. close-boarded fencing between gardens) will include a suitable 13cm x 13cm hedgehog hole to avoid impacting the ability of hedgehog to move across the site. The specification of these features will be detailed within the Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP), which can be secured by planning condition.

6.4 GCN

Construction impacts

- 6.4.1 The site is assessed to hold very low potential for GCN and therefore, precautionary measures will be implemented during vegetation clearance to ensure GCN are protected during the works.
- 6.4.2 The Rapid Risk Assessment (Natural England's licensing tool) was utilised to evidence whether a licence was likely to be required to allow the works to proceed legally. As shown in Figure 15 below, the Rapid Risk Assessment determined that an office is 'Highly Unlikely' and therefore, works can proceed under a precautionary method statement.

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)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.005
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.005
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

Figure 15 GCN Rapid Risk Assessment

- 6.4.3 The following measures will be implemented during vegetation to protect GCN:

- Any hedgerow, shrub or grassland requiring removal will be subject to a pre-works check by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE). The SQE will search the vegetation identified for removal and identify any amphibians present.

- Following the check, the vegetation will be cut to a minimum of 15cm, following which a second check and fingertip search will be carried out by the SQE.
- The vegetation will then be removed and any roots grubbed out, with the topsoil smoothed over to prevent creating cavities suitable for GCN and other amphibians.
- Works will be undertaken during the GCN active season (March-October inclusive) to avoid impacts on hibernating newts.
- If GCN are identified at any point during the clearance works, or during the construction period, works will cease and the SQE will assess the requirement for licensing to allow works to proceed legally.

6.4.4 Measures set out in Section 6.3.1 relating to hedgehog will also protect amphibians on site during the construction period.

6.5 Summary

6.5.1 A summary of the predicted significance of any effects, as well as the proposed mitigation/compensation measures and how these may be secured are outlined in Table 6.

Table 5 Summary of significance of effects and mitigation

Ecological Feature	Mitigation	Mechanism for securing delivery	Residual Effects
Common pipistrelle roosts	EPS licence for bats	Licence and CEMP secured by condition	None
Nesting birds	Removed potential nesting habitat out of bird breeding season or subject to a pre-works check.	CEMP secured by condition	N/a
Hedgehog	Precautionary construction measures. Measures to ensure site remains permeable post-construction.	CEMP secured by condition EEP secured by condition	N/a
GCN	Precautionary construction measures.	CEMP secured by condition, containing non-licensed method statement	N/a

6.6 Cumulative Effects

6.6.1 The following developments were identified near Mere:

- PL/2022/09365 - Land adjacent to Quarryfield Industrial Estate, Castle Street, Mere, BA12 6LA. New employment building (Use Class B2) with associated offices, access, car parking, service space, landscaping and associated development infrastructure.

- 20/11079/FUL - Land Adjacent Quarryfield Industrial Estate, Castle Street, Mere, BA12 6LA. Construction of a 70-bed care home with associated access, parking, sprinkler tank, bin store and landscaping.

6.6.2 As there are no predicted impacts as a result of the development, no cumulative impacts have been identified as likely in relation to the projects identified above.

7 ENHANCEMENTS

7.1 Habitats

7.1.1 All habitats will be managed for 30 years in line with BNG requirements. The following measures are recommended:

- Grasslands could be sown with a species-rich lawn mix such as Emorsgate EL1 Flowering Lawn Mixture.
- All tree planting should be native species. Using native species will encourage invertebrates, and in turn foraging for birds and bats.
- New native tree planting within the street scene and within areas of open space could include fruit-bearing species to provide a food source for birds and other species.
- A green roof will be built onto the bin storage.

7.2 Protected Species

7.2.1 Provisions for bats, birds and invertebrates could be installed integrally on new residential properties, to provide habitat for these species on site. This will comprise:

- 10 integral bat boxes suitable for crevice-dwelling bats.
- 5 woodland bird boxes.
- 3 swift boxes/ bricks.
- 10 bee bricks.

7.2.2 Habitat enhancement and management actions alongside the locations and management/ monitoring requirements for the protected species provisions will be set out within a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), which can be secured by planning condition.

8 MONITORING

- 8.1 The mitigation measures set out in Section 6 which will be supervised by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be recorded as a 'site note' by the ECoW, and if required made available to the LPA.
- 8.2 The provision of the ecological enhancements as set out in Section 7 will be subject to an ecological compliance report undertaken by the ECoW, which should be conditioned as part of the application.
- 8.3 The habitat on site provided for biodiversity net gain will be monitored for success every five years for 30 years. This will be the responsibility of the management company who will appoint an ecologist to undertake this.

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Surveys concluded the site supports a day roost for five common pipistrelle bats in five roost locations. It was assessed that the roosts are of 'low conservation status', in line with BCT guidance. This report includes mitigation regarding the need for a derogation licence from Natural England and the requirements for mitigation during the works. Whilst the proposed works will result in the destruction of the five common pipistrelle bat roosts, the mitigation and compensation measures outlined will not result in an impact on the favourable conservation status of the bats.
- 9.2 Following the mitigation outlined in this report there are predicted to be no significant impacts on biodiversity as a result of the development. The development is therefore in accordance with Wiltshire Council Core Policy 50, which relates to development proposals being required to be compliant with the mitigation hierarchy. The mitigation measures can be secured through an appropriate planning condition which ensures compliance with the measures set out within this EclA.
- 9.3 Suitable enhancements for habitats and protected species (bats, birds and invertebrates). These measures support Wiltshire Council Core Policy 50 and PSP19 Wider Biodiversity, which relate to providing biodiversity gains proportionate to the development proposals. As detailed within PSP19, the biodiversity gains can be secured through an appropriate planning condition and can be subject to a compliance check by a SQE.

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APPENDIX 1 BAT SURVEY DATA

The following section details the results of the bat emergence surveys at the site. Codes used in the description of bat species are as follows:

CP	Common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipitrellus</i>)
NOC	Noctule bat (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>)
SER	Serotine bat (<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>)
BLE	Brown long-eared bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>)
HNS	Heard not seen

Full results of the bat emergence surveys are detailed below, and the environmental variables recorded during the surveys are shown in Table 7.

Table 6 Emergence surveys environmental variables

Date	02/05/2024		20/06/2024		30/07/2024	
Sunset/Sunrise	20:30		21:17		20:58	
Start / End time	20:15	22:00	21:27	23:00	20:43	22:28
Temperature (°C)	11.1	11.5	16	16	23	21
Humidity (%)	81	71	70	68	64	66
Cloud cover (oktas)	8	8	3	1	1	2
Avg. Wind speed (m/s)	1.2	0.3	7	2	3	2
Rain	Earlier today		None		None	

2nd May 2024 Emergence Survey P1 (sunset: 20:30)

- 20:58– CP Foraging. Flew around yard towards garage.
- 21:00– CP Foraging. Came from behind building and flew down road towards gate.
- 21:04– CP foraging similar to before, flying back and forth over buildings.
- 21:07– CP foraging. Flew up again from behind building.
- 21:10– CP flew along road away from garage.
- 21:12– CP foraging, flew from behind building
- 21:18 – CP foraging. Came from behind building then went towards garage.
- 21:28– CP HNS.
- 21:42 – CP foraging, HNS.
- 21:48– CP foraging, HNS.
- 21:52– CP foraging, flying from behind building.

No emergences. Quiet survey, last CP heard contained social calls. 1 to 2 CP flying around building all night. Very few other bats heard.

2nd May 2024 Emergence Survey P2 (sunset: 20:30)

- 20:25:54 - bats in transit

- 20:45:18 - bat in transit
- 20:52:41 - bat in transit
- 21:04:44 - bat foraging
- 21:11:08 - bat foraging
- No emergence occurred

Only CP were recorded during the survey.

2nd May 2024 Emergence Survey P3 (sunset: 20:30)

- 20:55– CP Commuting along hedgerow to south, from east to west.
- 20:55 - CP came from Hedgerow to south. Foraging around lawn area & hedgerow.
- 21:10- CP foraging, flew over top of building, foraging around lawn & southern hedge.
- 21:22- CP foraging continued. Two bats present. Foraging over and around the building and open spaces.
- 21:28- CP foraging. Faint HNS.
- 21:28- CP brief forage by southern hedgerow.

No emergences. Common pip (up to two bats) frequently foraging around lawn area/ courtyard/ southern hedgerow early to mid-survey. Quiet during the second half. Very sporadic, brief and faint calls heard. No other bat species.

20th June 2024 Emergence Survey P1 (sunset: 21:30)

- 22:00 – CP Commuting S to N past surveyor. Low pass ~1.5m high.
- 22:06– CP pass over building E to W.
- 22:13– CP commuting from S to N then E over surveyor to gardens behind. Very low ~1.5m high.
- 22:16– **CP emerged from behind security light**, foraged around courtyard before flying S.
- 22:27– CP pass over building, foraging in courtyard then flew SE.
- 22:48– SER HNS.

Thermal 4

Relatively quiet. Mainly CP foraging or commuting with a single SER pass HNS. 1 single CP emerged from behind security light on N elevation of gable end. Most CP flying low <2m.

20th June 2024 Emergence Survey P3 (sunset: 21:43)

- 21:38 – CP bat emerged from building behind (top right)
- 21:41 – CP bat emerged from board above doorway
- 22:03 – CP commuting left to right
- 22:12 – CP re-entry into gable (front right)
- 22:28 – CP re-entry into board above doorway

- 22:42 – CP re-entry into board above garage door.

20th June 2024 Emergence Survey P3 (sunset: 21:30)

- 21.57 HNS
- 22.12 - 22.19. Flew north to south, likely over building. Foraged for around building for a few mins
- 22.23 - 22.25 foraging around trees along southeast of site boundary and circling building
- 22.27 foraging for a couple more mins
- 22.48 serotine flying south to north high overhead
- **Two CP Emerged** from barge board at right of apex and flew west. Very quiet survey with a couple of pips and a single NOC.

30th July 2024 Emergence Survey P1 (sunset: 20:43)

- 21:19 - **1x CP Emerged** from right of apex under barge board and flew west towards Angel Lane
- 21:23 – 1 x **CP Emerged** from same place and flew west
- 21:24 - SP foraging over surveyor
- 21:26 - CP foraging over surveyor
- 21:49 - SP HNS
- 22:08 – NOC pass HNS

Summary:

Thermal 5 at P1, thermal 6 at P2 with mini.

Two CP Emerged from barge board at right of apex and flew west. Very quiet survey with a couple of pips and a single NOC.

30th July 2024 Emergence Survey P2 (sunset: 20:43)

- 21:28 – CP commuting left to right
- 21:31 – CP **re-entry under drainage**, top right of door.
- 21:35 - commuting right to left
- 21:35 - **CP bat re-entry under ivy terminal barge board**, on far side of apex
- 21:39 – CP foraging (enters and exits right)
- 21:43 – CP foraging right to left
- 21:44 – CP commuting left to right
- 21:46 – CP commuting right to left

30th July 2024 Emergence Survey P3 (sunset: 20:43)

- 21:00 - **CP Emergence** - Flew southwest Around 21:00 Forging for ~18mins
- 21:22-21:40 - CP foraging
- 21:47 - CP foraging for 1min

- 21:56 - CP foraging Southwest
- 21:56 - BLE flying around in circles then flying south
- 21:59 - NOC HNS
- 22:09 - BLE HNS - short, quiet call

C pip emergence from apex, under barge board at gable end of larger building.
Two BLE commuting,
One NOC commuting,
Few pips foraging

APPENDIX 2 – POND ACCESS LETTER



5th August 2024



To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Access Request for Great Crested Newt Surveys

I am writing to ask for your permission to gain access to your land in order to carry out a great crested newt surveys on a pond located within your ownership. The location of the pond is shown in Figure 1 below.

The surveys will be used to inform a presence/absence survey of great crested newts in the local area. The best way to survey for great crested newts is to look for them in ponds during their breeding phase (between April and June) however, as we are outside the breeding season we will conduct a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) survey. Great crested newts are known to move up to 500m from their breeding ponds to areas of suitable habitat during the rest of the year, and so great crested newts present in the pond within your properties grounds during the breeding season may be present on the nearby site later in the year.

Survey Methods

A surveyor will visit the pond and conduct a HSI survey. This will comprise recording visible pond features including shading, aquatic vegetation level etc within the pond and is not intrusive. The survey will give an indication of the suitability of the pond to support great crested newts

We would be very grateful if you could help support our survey by granting access to your land. If you have any further queries about the survey, please contact me on the telephone number or email address below.

Yours sincerely,

Becky Morris
Ecologist
Ethos Environmental Planning Ltd
01225444114



Figure 16 Pond Location

APPENDIX 3 - DATA SEARCH RESULTS FOR BIRD SPECIES

Scientific name	Common name	Protection Level
<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Red Kite	BD1, WCA1i
<i>Apus apus</i>	Swift	BRed
<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Golden Plover	BD1
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing	BRed, Sect.41, UKBAP
<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Herring Gull	BRed
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Little Egret	BD1
<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Kingfisher	BD1, WCA1i
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Cuckoo	BRed, Sect.41, UKBAP
<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Hobby	WCA1i
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	BRed, Sect.41
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Snow Bunting	WCA1i
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Reed Bunting	Sect.41, UKBAP
<i>Chloris chloris</i>	Greenfinch	BRed
<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Brambling	WCA1i
<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Linnet	BRed
<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	House Martin	BRed
<i>Motacilla flava</i>	Yellow Wagtail	BRed
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Spotted Flycatcher	BRed, Sect.41, UKBAP
<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Black Redstart	WCA1i
<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Whinchat	BRed
<i>Poecile palustris</i>	Marsh Tit	BRed
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	BRed, Sect.41, UKBAP
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling	BRed
<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Redwing	WCA1i
<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Fieldfare	BRed, WCA1i