



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Land at High Street, Winterbourne Bassett,
Wiltshire, SN4 9QB

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Document History

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1	18/12/2025	Issued to the client.

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The evidence in this document is based upon the field survey(s) detailed. Due to the changing nature of ecology the list of species present cannot be considered comprehensive and Smart Ecology cannot guarantee that other protected/notable species and habitats are not present.

The ecology of a site is constantly changing and therefore the information provided in this document is only relevant at the time of survey. **If it has been over 12 months since this survey was undertaken advice should be sought on whether an updated survey is necessary.**

The evidence which we have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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Non-Technical Summary

Purpose of Report	Smart Ecology was commissioned by Catherine Pullan to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of Land at High Street, Winterbourne Bassett, Wiltshire, SN4 9QB. The purpose of the appraisal was to inform a full planning application to Wiltshire Council for the erection of two residential properties on the site.
Methodology	A desk study, UK Habitat Classification survey and an assessment for legally protected, notable and invasive non-native species were undertaken.

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts without Mitigation (refer to Section 4)	Required Mitigation (refer to Section 5.2)
Ditch	Pollution during works.	Implement good construction practices to ensure that the ditch is not polluted.
Hedgerows and trees	Damage during works.	Ensure that trees and hedgerows are protected during works.
Bats (foraging and commuting)	Artificial light spill onto hedgerows and ditch could disturb foraging and commuting bats.	Implement a sensitive lighting scheme to mitigate light spill onto hedgerows and ditch.
Badger, otter, brown hare, and hedgehog	Death/injury during site works.	Implement Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) during works to avoid injury/death.
Birds	Disturbance/destruction of active nests if sections of hedgerow and the bramble scrub are removed during the nesting bird season (which is typically March to August inclusive).	Remove hedgerow and bramble scrub outside the nesting bird season. If this is not possible then these must be checked for active nests by a qualified ecologist immediately before removal starts.
Amphibians and reptiles	Death/injury during site works.	Implement RAMs during works to avoid injury/death.

Conclusions	It is considered that the proposed development would not impact any statutory or non-statutory designated sites, ecologically important or protected habitats, or protected and notable species if the mitigation measures detailed in this report are implemented.
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Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Site Context.....	1
1.3	Aims.....	1
2	Methodology.....	2
2.1	Desk Study.....	2
2.2	Field Survey.....	2
2.3	Limitations.....	3
3	Baseline Ecological Conditions	4
3.1	Designated Sites.....	4
3.2	Habitats.....	4
3.3	Species	6
4	Ecological Constraints	12
4.1	Development Proposals	12
4.2	Great Crested Newt Rapid Risk Assessment	12
4.3	Evaluation of Potential Impacts.....	12
5	Surveys, Mitigation and Enhancements	14
5.1	Surveys.....	14
5.2	Mitigation.....	14
5.3	Biodiversity Net Gain and Enhancements.....	15
6	Conclusions.....	17
7	References.....	19
8	Figures	20
	Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Plan.....	21
	Appendix 2 – Survey Methodologies	22
	Appendix 3 – Target Notes.....	24
	Appendix 4 – Legislation and Planning Policy.....	25
	Appendix 5 – Reasonable Avoidance Measures	29



1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Smart Ecology was commissioned by Catherine Pullan (the client) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of Land at High Street, Winterbourne Bassett, Wiltshire, SN4 9QB (central national grid reference SU 09942 75094). Refer to Figure 1, Section 8 for a location map, which shows the survey area delimited by a red-line boundary (hereafter referred to as the “site”).
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the appraisal was to inform a full planning application to Wiltshire Council for the construction of two houses on the site. Refer to Appendix 1 for the proposed plans.
- 1.1.3 This report has been prepared with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017a), Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017b), and BS42020 Biodiversity – a code of practice for planners and developers (BSI, 2013).

1.2 Site Context

- 1.2.1 The site is approximately 0.13 ha and is situated in a rural location within the small village of Winterbourne Bassett. A hedgerow and ditch are located adjacent to the eastern site boundary, beyond which there is low-density housing. To the west there is also low-density housing, to the north there is a minor road beyond which there is low-density housing and agricultural development, and pasture is located to the south.

1.3 Aims

- 1.3.1 The purpose of the appraisal is to:
 - Identify any ecological constraints to the proposed development.
 - Inform appropriate mitigation measures.
 - Identify if any further surveys are required to inform an ecological impact assessment (if necessary).



2 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 A search was conducted for existing information about the site and surroundings. Refer to Table 2-1 for the sources reviewed and information obtained.
- 2.1.2 The search areas are considered sufficient to take into account ecological receptors which could potentially be impacted by the proposed development.

Table 2-1: Data search details

Source	Date Provided/ Accessed	Information	Search Area
Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC)	November 2025	• Statutory designated sites	1 km
		• Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones	Site
		• Priority habitats	100 m
		• Ancient woodlands	100 m
		• Granted European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences	1 km
		• Great crested newt licence returns and pond survey results	500 m
		• Mapped waterbodies	500 m
Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC)	November 2025	• Non-statutory designated sites • Protected and notable species • Invasive non-native species	1 km
HRA and Mitigation Strategy for Salisbury Plain SPA (Wiltshire Council, 2024)	November 2025	• SAC zone of influence	Site
Bat SAC Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (Wiltshire Council, 2015).	November 2025	• Bat SAC consultation zones and core areas	Site
Natural England Open Data Geoportal	November 2025	• Great crested newt risk zones	Site

2.2 Field Survey

- 2.2.1 This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal included the following surveys. Refer to Appendix 2 for full details of the survey methodologies.
- Extended UK Habitats Classification survey which included consideration of the potential of the site for protected and notable species.



- Ground level tree assessment of on-site trees to assess their suitability for roosting bats.

Personnel

- 2.2.2 The field survey was carried out by David Withington; see Table 2-2 for details of the surveyor's experience and qualifications.

Table 2-2: Surveyor information

Surveyor	Natural England Survey Licences	Qualifications/Experience
David Withington BSc, ACIEEM	Bats level 1 (2019-43816) Great crested newt level 1 (2017-29926)	Seven years' experience in ecological consultancy. Postgraduate diploma in environmental policy and management (University of Gloucestershire – merit).

Survey Weather Conditions

- 2.2.3 The survey was undertaken on the 10th of November 2025. See Table 2-3 for details of weather conditions during the survey.

Table 2-3: Survey weather conditions

Variable	Weather Conditions
Cloud cover	100 %
Temperature	10°C
Wind	Light breeze (BWS 2)
Precipitation	Light rain

2.3 Limitations

- 2.3.1 Some of the species records provided by WSBRC were at low spatial resolution and therefore the precise location of these records could not be determined, although they still provide background information on species present in the local area. Additionally, it must be noted that the accuracy of these records (e.g. correct species identification) has not been independently verified and that an absence of records does not necessarily mean that a species is not present within the search area.
- 2.3.2 Although the survey was carried out outside of the optimal period for surveys of grassland (which is May to August inclusive) species were still visible as the grassland had not been cut or grazed and the assemblage of species present was identifiable.
- 2.3.3 The survey was carried out outside of the bird breeding season and therefore nesting activity would not have been apparent. Additionally, nests are often hidden away in areas that are not viewable. However, it was still possible to identify any visible evidence of old nests and features with potential for use by nesting birds.



3 Baseline Ecological Conditions

3.1 Designated Sites

Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.1.1 Refer to Table 3-1 for details of statutory designated sites located within 1 km of the site.

Table 3-1: Statutory designated sites within 1 km

Site Name	Approximate Distance from Site (m)	Direction and Connectivity	Description
None within 1 km			

SAC Zones of Influence

- 3.1.2 The site is not situated within a SAC Zone of Influence.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones

- 3.1.3 The site is not situated in a location with a relevant risk category.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.1.4 Refer to Table 3-2 for details of non-statutory designated sites located within 1 km of the site.

Table 3-2: Non-statutory designated sites within 1 km

Site Name	Approximate Distance from Site (m)	Description
Richardson Wood Local Wildlife Site	930	A small stand of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland.

3.2 Habitats

Mapped Priority Habitats and Ancient Woodlands

- 3.2.1 Refer to Table 3-3 for details of priority habitat and ancient woodland records within 100 m of the site.

Table 3-3: Priority habitat and ancient woodland records within 100 m

Priority Habitat and Ancient Woodlands	Details
None within 100 m	



UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.2.2 The location and extent of habitats within the site are shown on the UK Habitat Classification Plan; see Figure 2, Section 8.
- 3.2.3 Target Notes (TN) were made for any habitats which were too small to be mapped. These are provided in Appendix 3 and plotted on the UK Habitats Classification Plan.

Modified Grassland – g4 518 (neglected)



- 3.2.4 The majority of the site comprised unmanaged modified grassland. Species present included cock's foot, tall fescue, rye-grass species, meadow-grass species, creeping thistle, nettle, broad-leaved dock, creeping buttercup, common ragwort, ground ivy, white dead-nettle, cow parsley and bramble. Within the north-western corner of the site there was approximately 10 m² of dense bramble and common nettle (TN1).
- 3.2.5 Within the western section of the site there was an area of bare earth (TN2) created by site vehicles accessing the adjacent building site. It is assumed that this was, until recently, grassland similar to the rest of the site.



- 3.2.6 A fenced-off area in the south-west corner of the site contained an area of grassland with a higher abundance of nettle and creeping thistle, which extended off-site. This area contained an immature ash and a semi-mature field maple, both of which were off-site.

Species-Rich Native Hedgerow – h2a5 116 (flailed hedgerow) 200 (tree)



- 3.2.7 A defunct hedgerow was present along the northern site boundary which included an immature silver birch tree and a silver birch sapling with a trunk diameter of less than 75 mm at chest height. Woody species present included dogwood, common hawthorn, hazel, field maple, rose species, and osier willow.
- 3.2.8 The hedgerow is classified as hedgerow priority habitat as it contained more than 80 % coverage of at least one native woody species.

3.3 Species

- 3.3.1 Species records provided by WSBRC are summarised in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4: Summary of desk study species records

Group	Species	Number of Records	Closest Record (m)	Additional Information
Bats	Brown long-eared	3	Not known	All records were for roosts, the precise locations were not provided.
	Unidentified	3		
Birds	31 species	75	100 (+/- 10 m)	Closest records of woodpigeon and wren.
Other mammals	Badger	13	140 (+/- 100 m)	
	Brown hare	6	110 (+/- 1 km)	
	Hedgehog	2	960 (+/- 100 m)	
	Water vole	29	460 (+/- 100 m)	
Plants	Nine species	16	110 (+/- 1 km)	Closest records were for box, round-leaved mint, and smooth brome.

3.3.2 Table 3-5 provides details of an assessment of the suitability of habitats on and close to the site for protected, notable, and invasive non-native species/groups, details of any evidence of these species/groups, and an assessment of the likelihood that these species/groups occur on or close to the site.



Table 3-5: Suitability for protected and notable species/groups and invasive non-native species

Species/ Group	Habitat Assessment	Evidence	Likelihood of Presence/Occurrence
Bats (foraging and commuting)	The hedgerows, and ditch located adjacent to the eastern site boundary, were suitable commuting and foraging habitat, providing connectivity through the site and to habitats in the local landscape. The on-site modified grassland provided habitat which is likely to be of lower value for foraging bats.	N/A	POTENTIALLY PRESENT The site provided a small area of suitable habitat and it is considered that bats would use on-site and adjacent habitats for foraging and commuting.
Bats (roosting)	There were no buildings or trees with potential roost features on, or close to, the site.	None.	NEGLIGIBLE Records of brown long-eared bat roost and an unidentified bat species roost within 1 km, precise locations were not provided. There were no records of EPS licences granted for bats within 1 km of the site. There were no potential roost features on, or close to the site.
Birds	The modified grassland provided a small area of suitable foraging habitat and the adjacent hedgerow was suitable for nesting and foraging.	None.	POTENTIALLY PRESENT Records of multiple species within 1 km, the closest records were of a woodpigeon and wren 100 m (+/- 10 m) from the site. The site provided suitable habitat and it is considered likely that birds, including nesting birds, would be present.
Badger	The modified grassland provided a small area of suitable foraging habitat. There was no evidence of setts present on or adjacent to the site.	None.	POTENTIALLY PRESENT Several records within 1 km of the site, the closest being 140 m (+/- 100 m) from the site. The site provided some suitable habitat and it is possible that badger could use the site for foraging and dispersal.



Species/ Group	Habitat Assessment	Evidence	Likelihood of Presence/Occurrence
Hazel dormouse	The hedgerows on and adjacent to the site provided sub-optimal habitat and did not connect to sufficiently extensive woodland habitat in the local landscape with at least 20 ha of suitable habitat more likely to support dormouse populations (Bullion et al, 2025).	None.	NEGLIGIBLE No records within 1 km of the site. The hedgerows provided poor-quality suitable habitat, and had no connectivity to large areas of suitable habitat which could support dormice. Taking into account the absence of records within 1 km of the site, it is concluded that there is a negligible likelihood that dormice would occur in the hedgerows.
Otter	The ditch located adjacent to the site was considered to provide sub-optimal habitat as it was dry on one side of the road and had very shallow water from a surface drain on the other. There was no aquatic vegetation. The vertical banks were approximately 2 m high and lined with gabions. The ditch discharges into the River Kennet approximately 800 m to the south of the site.	None.	POTENTIALLY PRESENT No records within 1 km of the site. Although the ditch was not suitable for foraging or holts, the course of the ditch may be used for commuting otter and so there is the potential for otter to pass through the site.
Water vole	No suitable habitat on the site. The banks of the adjacent ditch were gabion lined and so not suitable for creating burrows.	None.	NEGLIGIBLE Records of water vole within 1 km of the site, the closest record was approximately 460 m from the site. All sightings originated from the River Kennet to the east of the site. The site provided negligible suitable habitat and it is considered unlikely that water vole would be present.
Other mammals	Suitable habitat on the site for hedgehog and brown hare.	None.	POTENTIALLY PRESENT (brown hare and hedgehog) Records of hedgehog and brown hare within 1 km, with one record for brown hare potentially originating from within the site boundary. Suitable habitat for brown hare and hedgehog and it is considered possible that these species could be present.



Species/ Group	Habitat Assessment	Evidence	Likelihood of Presence/Occurrence
Amphibians	No waterbodies were located on the site nor within 250 m. Three waterbodies were identified within 250 – 500 m, the closest of which was approximately 300 m from the site. The site provided a small area of suitable foraging and dispersal habitat. The base of hedgerows provided suitable dispersal, foraging and refuge habitat. No higher-quality suitable habitat was present in the immediate vicinity of the site.	None.	POTENTIALLY PRESENT (common species) The site is located within a green risk zone for great crested newt. No records within 1 km of the site. There were no records of EPS licences granted for great crested newt or survey returns within 1 km of the site. The site provided some suitable habitat for amphibians. As the closest waterbody is approximately 300 m from the site and waterbodies within 250 – 500 m from the site are located close to good quality terrestrial habitat it is considered unlikely that great crested newt would occur on the site as great crested newt predominantly remain within 250 m of breeding ponds when good quality habitat surrounds them (Langton et al, 2001).
Reptiles	Unmanaged grassland alongside hedgerows provided suitable foraging and dispersal habitat. Hedgerows provided suitable dispersal, foraging and refuge habitat.	None	POTENTIALLY PRESENT No records within 1 km of the site. The site provided a small extent of suitable habitat for reptiles and it is considered possible that they would occur on-site.
Invertebrates	On-site habitats were common and ubiquitous and are considered unlikely to support protected or notable species. Suitable habitat on-site for common species.	None	LIKELY PRESENT (common species) No records within 1 km of the site. The site provided some suitable habitat for invertebrates, and it is considered possible that common and widespread species could be present.



Species/ Group	Habitat Assessment	Evidence	Likelihood of Presence/Occurrence
Plants	On-site habitats provided negligible potential for rare or notable species to be present.	None	NEGLECTIBLE Several records within 1 km, most were for low precision locations. The site provided widespread and common habitats and it is considered unlikely that protected or notable plant species would be present.
Invasive non-native species	N/A	None	NEGLECTIBLE No records within 1 km of the site.



4 Ecological Constraints

4.1 Development Proposals

4.1.1 The assessment of impacts is based on the proposed site plan which is provided in Appendix 1.

4.1.2 It is proposed to erect two residential properties on the site which would result in:

- Loss of 1332 m² of modified grassland.
- Loss of 10 m² of bramble scrub.
- The removal of sections of the on-site roadside hedgerow to create new access onto the site and the incorporation of the retained hedgerow into private gardens.

4.2 Great Crested Newt Rapid Risk Assessment

4.2.1 A Natural England Rapid Risk Assessment (RRA) was undertaken (see Figure 4-1), which is an assessment of the likelihood that the proposed development would result in an offence being committed with respect to great crested newts. This RRA assumes that great crested newts are present within the three waterbodies identified within 500 m of the site and that 0.13 ha of suitable habitat would be cleared. It is also assumed that precautionary methods of working would be implemented during site clearance and works to avoid impacts on individual great crested newts. This RRA indicates that it is highly unlikely that the proposed development would result in an offence being committed with respect to great crested newts.

Component	Likely effect	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100 m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100 – 250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250 m 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 4-1: Rapid Risk Assessment (Natural England, 2020)

4.3 Evaluation of Potential Impacts

4.3.1 Statutory and non-statutory designated sites, protected and ecologically valuable habitats, and protected and notable species may pose a constraint if there is potential for them to be impacted by a proposed development. Invasive non-native species may also pose a constraint to development and provide opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of a site by their removal or control.



- 4.3.2 Table 4-1 provides an assessment of potential impacts on ecological features in the absence of mitigation. Only designated sites and protected and ecologically valuable habitats which could be impacted by the proposed development and species which were present or assessed to have the potential to be present on or close to the site are included. Features highlighted in blue have the potential to pose a constraint to the proposed development of the site and would require further surveys and/or mitigation (see Section 5).

Table 4-1: Potential impacts on ecological features

Ecological Feature	Anticipated/Potential Impacts Without Mitigation
Richardson Wood Local Wildlife Site	Given the scale and nature of the proposed development and the distance to the Local Wildlife Site, it is considered that there would be no impact on this non-statutory designated site due to the proposed development.
Ditch (adjacent to the site)	Pollution of the ditch during works, which could result in pollution of downstream watercourses.
Modified grassland and bramble scrub	It is considered that the loss of these habitats would not have a significant biodiversity impact as they are common and widespread habitats, and the bramble scrub is very small in area.
Hedgerow and trees	Damage to hedgerows and trees during works.
Bats (foraging and commuting)	Artificial light spill onto hedgerows and ditch could disturb foraging and commuting bats.
Birds	Destruction of active nests if hedgerow and/or bramble scrub are removed during the nesting season (which is typically March until the end of August).
Badger, otter, hedgehog, and brown hare	Loss of a small area of suitable habitat is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on local mammal populations. Further and more extensive suitable habitat in the local landscape. Death or injury during site works.
Amphibians and reptiles	Loss of a small area of suitable habitat is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on local populations. Further and more extensive suitable habitat in the local landscape. Death or injury during site works.
Invertebrates	Loss of a small area of suitable habitat is considered unlikely to have a significant impact on local invertebrate populations.

5 Surveys, Mitigation and Enhancements

5.1.1 The following mitigation is required to ensure that the proposal is compliant with legislation and planning policy. Additionally, enhancements are recommended in compliance with planning policy.

5.1.2 For full details of legislation and planning policy refer to Appendix 4.

5.1 Surveys

5.1.1 No further surveys are considered necessary.

5.2 Mitigation

5.2.1 The following mitigation must be implemented to avoid impacts on habitats and species.

Ditch

5.2.1 Good construction practices must be implemented during site clearance and construction to ensure that the ditch located adjacent to the site is not polluted. This should include use of silt fences or fibre bund (where necessary), careful storage of fuels and chemicals on an impervious base sited away from the ditch, covering material stockpiles and minimising the amount of time the ground is left bare.

Hedgerows

5.2.2 Maintain a minimum 2 m wide buffer area between the edge of hedgerows and works, delimited by a temporary fence or barrier tape or using suitable ground protection. Where necessary, this protection must be installed before works commence and retained throughout the construction period. Where trees are present within hedgerows the root protection area around the trees must be increased to 12 times the tree stem diameter. If it is not possible to maintain a suitable root protection area then it is recommended that an arboriculturist is consulted for advice on how to mitigate impacts.

Bats

5.2.3 Additional artificial illumination of habitats on and in the vicinity of the site could disturb foraging and commuting bats. Therefore, it is recommended that external lighting is not installed. If external lighting is essential then it is recommended that it is kept to a minimum and follows the specifications detailed in ILP Guidance Note 8: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (ILP, 2023) which includes:

- Use of LED luminaires with a warm white light source (2700 Kelvin or lower) to reduce blue light component.
- Using light sources with a peak wavelength higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats.
- Mounting luminaires horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt



- Setting external lighting on motion sensors and using as short a timer as possible; for most general residential purposes a 1 or 2 minute timer is likely to be appropriate.

Birds

- 5.2.4 Removal of sections of hedgerow and bramble scrub should ideally take place outside the nesting bird season which is typically March to August inclusive. If this is not possible then they must be checked for active nests by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately before the removal of these habitats starts; if active nests were then discovered they would have to be left undisturbed until the young had left the nest.

Badger, Brown Hare, Otter, and Hedgehog

- 5.2.5 Implement Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) during works to avoid injury/death. Appropriate RAMs are provided in Appendix 5.

Amphibians and Reptiles

- 5.2.6 Implement RAMs during site clearance and works to avoid injury/death. Appropriate RAMs are provided in Appendix 5.

5.3 Biodiversity Net Gain and Enhancements

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.3.1 The development will be required to provide 10% mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). A metric has been completed and the results provided in a Biodiversity Net Gain Report (Smart Ecology, 2025). The BNG assessment indicates that 10% BNG must be achieved through the purchase of off-site biodiversity units.

Other Biodiversity Enhancements

- 5.3.2 It is recommended that enhancements for species are incorporated into the proposed development in line with the NPPF and local planning policy. Details of opportunities to permit additional species enhancements are provided in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1: Opportunities for biodiversity enhancements for species

Opportunity	Details
Bird boxes	Install bird boxes on the site. Ideally these should be integrated into the walls of the proposed new buildings. If this is not feasible then they could be mounted on external walls. Suitable boxes include: Integrated • PRO UK Rendered Build-In swift box. • Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow nest box. • Woodstone Build-in Open nest box. Wall mounted • Vivara Pro WoodStone Swift nest box. • Vivara Pro Seville 28 mm or 32 mm WoodStone nest box. • Vivara Pro WoodStone House Martin nest.



Opportunity	Details
	Nest boxes must be installed at least 3 m above ground level (5 m for swift boxes), face between the north and east, and be at least 0.5 m away from any perches (e.g. doors, windows, vents, downpipes, vegetation) which may be used by predators. Birds must have a clear flight path to and from the boxes. Swift bricks must be installed in clusters of at least two bricks per elevation, with at least 1 m between bricks. House martin nest cups must be installed in groups of at least four.
Bat boxes	Install bat boxes on the site. Ideally these should be integrated into the walls of the proposed new buildings. If this is not feasible then they could be mounted on external walls. Suitable boxes include: Integrated • 1FR Schwegler bat tube. • Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone bat tube. • Ibstock Enclosed bat box. Wall mounted • Beaumaris Woodstone bat box. • 1FF Schwegler bat box. Bat boxes must be installed at least 3 m above ground level, facing to the south, south-west and/or south-east, located away from windows and other artificial light sources, and with a clear flight path to and from the entrance.
Hedgehog nest boxes	One or more hedgehog nest boxes could be installed in sheltered areas to provide permanent nesting opportunities for hedgehogs.



6 Conclusions

Development Proposal

- 6.1.1 The assessment of impacts is based on the proposed plans; see Appendix 1.
- 6.1.2 It is proposed to erect two residential properties within the site. This would result in:
- Loss of 1332 m² of modified grassland.
 - Loss of 10 m² of bramble scrub.
 - The removal of sections of the on-site roadside hedgerow to create new access onto the site and the incorporation of the retained hedgerow into private gardens.

Designated Sites

- 6.1.3 It is considered that the proposed development would not impact any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.

Habitats

- 6.1.4 It is considered that the proposed development would not impact any ecologically important or protected habitats if the mitigation measures in this report are implemented.

Species

- 6.1.5 It is considered that the proposed development would not impact any protected or notable species provided that the mitigation measures in this report are implemented.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.1.6 A Biodiversity Net Gain report has been produced (Smart Ecology, 2025). The assessment indicates that 10% BNG must be achieved through the purchase of off-site biodiversity units.

Summary

- 6.1.7 A summary of potential impacts which could arise from the proposed development and details of required/potentially required mitigation are provided in Table 6-1.

Table 6-1: Potential impacts and required/potentially required mitigation

Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts without Mitigation (refer to Section 4)	Required Mitigation (refer to Sections 5.2)
Ditch	Pollution during works.	Implement good construction practices to ensure that the ditch is not polluted.
Hedgerows and trees	Damage during works.	Ensure that trees and hedgerows are protected during works.
Bats (foraging and commuting)	Artificial light spill onto hedgerows and ditch could disturb foraging and commuting bats.	Implement a sensitive lighting scheme to mitigate light spill onto hedgerows and ditch.



Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts without Mitigation (refer to Section 4)	Required Mitigation (refer to Sections 5.2)
Badger, otter, brown hare, and hedgehog	Death/injury during site works.	Implement Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) during works to avoid injury/death.
Birds	Disturbance/destruction of active nests if sections of hedgerow and the bramble scrub are removed during the nesting bird season (which is typically March to August inclusive).	Remove hedgerow and bramble scrub outside the nesting bird season. If this is not possible then these must be checked for active nests by a qualified ecologist immediately before removal starts.
Amphibians and reptiles	Death/injury during site works.	Implement RAMs during works to avoid injury/death.



7 References

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8 Figures

Figure 1 – Site Location Map

Figure 2 – UK Habitat Classification Plan





**Figure 1 -
Site Location**

Land at High Street,
Winterbourne Bassett,
Wiltshire,
SN4 9QB

 Site boundary

Base map and data from
OpenStreetMap and OpenStreetMap
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Figure 2 -
UK Habitats
Classification Plan
Land at High Street,
Winterbourne Bassett,
Wiltshire,
SN4 9QB

- Site boundary
- Scattered broadleaved trees
- Target notes
- h2a5 - species-rich native hedgerow
- g4 - modified grassland

Secondary Codes
116 - Flailed hedgerow
200 - Tree

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Figure 3 -
Waterbody Locations

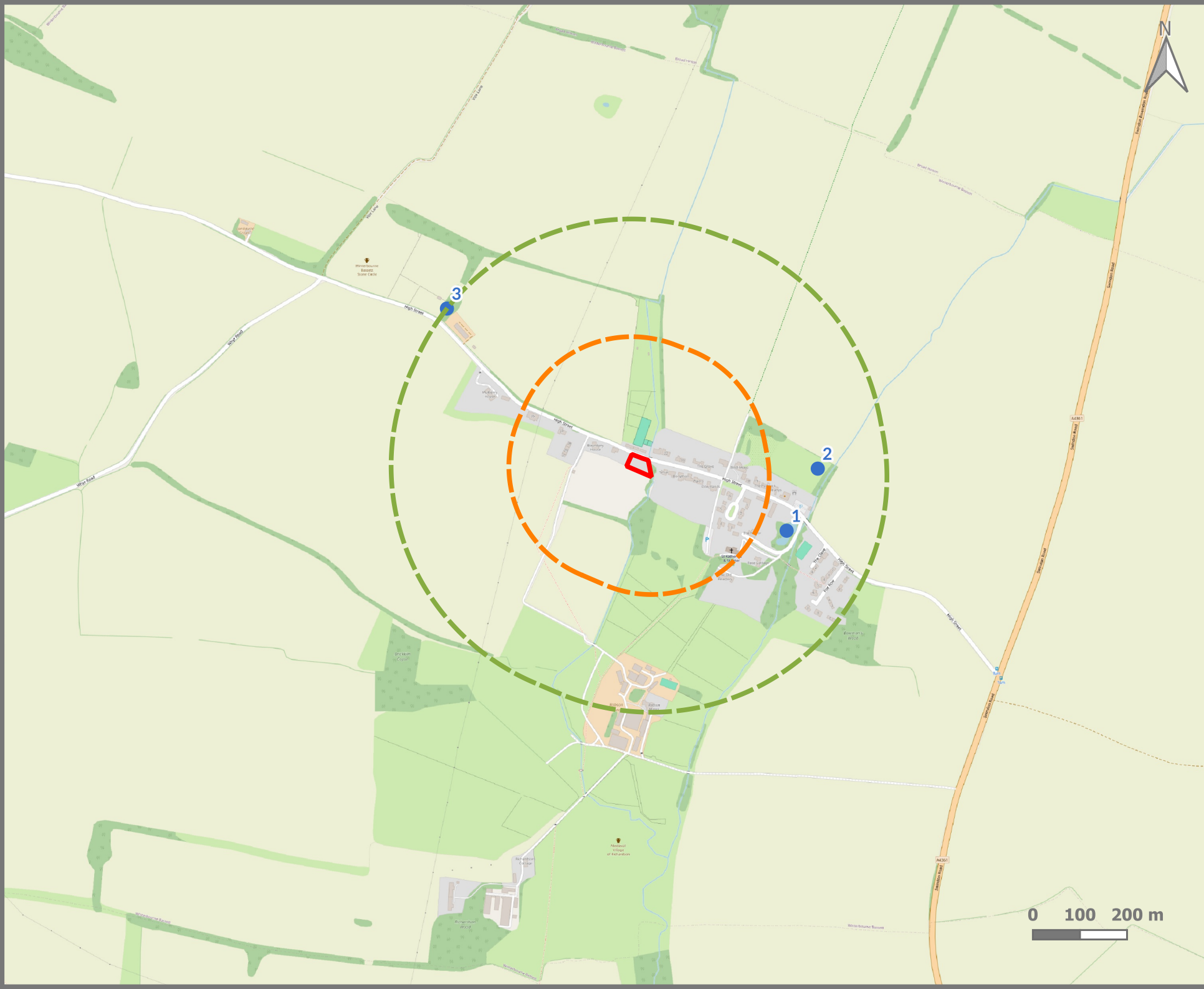
Land at High Street,
Winterbourne Bassett,
Wiltshire,
SN4 9QB

- Site boundary
- 250 m buffer
- 500 m buffer
- Waterbodies

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Appendix 1 – Proposed Site Plan

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Appendix 2 – Survey Methodologies

A2.1.1 The survey methods followed to inform this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are provided in this Appendix.

A2.2 UK Habitat Classification Survey

A2.2.1 A walkover of the site was undertaken to map the habitats present. The habitats were mapped and classified using the UK Habitats Classification system, with a minimum mapping unit of 25m² (UKHab, 2023). Additionally, any priority habitats within the site were identified and habitats assessed for evidence of, and potential to support, legally protected¹, notable² and invasive non-native species. Any evidence of, and potential for, such species was recorded. Target Notes (TN) were made for any evidence of, or features with particular suitability for legally protected, notable and invasive non-native species; these are provided in Appendix 3 and plotted on the UK Habitat Classification Plan (Figure 2, Section 8).

A2.3 Bats

Ground Level Tree Assessments (GLTA)

- A2.3.1 Trees were inspected for potential roost features (PRFs) for bats from ground level using a high-powered torch (Clulite 1 million candle power) and close focusing (8.5 x 21) binoculars. Trees were viewed from all angles and any potential roost features (e.g. woodpecker holes, rot holes, hazard beams etc.) or evidence of bats (e.g. droppings, odour, staining etc.) were noted.
- A2.3.2 An assessment was then made of the suitability of the tree for bats (see Table A2-1) and then the potential suitability of each potential roost feature identified for bats (see Table A2-2) with reference to the BCT good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Table A2-1: Suitability of trees for bats

Suitability	Description
None	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present.

¹ Legally protected species include species afforded protection by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

² Notable species include priority species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, UK red data book species, and Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC).



Table A2-2: Potential roost feature suitability

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Appendix 3 – Target Notes

Number	Description	Photographs
TN1	Bramble scrub in the north-east corner of the site.	
TN2	Area of bare earth caused by access to the adjacent site.	

Appendix 4 – Legislation and Planning Policy

A4.1 Legislation

A4.1.1 Certain species and habitats are legally protected in the UK by legislation. The key pieces of legislation are:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997.
- The Environment Act 2021.

A4.1.2 The implications of legislation with regard to species are provided in Table A4-1.

A4.1.3 Only a brief summary of wildlife legislation is provided here for general guidance and should not be considered a definitive statement of the law. For detailed information the legislation itself should be consulted.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

A4.1.4 These Regulations transpose the EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law. The Regulations require the designation and protection of European Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) and the protection of European Protected Species (EPS).

A4.1.5 A EPS mitigation licence is required if works affect EPS (e.g. bats) or their places of rest or breeding sites. EPS licences are issued by Natural England only after the following three tests have been satisfied:

- The proposed works must be for the purpose of preserving public health or safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.
- There is no satisfactory alternative to the proposed works.
- The proposed works will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

A4.1.6 It will be necessary to determine whether any European Sites or EPS may be impacted, either directly or indirectly, by the proposed development.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

A4.1.7 This Act implements the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Directive) and the EU Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive).



A4.1.8 The Act provides protection to a range of animal and plant species. It also requires sites with special wildlife or geological interest to be designated nationally as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

A4.1.9 It will be necessary to consider whether the proposed development would have any direct or indirect impacts on any SSSI or species listed in relevant schedules of the Act.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

A4.1.10 Section 40 of this Act places a duty on public authorities to 'have regard' to conserving biodiversity when determining planning applications. Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species and habitats of principal importance to biodiversity (priority species and habitats). The local planning authority must 'have regard' to conserving these species and habitats when determining a planning application. The development would need to mitigate for any impacts on priority habitats and species.

A4.1.11 The proposed development would need to mitigate for any impacts on priority habitats and species.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

A4.1.12 This Act provides specific protection for badgers and their setts from harm and disturbance.

A4.1.13 The proposed development would need to mitigate any impacts on badgers and setts.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

A4.1.14 This Act makes it an offence to intentionally inflict unnecessary suffering on a wild mammal through mutilation, kicking, beating, nails, impaling, stabbing, burning, stoning, crushing, drowning, dragging, or asphyxiation.

A4.1.15 Care would have to be taken during the construction phase of the proposed development to ensure that unnecessary suffering is not inflicted.

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997

A4.1.16 These Regulations protect most hedgerows from removal unless permissioned by a local planning authority. They also provide historic and ecological criteria for defining important hedgerows. A local planning authority can only refuse permission to remove a hedgerow under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 if a hedgerow is assessed to be important.

A4.1.17 The proposed development should aim to retain and protect hedgerows and mitigate for impacts.

The Environment Act 2021

A4.1.18 This Act sets statutory targets in four priority areas: biodiversity, air quality, water, and waste, and includes a new target to reverse the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030. The Act also makes provisions for a mandatory 10% net gain in biodiversity for most developments covered by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



Table A4-1: Implications of legislation with regard to species

Legislation	Species	Legal Implications
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)	- Bats - Hazel dormouse - Otter - Great crested newt	It is illegal to: - Deliberately capture, injure or kill these species. - Deliberately disturb¹ these species. - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by these species.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – sub-sections 9(4) b and c and 9(5) only	- Bats - Hazel dormouse - Otter - Great crested newt	It is illegal to: - Intentionally or recklessly disturb these species while they are occupying a structure or place of shelter or protection. - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place of shelter or protection.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	Birds	It is illegal to intentionally: - Kill, injure or take any wild bird. - Take, damage or destroy a wild bird's nest while it is in use or being built. - Take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird. There is additional protection for birds listed on Schedule 1 (S1) of the Act, which includes barn owls, whereby it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a S1 bird while building a nest or in or near a nest containing eggs or young, and disturb dependent young of a S1 bird.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	- Water vole - Pine marten	It is illegal to: - Intentionally kill, take, or injure these species. - Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a place of shelter or protection. - Intentionally or recklessly disturb these species while they are occupying a structure or place of shelter or protection. - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a structure or place of shelter or protection.
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – sub-sections 9(1) (partial) and 9(5) only	Common reptile species	It is illegal to: Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure common lizard, slow worm, grass snake, and adder.
NERC Act 2006	Priority species	Local planning authorities must '<i>have regard</i>' to conserving priority species. Priority species include several bat and bird species, otter, hazel dormouse, water vole, hedgehog, brown hare, harvest mouse, polecat, common reptile species, great crested newt, and common toad.
Protection of Badgers Act 1992	Badger	It is illegal to: - Wilfully capture, kill or injure a badger. - Damage, destroy or obstruct access to setts. - Disturb badgers in setts.

¹ Disturbance under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) is defined as impairing the ability of an animal to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young, hibernate or migrate, or to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.

A4.2 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

- A4.2.1 Paragraph 187 states that planning decisions should protect sites of biodiversity value, minimise biodiversity impacts, and contribute to net biodiversity gains.
- A4.2.2 Paragraph 193 states that planning permission should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.
- A4.2.3 The NPPF emphasises the need to consider biodiversity at a landscape scale, conserving, restoring and enhancing priority habitats and ecological networks, and protecting priority species. The NPPF also specifies the need to protect designated sites from adverse harm and to protect irreplaceable habitats (e.g. ancient woodland and veteran trees).
- A4.2.4 The proposed development would need to mitigate for impacts on biodiversity and provide net biodiversity gains where possible.**

Local Planning Policy

- A4.2.5 The presence of EPS, including bats, is a material consideration in the planning process and local planning authorities will refuse planning permission where a EPS licence is unlikely to be granted and a criminal offence relating to an EPS is likely to result from a development.
- A4.2.6 The Wiltshire Council Core Strategy 2015 sets out policies for development and land use in Wiltshire. Two policies are relevant to ecology and biodiversity at this site; refer to Table A4-2 for details. Refer to the original document for full wording of these policies.

Table A4-2: Wiltshire Core Strategy policies with relevance to ecology and biodiversity

Policy	Details
Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Protection: Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation. 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. 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. 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: All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Local Sites: Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites.
Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure	Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure.



Appendix 5 – Reasonable Avoidance Measures

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Reasonable Avoidance Measures

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The following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) must be implemented to minimise the risk of injuring or killing mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles during site clearance and construction.

1. Site Induction

The client or site manager must ensure that contractors are aware of the potential for protected species to be present on the site and the requirements to implement these RAMs during works.

These RAMs must be printed out and kept on site for contractors to view during works.

An identification guide for great crested newt is provided at the end of these RAMs and this must be printed out and displayed for all contractors to see.

If a great crested newt is found anywhere on the site then works in the vicinity of the animal must immediately stop and a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist must be consulted for advice on how to proceed.

2. Timings

If the clearance of any habitats with suitability for nesting birds (e.g. trees, hedgerows, shrubs, scrub) is to be carried out during the bird nesting season (i.e. between March and August inclusive) then a check for nesting birds must be undertaken immediately before clearance works start. If active bird nests are found then works in the area around the nests must stop until the young have left the nest.

Clearance of any habitats with suitability for reptiles and amphibians (e.g. tall vegetation, rough grassland, log piles, debris piles, scrub, tree/hedgerow roots) will be undertaken during the reptile and amphibian active season (April to September inclusive).

Clearance timings (blue shading shows when tasks must be carried out)

Task	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Clearance of habitat with suitability for nesting birds (e.g. trees, hedgerows, shrubs, scrub).			Must be checked for bird nests prior to removal between March and August.									
Clearance of habitats with suitability for reptiles and amphibians (e.g. tall vegetation, rough grassland, log piles, debris piles, scrub, tree/hedgerow roots).												



3. Site Clearance

Any areas of short vegetation with limited suitability for species (e.g. short mown lawn) must be maintained at a short height until works start (maximum height of 30 mm).

Any potential refugia (e.g. compost heaps, log piles, dry stone walls, brash, piles of stone/rock/debris) must be carefully removed by hand.

Clearance of any tall vegetation (e.g. tall vegetation, grassland, scrub) must be undertaken using the following phased approach:

- Day 1 – cut vegetation to a height of 150 mm
- Day 2 – cut vegetation to a height of 75 mm
- Day 3 – cut vegetation to a height of 30 mm

Vegetation must be strimmed or brush cut and all cuttings must be raked and removed from the clearance area on the same day.

Once cut all areas will be maintained at a short height.

Any small mammals, amphibians (except great crested newt), and reptiles found during site clearance and works must be carefully moved outside of the works area using gloved hands or a suitable container.

If a great crested newt is found at any time during works, then work must stop immediately and an ecologist must be contacted for advice.



4. Construction

- All building materials must be stored on pallets or hardstanding to deter mammals, amphibians and reptiles from sheltering underneath.
- All waste must be stored in skips or containers and not in piles on the ground.
- All excavations must be covered overnight, or a ramp at least 40 cm wide must be installed, with an angle no steeper than 40 degrees, to enable animals to escape.
- Any open pipe work must be capped overnight.
- Excavations must be checked every morning to ensure there are no trapped animals. Any animals present must be left to escape by their own volition (badgers), or carefully moved outside of the works area by gloved hand or using a suitable container (other mammals, amphibians and reptiles). **However, if a great crested newt is found then work must stop immediately, and an ecologist contacted.**



Smooth newt

A widespread species which breeds in a variety of water bodies. Often found in garden ponds.



Male

Female

Both sexes have an orange or yellow belly stripe and rounded spots, which are larger in the male.



Male

Female

Grows to about 10 cm. Breeding male has an undulating crest running from head to tail tip.



Non-breeding male

Non-breeding adults live mostly on land. Juveniles live entirely on land.



Juvenile (eft)

Palmate newt

Grows to 9 cm. Breeding male has a ridge running along the back, rather than a crest. Dark, webbed hind feet, and tail ends in filament.

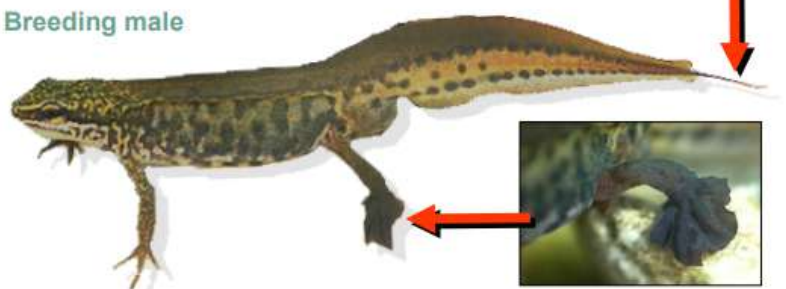


Non-breeding male



There are two pale coloured nodules on the underside of the hind feet of the female.

Breeding male



Female



Female looks similar to smooth newt.



Palmate



Smooth

Throat of palmate newt has no pigment (looks pink). Throat of smooth newt is off-white and usually spotted.

Underside (male)



Juveniles live on land.



Juvenile (eft)

Great crested newt

Grows to 16 cm, but usually smaller. Crest in male has break at base of tail. Silvery-white stripe towards rear of tail conspicuous.

Both sexes have rough, granular skins and yellow/orange bellies with irregular black spots.

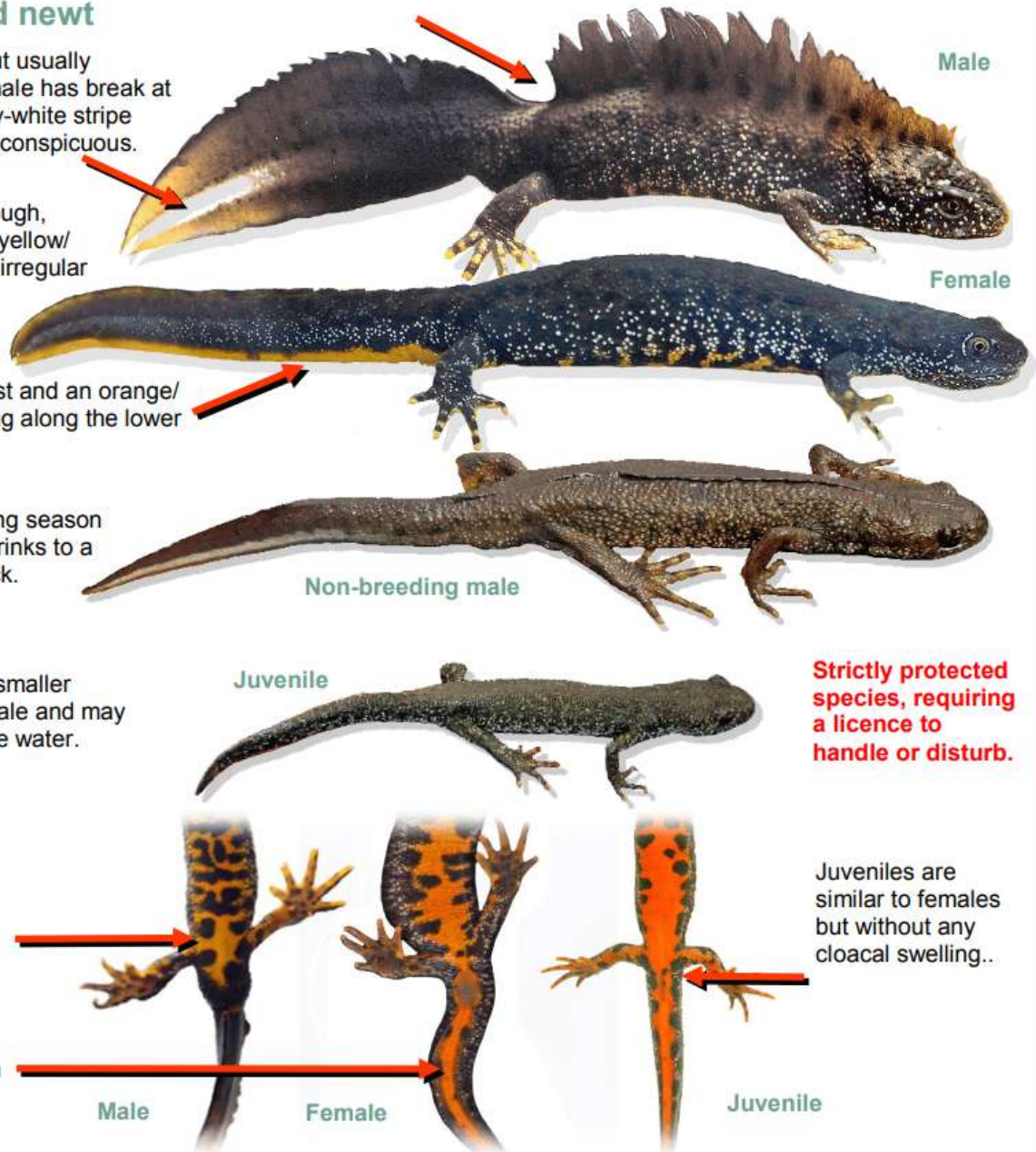
Female has no crest and an orange/yellow stripe running along the lower edge of the tail.

Outside the breeding season the male's crest shrinks to a ridge along the back.

Juveniles look like smaller versions of the female and may live on land or in the water.

Orange/yellow coloration on underside extends to flanks (not confined to central stripe). This continues along lower edge of tail in females.

Strictly protected species, requiring a licence to handle or disturb.



Alpine newt



Adults 8-11 cm, females often much larger than males. A non-native species restricted to few sites, but becoming increasingly common. Most likely to be found in garden ponds, or ponds near to gardens.

Females have a marbled pattern on the back.

Underside is bright orange, without spots (although there may be black spots on the throat in some cases).



Underside (female)