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46, Priory Close, Bradford On Avon, Wiltshire,

BA15 1QZ  
AEUK 1712

Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Roger Martindale

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## Contents

|                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. BACKGROUND .....                           | 3  |
| 2. INTRODUCTION .....                         | 7  |
| 3. FIELD STUDY .....                          | 7  |
| 4. LEGISLATIVE AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE .....    | 8  |
| 5. LIMITATIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT .....        | 8  |
| 6. DATA REVIEW .....                          | 9  |
| 7. PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES .....                  | 13 |
| 8. RESULTS .....                              | 18 |
| Habitats .....                                | 18 |
| Protected and Otherwise Notable Species ..... | 20 |
| 9. CONCLUSIONS.....                           | 22 |
| 10. RECOMMENDATIONS .....                     | 23 |
| 11. Appendix 1 - Habitat Map .....            | 24 |
| 12. Appendix 2 Ecological enhancements .....  | 25 |

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

### *Commission*

This report presents the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) on the proposed development of the land of the property 46 priory close, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire. BA15 1QZ National grid reference ST 82462 61216 what3words locator (incensed.viewing.brain) hereafter referred to as the “site”. The survey was commissioned by Mr David Waldron and undertaken by Alder Ecology UK Ltd. The survey comprised an inspection of the land on site, a former residential garden and amenity grassland.

The site (survey area) is a small plot approximately 0.071hectares (0.176 acres) which is situated within an urban location, although the red line boundary is smaller than the figures above. This application relates to the proposed provision of an extension to residential accommodation. The wider site contains amenity grassland, immature and mature trees (woodland) and hard standing and buildings.

### *Proposed works*

The proposal is for the extension of residential property to the side west of the original property.

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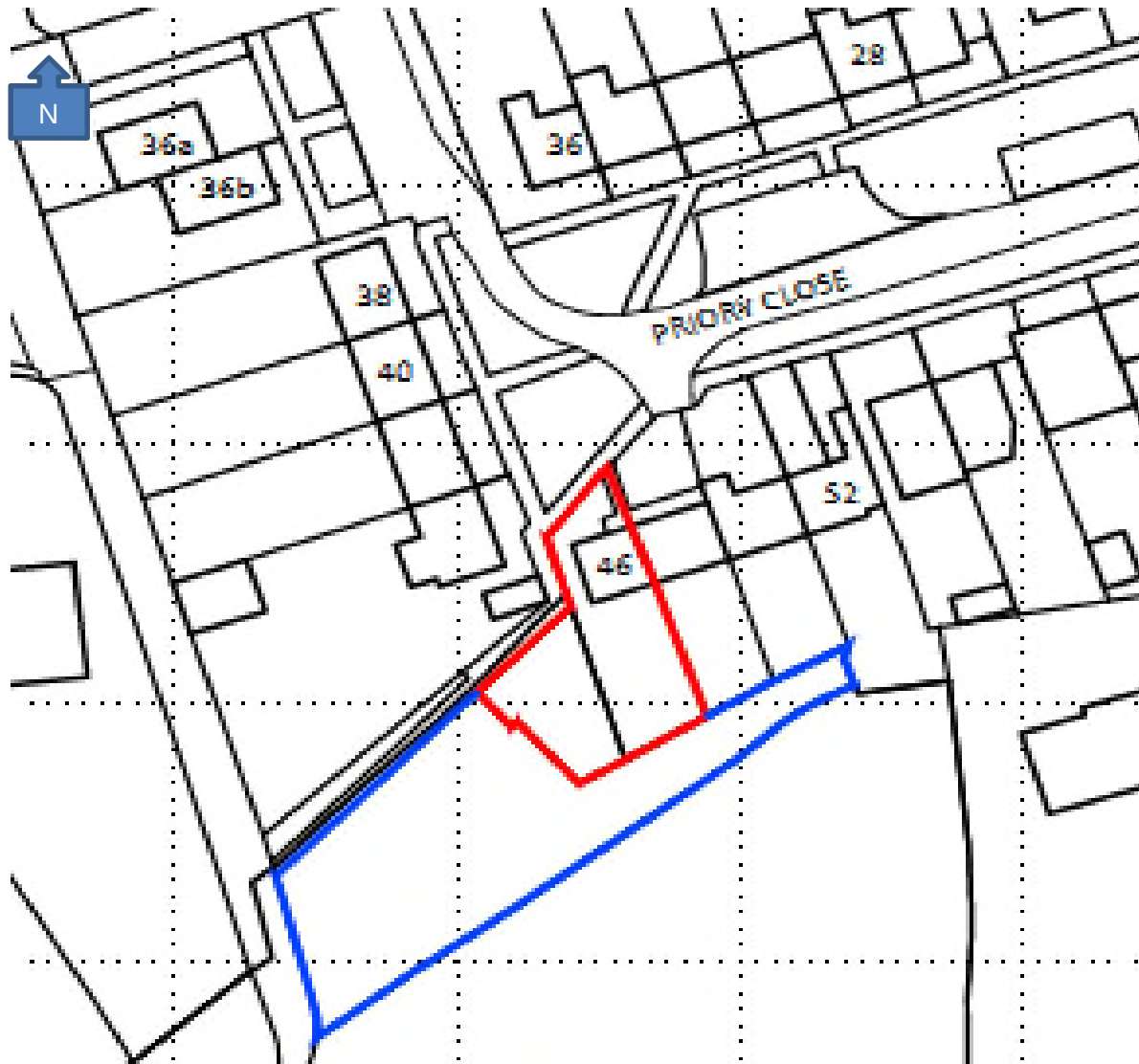


Map 1 showing site location



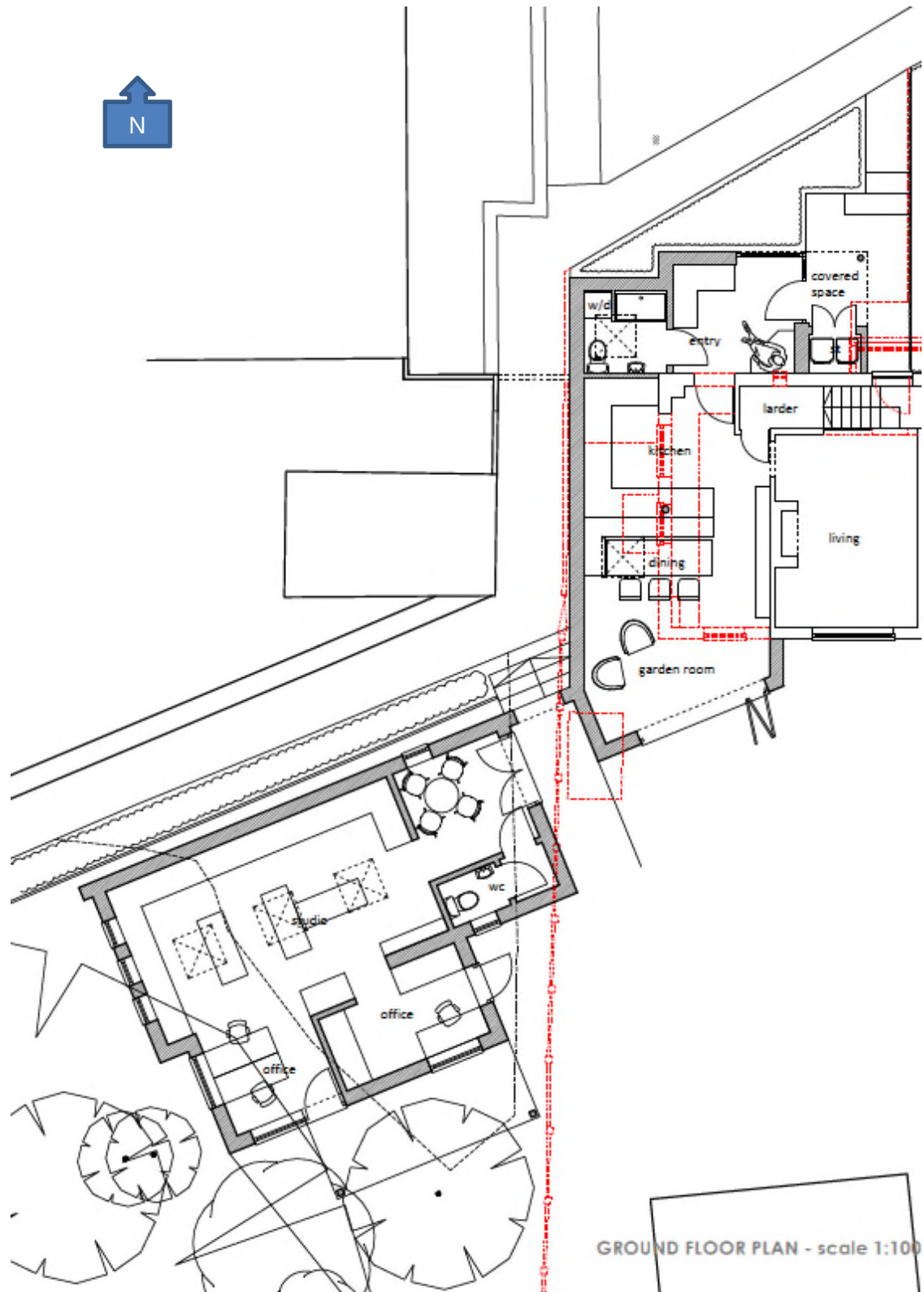
Map 2 showing the approximate site survey boundary and surrounding habitat

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Map 3 Existing site plan showing red line application and blue line ownership

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**Proposed Drawings - 46 Priory Close, Bradford On Avon**

Map 4 proposed site layout see full submission for details

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## **2. INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) undertaken on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026. An assessment has been provided on the potential value of the site for wildlife based on the PEA results obtained. Conclusions have been drawn about the site and an approach has been proposed to the way any development may proceed with enhancements for the site.

Mr Roger Martindale BA (Hons), MSc CEnv, MCIEEM, Ecologist at Alder Ecology UK Ltd who is a full member of The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv), undertook the PEA assessment during January 2026. The surveyor has over 25 years' experience of this type of work.

The aim of the PEA is to identify existing habitat types, to determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas and to identify the presence of any protected species or habitats suitable for supporting such species that may be impacted by the scheme.

*The objectives of the PEA were to:*

- Identify habitat types on site;
- Assess the importance of habitat types;
- Identify the potential presence of any protected species and recommend further survey
- Assess the likely impact areas within any potential development

## **3. FIELD STUDY**

*Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA)*

This survey consists of a walkover survey of the site observing habitats and if they are considered important or have potential to hold protected species. This is not a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and therefore does not detail species compositions within identified habitat areas or assign them an alpha numeric code. The survey included a search for the presence or evidence of UK protected species and UK priority habitats and species.

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#### **4. LEGISLATIVE AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE**

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) affords protection to species of fauna and flora included in schedules 5 and 8 of the act. Additionally section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists species and habitats that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales. Those pieces of legislation together with national, regional and local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) seek to safeguard areas containing protected species and habitats.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Section 41 list and the BAPs are used to guide decision-makers such as landowners in implementing their duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions. This legislation is further strengthened by the European Habitats directive 1992 which affords special protection to species and habitats of European importance. Protected species and habitats are a material consideration in the planning process and an assessment of their presence/absence from a site and the likely impact of a development on such species or habitats must be undertaken prior to any planning submission.

#### **5. LIMITATIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT**

The PEA habitat survey was carried out at a sub optimal time of year for early spring floristic species compositions but given the limited range of habitats on site is thought to be accurate. The timing of the survey may limit the ability of the assessment to recognise seasonal changes on site. Although given the baseline conditions and habitats present it is considered to be accurate. Full access was available for the site survey and a drone was used to aid survey techniques. The adjacent woodland was also assessed as part of the scheme due the proximity.

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## 6. DATA REVIEW

*Table 1 Protected habitats 5km search BA15 1QZ*

| Site Name                     | Protected status | Distance from site to closest record | Comment                |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Grip wood Quarry</b>       | SSSI             | 387m S                               | Bat habitat            |
| <b>Winsley Mine</b>           | SSSI, SAC        | 2.5km W                              | Bat habitat            |
| <b>Iford Manor</b>            | SSSI             | 2.7km SW                             | Bat habitat            |
| <b>Inwood Warleigh</b>        | SSSI             | 3.1km NW                             | Woodland               |
| <b>Midford Valley woods</b>   | SSSI             | 4.4km W                              | Woodland               |
| <b>Southwick Country park</b> | LNR              | 4.7km S                              | Woodland and grassland |

*Table 2 Protected and Notable Species Historic Records 2km search*

| Name                   | Records | Distance from site to closest record | Date of most recent record | Comment           |
|------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Badger</b>          | 2       | 2km                                  | 2021                       |                   |
| <b>Bird assemblage</b> | 124     | 2km                                  | 2024                       | See table 3 below |
| <b>Brandt's bat</b>    | 2       | 2km                                  | 2020                       |                   |
| <b>Brown hare</b>      | 2       | 2km                                  | 2018                       |                   |

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|                               |     |     |      |  |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|------|--|
| <b>Brown long eared bat</b>   | 1   | 2km | 2024 |  |
| <b>Common pipistrelle bat</b> | 10  | 2km | 2023 |  |
| <b>Common Toad</b>            | 4   | 2km | 2023 |  |
| <b>Daubentons bat</b>         | 397 | 2km | 2022 |  |
| <b>Great crested newt</b>     | 3   | 2km | 2022 |  |
| <b>Greater horseshoe bat</b>  | 104 | 2km | 2023 |  |
| <b>Hedgehog</b>               | 33  | 2km | 2021 |  |
| <b>Lesser horseshoe bat</b>   | 75  | 2km | 2023 |  |
| <b>Natterers bat</b>          | 7   | 2km | 2022 |  |
| <b>Noctule bat</b>            | 5   | 2km | 2023 |  |
| <b>Otter</b>                  | 6   | 2km | 2024 |  |
| <b>Serotine bat</b>           | 9   | 2km | 2023 |  |
| <b>Slow worn</b>              | 6   | 2km | 2022 |  |
| <b>Soprano pipistrelle</b>    | 12  | 2km | 2023 |  |
| <b>Water vole</b>             | 8   | 2km | 2005 |  |
| <b>Whiskered bat</b>          | 5   | 2km | 1984 |  |

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## **Bird assemblage**

Of the 124 species of bird historically recorded within 2km of the site a total of 21 species are listed on section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as Species of Principle Importance for Nature Conservation (Priority species) and 6 species listed as schedule 1 species so the area has value in that respect.

*Table 3 Priority bird species or schedule 1 bird species are listed below.*

| <b>Species</b>                   | <b>Number of records</b> | <b>Priority species</b> | <b>Schedule 1 species</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Barn owl</b>                  | 8                        |                         | Yes                       |
| <b>Brambling</b>                 | 7                        |                         | Yes                       |
| <b>Bullfinch</b>                 | 271                      | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>Common Cuckoo</b>             | 2                        | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>Fieldfare</b>                 | 57                       |                         | Yes                       |
| <b>Grey Partridge</b>            | 9                        | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>Herring gull</b>              | 89                       | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>House sparrow</b>             | 815                      | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>Kingfisher</b>                | 123                      |                         | Yes                       |
| <b>Lapwing</b>                   | 12                       | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>Lesser redpoll</b>            | 5                        | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>Lesser spotted woodpecker</b> | 3                        | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>Linnet</b>                    | 26                       | Yes                     |                           |
| <b>Marsh tit</b>                 | 17                       | Yes                     |                           |

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|                           |     |     |     |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Redwing</b>            | 137 |     | Yes |
| <b>Reed bunting</b>       | 27  | Yes |     |
| <b>Scaup</b>              | 1   |     | Yes |
| <b>Skylark</b>            | 28  | Yes |     |
| <b>Song thrush</b>        | 455 | Yes |     |
| <b>Spotted flycatcher</b> | 7   | Yes |     |
| <b>Starling</b>           | 876 | Yes |     |
| <b>Tree pipit</b>         | 1   | Yes |     |
| <b>Tree sparrow</b>       | 3   | Yes |     |
| <b>Tundra Swan</b>        | 2   | Yes |     |
| <b>Willow tit</b>         | 4   | Yes |     |
| <b>Yellow wagtail</b>     | 1   | Yes |     |
| <b>Yellowhammer</b>       | 28  | Yes |     |

The site habitats inside the red line boundary are not conducive to the birds listed using the site other than occasional over flight or occasional resting in adjacent woodland.

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## **7. PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES**



Plate 1 showing the site 46 Priory close and approx. proposed red line



Plate 2 showing site looking west showing single conifer

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Plate 3 Showing the adjacent woodland which will not be impacted by the works



Plate 4 showing the area for the proposed extension west

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Plate 5 front of the property looking south



Plate 6 showing area for proposed extension to the main house

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Plate 7 main house west side negligible potential for birds or bats



Plate 8 area proposed for west extension low quality amenity grassland

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Plate 9 woodland adjacent to the site has a poor structure and limited ground flora



Plate 10 east of the site in a neighbour's compost heap is a fox earth

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## 8. RESULTS

### Habitats

#### *Habitat Description*

The site supports a limited range of generally low quality natural habitats and is a residential garden with amenity grassland, a single conifer, and hard standing in the impact zone. To the south is a low quality woodland with poor structure but this will not be impacted by the works.

*Table 4 Habitats on site*

| <b>Habitat</b>                                 | <b>National importance</b> | <b>Regional importance</b> | <b>Local importance</b> | <b>Site importance</b> | <b>Distinctiveness</b> |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Amenity grassland</i>                       |                            |                            |                         | Yes                    | Low                    |
| <i>Scattered tree</i>                          |                            |                            |                         | Negligible             | Low                    |
| <i>Hard standing</i>                           |                            |                            |                         | Negligible             | Low                    |
| <i>Buildings</i>                               |                            |                            |                         | Negligible             | Low                    |
| <i>Woodland (outside the site impact zone)</i> |                            |                            | Yes                     | Yes                    | Low                    |

#### *Amenity grassland*

The site contains two areas of amenity grassland (approx. 50% of the plot) typical of residential gardens in the area and has been regularly mown for a number of years including the area to the west outside the original garden wall. This type of grassland is common within urban settings such as this but does have some limited value for foraging birds and mammals. A proportion (west) of the amenity grassland will be impacted by the proposed scheme and is assessed to be of site value and low distinctiveness. The grassland is easily re-created and some grassland will still be present as a site habitat once the development is completed only in a smaller quantity within the original residential garden.

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*Scattered tree*

The site contains one conifer tree that would be impacted by the works shown in plate 2. The tree will be removed to accommodate the works and the tree is non-native and low value for wildlife other than roosting or resting birds. The scattered tree is assessed to be of negligible value and low distinctiveness.

*Hard standing*

There is a large area of hard standing that forms part of the existing garden at the west of the property within the original plot. The hard standing will be built on and is negligible value for wildlife in this context. The hard standing is assessed to be of negligible value and low distinctiveness.

*Buildings*

The site contains a semi-detached house with proposed works to the west side front and rear in a wrap around style. The building is of negligible value to birds and bats as it is tightly constructed and well maintained. The buildings on site have been assessed to be of negligible value and low distinctiveness.

*Woodland*

A small proportion of the woodland south and west of the site is owned by the site owner David Waldron (recent ownership) and although not impacted by the proposed scheme is an important habitat locally. Unfortunately, the woodland is in poor condition and has not been managed to maximise its value for wildlife by the previous owners. The woodland is dominated by sycamore and Ash (some with die back) and has a very poor structure. There is low growing ivy preventing good quality ground flora, there is no understory and the trees have restricted crown growth and many are in poor condition. The woodland needs to be managed to maximise the value for wildlife going forwards

*Non-Native Invasive Species*

The site does not contain any non-native invasive species listed on schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

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## Protected and Otherwise Notable Species

The site has limited opportunities for low numbers of common species primarily as a foraging resource.

*Table 5 Potential protected species associated with the site as a foraging resource*

|                      | <b>European<br/>importance</b> | <b>National<br/>importance</b> | <b>NERC section<br/>41 species</b> | <b>Local BAP<br/>species</b> |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bats                 | Yes                            | Yes                            | Yes                                | Yes                          |
| Bird<br>assemblage   |                                | Yes                            | Yes                                | Yes                          |
| Hedgehog             |                                |                                | Yes                                | Yes                          |
| Reptiles             |                                |                                | Yes                                | Yes                          |
| Amphibian<br>species |                                |                                | Yes                                | Yes                          |

### *Bats*

The wider site (within the blue line) has resources for bat foraging in the woodland adjacent to the site and is connected to a wider complex of gardens providing opportunities for common species which are locally recorded in the area within 2km of the site. There are presently no opportunities for roosting bats on site. The site is assessed to be of low value to foraging bats and negligible value to roosting bats.

### *Birds*

The wider landscape (within 2km) has records of a total of 21 species which are listed on section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as Species of Principle Importance for Nature Conservation and 6 species listed as schedule 1 birds. The site does not have sufficient habitats or connection to the wider landscape to support all such species for breeding but could support birds such as house sparrow, song thrush and more locally common species. The site has the ability to support some of the species listed in table 3 for occasional foraging and roosting within the wider site. The general area has potential to hold low numbers of common foraging bird species and has potential to support breeding birds within the woodland adjacent to the site. The site is assessed to be of low value to common, NERC and schedule 1 bird species as a limited foraging resource and low value as a breeding site within the adjacent woodland.

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The woodland will not be impacted by the proposed works and will be retained on the wider site.

*Hedgehog*

There are 33 local records of hedgehog within 2km of the site and they are likely to occur close to the site or even on site as they will forage in the habitats of this site the adjacent woodland and other residential gardens in close proximity. The habitats on site (grassland) has value for foraging and sheltering hedgehog within the woodland to the west and south. The proposed works are unlikely to significantly impact upon hedgehog habitat provided the works are undertaken with ecological guidance. The site has been assessed to be of low value for foraging hedgehog.

*Reptiles*

The site does not contain habitat which is regularly used by reptile species such as slow worms as the grass is closely mown and maintained as they are more often associated with stone piles, deadwood/leaf litter habitat which is found outside the site boundary within the woodland and neighbouring properties. The grassland habitat can be used by reptiles but in this instance only for moving through the site. The site has been assessed to be of low value for reptile species.

*Amphibian species*

The site does contain suitable foraging habitat within the grassland and adjacent woodland for common amphibian species but contains no areas suitable for breeding amphibian species and the local area does not contain ponds suitable for breeding amphibians. The site is assessed to be of low value to foraging amphibians and negligible value to breeding amphibians.

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## **9. CONCLUSIONS**

The PEA concludes that any proposed development of the site 46 Priory Close Bradford on Avon and the land to the west will not negatively impact on protected habitats or protected species.

The site inside the redline boundary does not contain habitats that are nationally or locally significant and does not contain any priority habitats as listed in the NERC Act 2006. The remaining habitats on site are of low conservation value or negligible conservation value and easily re-created. The site does sit adjacent to a habitat that is locally significant, a small woodland which is partially owned by the site owner but will not be impacted by the proposed works. Any proposed development of the site will not on its own or in combination affect the integrity or designatory features of locally designated sites listed in table 1 and will not lead to permanent habitat loss of significant habitats.

The proposed works does have the potential to impact upon foraging protected species, species of principle importance for nature conservation and locally listed BAP species in the long term for example birds and hedgehogs without mitigation. Plans for the site should include measures to promote local wildlife species that have the potential to use the wider site in low numbers such as birds, bats and hedgehog. Managing the woodland in a positive way for wildlife will help mitigate any impacts. Further survey will not be required to inform any planning decision for the site to comply with local and national policies for protected species.

As the site is a residential extension it would be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) but it is recommended that management of the owner's proportion of the woodland should be undertaken to prolong the life of the woodland, provide more structure to the woodland and provide benefits for wildlife.

Overall the site has been assessed as being of low ecological value due to the limited value of the habitats on site and the small size of the site. The site does provide opportunities for foraging, and commuting wildlife as part of the larger residential garden complex and woodland adjacent to the site. Any development of the site will not impact directly on local wildlife, habitats or protected species and will not require further surveys for the site.

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## **10.RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made for the site:

- Any development of the site provides biodiversity net gain by providing locally x2 bird boxes for common bird species such as house sparrow (priority species) which are locally abundant or appropriate to species recorded using the site. See appendix 2
- Any development of the site provides biodiversity net gain by providing locally x2 bat boxes suitable for pipistrelle species located on the new built structure or adjacent trees within the woodland and positioned to avoid light spill from the property or local municipal lighting.
- Provide a hedgehog nest box on site within the retained ownership boundaries
- Any landscape design for the site if required should where possible aim to use 70% native species in any design to help local native wildlife species.
- Woodland management is recommended of the owner's proportion of the woodland and should be undertaken to prolong the life of the woodland, provide more structure to the woodland and provide benefits for wildlife.

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## 11. Appendix 1 - Habitat Map



### Key

- Buildings 
- Scattered trees 
- Fox Earth 

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## **12.Appendix 2 Ecological enhancements**

**House sparrow nest box mounted at approx. 2.5m east or north facing**



**Bat box suitable for pipistrelle bats mounted at approx. 3m south or west facing**



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### **Hedgehog nest box**

