

Site Name: Bowmans Paddock, Winterborne Bassett, Swindon, SN4 9QA

Report Reference: WWE25191 PEA – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Date: 19/11/2025

Author: Caroline Gregory (Consultant Ecologist) Reviewed: Peter Hacker (Senior Ecologist)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Bowmans Paddock, Winterborne Bassett, Swindon, SN4 9QA (Grid reference: SU 10421 74818) is subject to a full planning application for the creation of a new access route into the field. Therefore, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken by Caroline Gregory (Consultant Ecologist) of Wildwood Ecology on 28/10/2025, following the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017) guidelines and using UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 codes (UK Hab, 2023).
- 1.2. The site (Figure 1) was situated to the west of the small village Winterbourne Bassett. There were residential dwellings to the west of the site with agricultural fields to the north, east and south of the site.



Figure 1. Site Location

2. Survey methods

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1. A field survey was undertaken on 28/10/2025.
- 2.2. All habitats present within the site and wider area with the suitability to support rare, protected, or otherwise notable species of flora or fauna were noted, as well as incidental observations of species.

Habitat Condition Assessment

- 2.3. A field survey was undertaken on 28/10/2025. All habitats present within the site was recorded and fauna were noted, as well as incidental observations of species.

Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

- 2.4. A field survey was undertaken on 28/10/2025. This was an external and internal building inspection survey and a ground level inspection of each tree onsite using binoculars and torches, the purpose of which was to search for bats/evidence of bats and assess the likelihood of bats being present and the need for further survey and/or mitigation.
- 2.5. A systematic search was made of the building and the ground, especially below suitable access points where present. Such features include window-sills, windowpanes, walls, tiles, weather boarding, lead flashing, eaves, behind surfacing materials and under tiles, and other cracks and crevices that provide protection from the elements. Such features are known to be used by roosting bats.
- 2.6. Additionally, a systematic search was made of the trees, to confirm if any suitable roosting features were present. Such features include cracks, woodpecker holes, crevices, cavities, or torn bark that provide protection from the elements. Such features are known to be used by roosting bats.
- 2.7. Where roosting bats were found, the conservation significance of the bat roosts was assessed according to the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (p.33, Table 3.1); however, these are minimum valuations (in the absence of further survey). The minimum roost status is determined as either high, medium, or low according to the following criteria:
 - conservation status of the species (common, rare, or rarest);
 - type of roost (feeding perch, individual, small numbers, hibernation, or maternity); and
 - if the site meets the guidelines for SSSIs, which only applies to high conservation status roosts.

3. Results

Desk study

- 3.1. The data informing this report was collected from field survey and desk study. Desk study data was collected from the following sources on 30/10/2025
 - Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre; and
 - Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC).

Designated sites

- 3.2. Results from desk study data showed that there were four designated sites (Special Area of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), RAMSARs) within 20km. There were no national designated sites (Special Site of Scientific Importance (SSSIs), Nation Nature Reserve (NNRs), Local Nature Reserve (LNRs)) within 2km of the site. There was one non-statutory designated Local Wildlife Sites LWS within 1km of the site.
 - 3.3. The statutory designated sites are outlined below:
 - Pewsey Downs (SAC) located 10km south of the site;
 - River Avon (SAC) located 15km south of the site;
 - Salisbury Plain (SPA, SAC) located 19km south of the site; and
-

- North Meadow and Clattinger Farm (SAC) located 19km north of the site.

3.4. The non-statutory designated sites are outlined below:

- Richardson Wood (LWS) located 1km south of the site.

Priority and notable habitats

3.5. There is a priority habitat (Bowman's wood – Deciduous woodland) located within the site, close to the southern boundary. Located offsite to the south is another area of priority habitat (deciduous woodland) which is contiguous with the habitat present onsite (Appendix 4).

Priority and protected species

3.6. Results from desk study data showed that there are two granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences for bats within 5km of the site. The closest was located 1.70km east of the site and was granted in 2015 for the damage to a resting site for brown long-eared and common pipistrelle. The second licence was located 5km south of the site and granted in 2017 for the destruction of a resting site for common pipistrelle. From the Local Records Centre (LRC) data, 3 species of bat was recorded in the local area, including serotine, pipistrelle species and long-eared species.

3.7. There were no granted licence for great crested newt within 2km of the site. From the Local Records Centre (LRC) data, 3 records of great crested newt were returned, with two records located 1.70km north of the site.

3.8. There were no records of hazel dormouse located within 5km of the site from MAGIC data. No records were returned from the LRC within the local area.

3.9. Priority and protected species records were returned from the Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre for species located within 2km of the site include the following:

- Two records of water vole were returned, 600m north of the site and 960m south of the site;
- 22 records of badger, including latrines and individual sightings, were returned with the closest record located 1.40km north-west of the site;
- One record of harvest mouse was returned, located 1.65km south of the site;
- 32 records of corn bunting were returned, with the closets record 1.50km south of the site;
- Four records of white stork were returned, with the closets record 960m south-west of the site;
- 13 records of barn owl were returned, with the closest located 1.90km south of the site;

Field survey

Table 1 - Field survey timings and conditions

Date	Weather conditions			
	Temp [°C]	Cloud cover [Oktas]	Wind speed [Beaufort scale]	Rain
28/10/2025	9	3	3	Nil

Field survey limitations

3.10. Upon arrival to the site, it was noticed that the field had recently been cleared, with all vegetation cleared. Therefore, a judgment was made on the suitability of the habitat for protected species based on the current condition of the field.

3.11. Although the extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey falls outside the recommended seasonal period for botanical surveys (April to September, inclusive), the evaluation and habitat descriptions (and hence the impacts and their significance), are considered to be accurate.

3.12. No other limitations were encountered, or assumptions made during either the desk study or the field survey and it is considered that with the access gained and recording undertaken an accurate assessment of the site's ecological importance has been made.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Habitats

3.13. Table 2 sets out descriptions of the habitats present within the site and wider blueline boundary using UK habitat Classification Version 2.0 codes, along with a list of species present.

Table 2: Habitats and linear features present within the site.

Habitat	Habitat description	Species present	Ecological Importance
u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface Secondary code: 64	The majority of the site consisted of recently disturbed ground. The field had recently been cultivated with areas of scrubby woodland cleared. The ground was bare with some straw present. There was some rubbish piles in the centre of the field. Aerial imagery shows the site to have been historically comprised on grassland and scrub	Bare ground.	Site
u1b - Developed land; sealed surface Existing Structures	To the north eastern corner of the site was an old water structure, that is sealed off. There was a single existing structure to the south west of the site. Constructed of corrugated metal, that was in disrepair. There was an existing wooden shed located to the northwest of the field, close to the entrance. This was in good condition.	N/A	Site
h2a - Native hedgerow H1	Southern boundary hedgerow- gappy, sparse, loose, open at parts, cut and fallen trees throughout and unmanaged. Backs on to a ditch and a small woodland.	Ground ivy, field rose, wild cherry, field maple, common lilac, beech trees, cedar, holly tree. Understorey- nettles, ivy and tongue fern.	County
h2a - Native hedgerow H2	Western boundary hedgerow- adjacent to residential buildings, gappy at parts, unmanaged, with a few trees within.	Ivy, elder tree, ash trees, common lilac, fragrant viburnum tree, field maple. Understorey- nettles, ivy and cleavers.	County
h2a - Native hedgerow H3	Northern boundary hedgerow- fewer gaps than the southern and western boundary, denser and more unmanaged.	Elder tree, brambles, hawthorn, blackthorn trees, ash trees, horse chestnut.	County

Habitat	Habitat description	Species present	Ecological Importance
		Understory- ivy.	
h2a - Native hedgerow H4	Eastern boundary hedgerow- more dense and fewer gaps than the other hedgerows, more mature trees within.	Hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, ash tree, elder tree, horse chestnut Understorey- ivy and nettles.	County

3.14. The suitability of the site habitats for protected species relevant to the site habitats, the connectivity of the site and observed incidental evidence can be found in Table 3.

Table 3 - Protected species potentially present onsite

Species or group	Habitat suitability	Site connectivity	Notable onsite features	Presence confirmed?
Amphibians, including great crested newt	Poor	Good	The boundary hedgerows with scrub provided suitable habitat. There were two ponds located within 250m of the site.	The majority of habitat currently present on site was semi-suitable for the species. The boundary features provided more suitable habitat. The site had good connectivity to other habitat including the woodland to the south.
Badger	Good	Good	Hedgerows onsite and neighbouring agricultural fields.	Onsite habitat was suitable and the site had good connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Bats: foraging and commuting	Good	Good	Hedgerows and integrated trees form good linear commuting features	Onsite habitat was suitable and the site had good connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Fish	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fungi	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hazel dormouse	Poor	Good	Mostly open bare ground, although hedgerows in parts could provide some habitat these were gappy and sparsely in areas.	Onsite habitat was unsuitable but there was some connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Hedgehog	Good	Good	Hedgerows on site and neighbouring residential gardens.	Onsite habitat was suitable and the site had some connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Invertebrates	Poor	Poor	Lack of vegetation of site, mostly bare ground, so site is likely to support common and widespread species.	Onsite habitat was unsuitable but there was some connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Nesting birds	Good	Good	Parts of the hedgerows which are denser and	Onsite habitat was suitable and the site

			some trees onsite could be used by nesting birds.	had good connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Otter	Poor	Poor	Ditch on the southern boarder was dry at the time of the survey, however this could be used if it fills up. River runs to the east of the site.	Onsite habitat was unsuitable but there was some connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Reptiles	Poor	Poor	Areas of bare ground near the hedgerows could be used by basking reptiles.	The majority of habitat currently present on site was semi-suitable for the species. The boundary features provided more suitable habitat. The site had good connectivity to other habitat including the woodland to the south.
Water vole	Poor	Good	Ditch on the southern boarder of the site was dry at the time of the survey but could be wet during other parts of the year.	Onsite habitat was unsuitable but there was some connectivity to the surrounding landscape

Invasive species

3.15.No species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were present onsite.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Structures

3.16.Descriptions of the structures surveyed during the PRA are summarised in Table 4. Structure locations can be seen in Figure 2.

Table 4: Structures surveyed during the PRA.

Structure reference	Building description	Development plans
B1	A single storey structure constructed of corrugated metal. The building has an open window and was starting to collapse. There was no crack or crevices present.	Retained in current proposed development plans.
B2	Single-storey wooden construction with a flat corrugated roof. No cracks ore crevices present.	Retained in current proposed development plans.
B3	An old structure ground level, consisting of concrete. Sealed with no gaps	Retained in current proposed development plans.

3.17.Survey results, including the suitability of each building for roosting bats and a description of potential roost features, can be found in Table 5.

Table 5 - Structure information and survey results.

Feature reference	Suitability for bats	Potential roost features and evidence of use identified
B1	Negligible	No potential roost features suitable for bats identified from the ground.
B2	Negligible	No potential roost features suitable for bats identified from the ground.
B3	Negligible	No potential roost features suitable for bats identified from the ground.

Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

3.18.A GLTA of trees was undertaken during the site survey.

3.19.All trees (species: hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, sycamore and elder) within the redline boundary were surveyed during GLTA to assess if they had any bat roost suitability. A section of the northern hedgerow with trees is to be lost to facilitate access.

3.20.The location of the trees identified as having PRF-I are shown on figure 2. The 3 ash trees were noted to be covered in dense Ivy, potentially hiding roosting features.



Figure 2: Structure and Tree Locations and Bat Roost Suitability

4. Impacts

4.1. Due the proposed works, it is likely that in the absence of mitigation there will be adverse effects on the following habitats and species.

- Habitats – Any habitats to be lost due to the development.

- Amphibians (including great crested newt) – Due to proximity of nearby water bodies (two within 250m of the site) and the presence of semi-suitable terrestrial habitat onsite, it is likely that amphibians would use the site for commuting, foraging or overwintering. Therefore, the loss of suitable terrestrial habitat onsite is likely to have a negative impact. The site also lies within an amber and green risk zone for GCN on Natural England's impact risk map. The rubbish/debris has potential hibernation suitability.
 - European badger – Due to the presence of suitable habitat onsite (woodland to the south of the site and the hedgerows around the site perimeter) and nearby biological records indicating badger presence in the area, loss of suitable foraging habitat onsite and the potential for direct killing/injury of badger during the construction phase of the proposed development is likely.
 - Foraging and commuting bats - The suitability for linear features located along the site boundaries to be used as potential flight-paths and/or foraging habitat is moderate. New external and internal lighting associated with the new building may result in increased light spill. Due to the location of the new agricultural building, it is considered likely that any increase in artificial lighting would have an impact on commuting bat species. The removal of a section of the northern hedgerow for a new entrance way will have a negative impact on any bats using the linear feature for commuting or foraging.
 - Nesting birds – Due to boundary woody vegetation habitats being highly suitable for nesting birds, and the suitability of structures onsite for nesting birds, destruction of active bird nests would trigger legislation.
 - Reptiles – Despite onsite features of bare ground and wider connectivity to grassland, the site is small and open so would be unlikely to support a significant population of reptiles but may be used opportunistically. The rubbish/debris has potential hibernation suitability.
 - Water vole – from the biological records, water vole was found approximately 600m north of the site. The ditch to the south of the site could be used by water vole therefore the addition of the agricultural building to the south of the site may negatively impact water vole in the area.
 - Hedgehog – Due to suitable onsite habitats, killing/ injury of hedgehog during the construction phase would trigger legislation.
- 4.2. The site was recently cleared of vegetation, from analysis of ariel imagery and the lack of re-growth on site. Onsite vegetation prior to site clearance comprised deciduous woodland, scrub and grassland. The cleared habitats were likely suitable to support foraging bats, nesting birds, reptiles, common amphibians and badgers.

5. Recommendations

Habitats and biodiversity enhancements

- 5.1. Local authorities have a duty to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. Where possible, the existing onsite habitat of ecological importance should be retained to ensure that habitats and species that rely on them are not adversely affected by the works.
- 5.2. All habitats are to be retained within the proposed development. Retained habitats (including trees) will need to be protected during the development to avoid adverse effects (damage and/ or pollution). The development should adhere to best practice guidelines and standard construction protocols, to ensure retained habitats are not affected by the development.
- 5.3. The development falls under the exemptions for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The total impact top both on site habitats and linear features falls below the threshold of less than 25 meters squared for habitats and 5 meters of on-site linear habitats.
- 5.4. New planting is proposed along hedgerow within the blueline boundary to compensate for the loss of hedgerow on site.

Priority and protected species

- 5.5. It is recommended that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar Precautionary Working Methods (PWMS) document should be produced, to set out the methods and mitigation measures
-

to be in place during the proposed works. The CEMP will specify how the nearby priority woodland will be protected during the construction phase of the development. The CEMP/ PWMS should be issued to the principal contractor during works onsite.

- 5.6. The development should adhere to best practice guidelines and standard construction protocols, to ensure the retained habitats and species present are protected. No trenches or excavations should be left open without a means of escape (ramps should be left at a 30-degree angle to allow escape). All materials, fuel, and chemicals should be kept safely away from animal access. If any protected species are encountered during the works, works must stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice. Night-time work should be avoided to prevent adverse effects on nocturnal fauna. Work should start a minimum 30 minutes after sunrise and be completed a minimum 30 minutes before sunset.
- 5.7. The following recommendations are made for general protection of wildlife, and in relation to specific species or habitats.

Amphibians (including great crested newt)

- 5.8. Two offsite waterbody is present 130m and 220m west of the site (see appendix 3). It is recommended that a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment is carried out, followed by eDNA testing in order to confirm presence or absence of great crested newt. If presence of great crested newt is confirmed, core to intermediate terrestrial habitat would be affected by the site habitat loss due to the proposals. Therefore, a full European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) or a Natural England district licence will be required.
- 5.9. A rapid risk assessment was undertaken to establish the risk of habitat loss due to the development to GCN. The development was assessed to be Green: offence Highly Unlikely when taking into account the new entrance.

Table 6: GCN rapid risk assessment

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.1
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.1
Rapid risk assessment result:		GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY

European Badger

- 5.10. Precautionary working methods should be put in place to prevent impacts on badger that may be moving through the site. These include covering up any trenches overnight or leaving a wide plank (deployed at 30°) in open trenches/ excavations to prevent animals from becoming trapped.
- 5.11. As badger is a highly mobile species that readily digs new setts, to avoid legislation triggering, a suitably qualified ecologist should carry out a site walkover prior to the start of works. The ecologist should check that no new setts exist onsite (or adjacent to site), that would be adversely affected by the excavation/ extensive vegetation removal works. The ecologist should advise after the site visit if any mitigation measures or a licence is required, if a new sett is confirmed and impacts cannot be avoided by adhering to an appropriate buffer zone around the sett (a minimum of 30m around the setts. In some instances a larger buffer may be required).

Foraging and commuting bats

- 5.12. The proposed development will not be subject to additional lighting.
- 5.13. If there is to be new lighting at the site, the increased disturbance and potential fragmentation as a result of light spill is likely to be moderate and may have a negative effect on the favourable conservation status of the local bat populations. The proposed development should consider measures to avoid or mitigate the use of additional lighting that would disturb nocturnal wildlife that may use the surrounding habitats for

commuting and foraging activities, as well as potentially causing habitat fragmentation. Consideration should be given to the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 8 (Bats and Artificial Lighting) during the design of the building, including:

- LED luminaires should be used where possible;
- Warm white light sources (2700K or lower) should be adopted, to reduce the blue light component;
- Light sources should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm;
- Only luminaires with negligible or zero Upward Light Ratio should be considered; and
- Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion sensors and set to as short as possible a timer (1 or 2 minutes).

5.14. Additionally, installation of bat roosting boxes on the retained trees or new building are recommended as an enhancement to the roosting opportunities for bats onsite. The precise number, location, and design of bat boxes should be determined with input from a suitably qualified ecologist. A preliminary recommendation would be to install at least:

- 2x Schwegler 1FF, 2FN, or a similar design (such as the Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box) installed on retained trees or the new building, at least 3m from the ground and following the manufacturer's instructions.
- If suitable, built-in designs of bat box could be installed on the building (such as the Schwegler 1FR, 1FE, or a similar design).

Nesting birds

5.15. Site clearance works will commence outside of the bird nesting season or, if work has to be carried out during the nesting season (generally from 1st March until 31st August, although birds are known to nest outside of these dates in suitable conditions), a nesting bird check will be required and must be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist. Active nests should be protected by a suitable buffer, as instructed by the ecologist, until the young have fledged, as confirmed by the ecologist. Where a Schedule 1 species (as defined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act) is confirmed to be present, compensation for impacts, e.g., loss of nesting sites, should be devised and implemented.

5.16. Additionally, installation of bird nesting boxes on the retained trees or new building are recommended as an enhancement to the nesting opportunities for garden birds onsite. The precise number, location, and design of bat boxes should be determined with input from a suitably qualified ecologist. A preliminary recommendation would be to install at least:

- 2x Schwegler 1B nest boxes, or a similar design, installed on retained trees or the new building, following the manufacturer's instructions.

Reptiles

5.1. A Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) will be required to support the works. The PWMS should include details on appropriate avoidance methods to be undertaken during clearance works to prevent impacts on reptiles.

5.2. It is recommended that a reptile mitigation strategy is created detailing the appropriate avoidance methods to be undertaken during vegetation and refuge feature clearance works to prevent impacts on reptiles. Any features suitable for use as refuge should be carefully dismantled by hand, with Ecological Clerk of Works supervision in case of the potential presence of reptiles. Any works to vegetation/ potential reptile refuges should be undertaken in the spring or autumn periods when reptiles are active, to avoid potential disturbance or killing/ injury of reptiles. Vegetation clearance should be completed prior to the winter period to avoid any killing/injury of reptiles, and the site should then be maintained at a non-vegetated state to discourage reptiles returning.

Water vole

- 5.3. If the ditch adjacent to the site is to be affected by the proposed development then a water vole walkover survey around the site boundary will be required. The survey will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist and will look for evidence of water vole presence onsite or along waterbodies close to the site.

Hedgehog

- 5.4. The site contained suitable habitat for hedgehog shelter, in the form of scrub and hedgerow in northern areas of the site. Some of the grassland may be used by foraging and commuting hedgehog. The site was open, providing good connectivity to the surrounding habitats, including the residential developments to the south that were likely to provide additional suitable habitat for the species in the gardens.
- 5.5. The development should consider hedgehog by ensuring continued open connectivity to the surrounding habitats and habitat creation onsite for the species (brash piles in discrete locations). Fences (if installed) should have hedgehog passes. To avoid legislation triggering, scrub or woody vegetation should be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist before clearance works are carried out. The ecologist should deliver a toolbox talk to the contractors prior to the works.
-

Appendix 1

Habitat plan

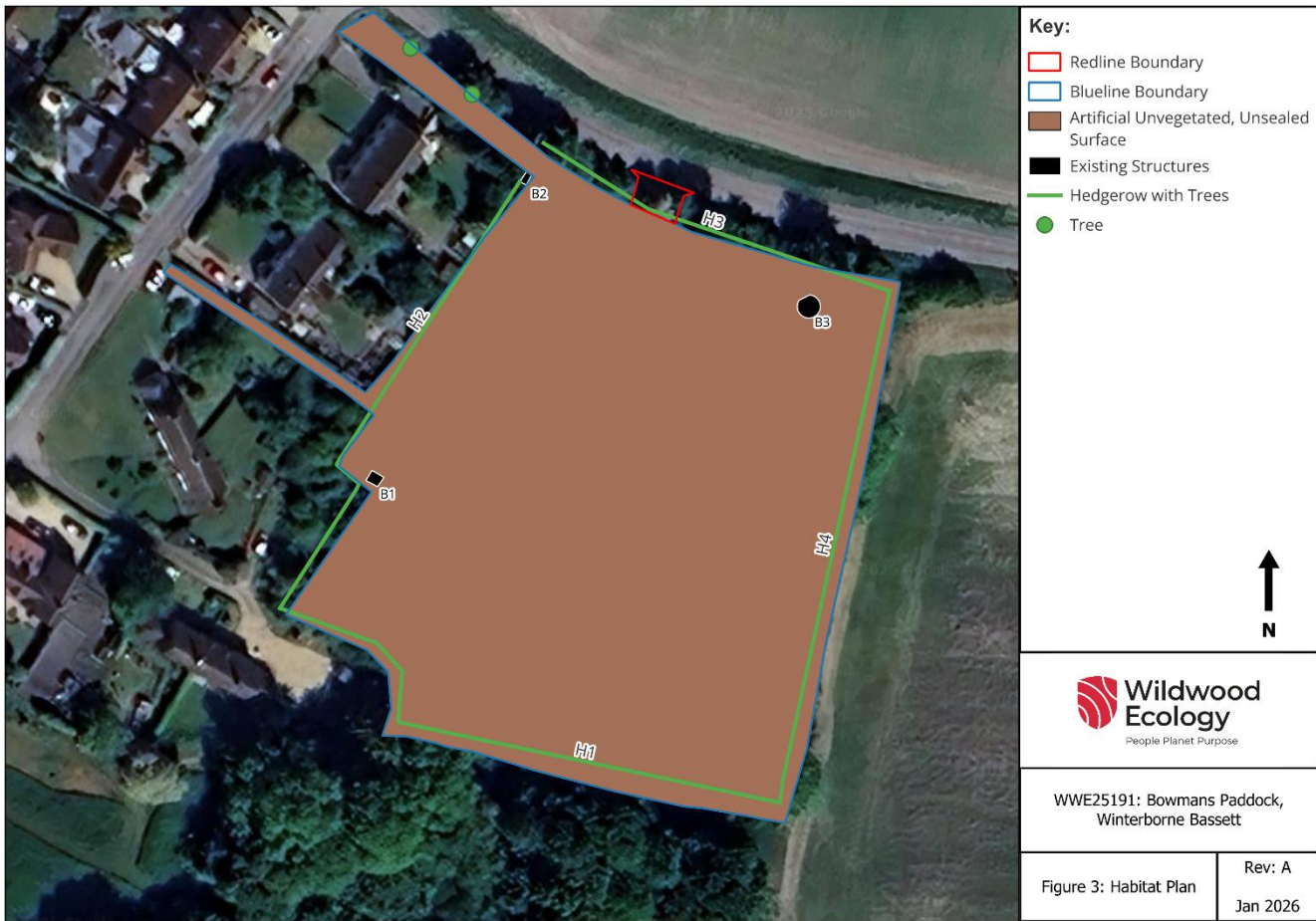


Figure 3: Habitat Plan

Appendix 2

Proposed development plan



Figure 4: Proposed Development

Appendix 3

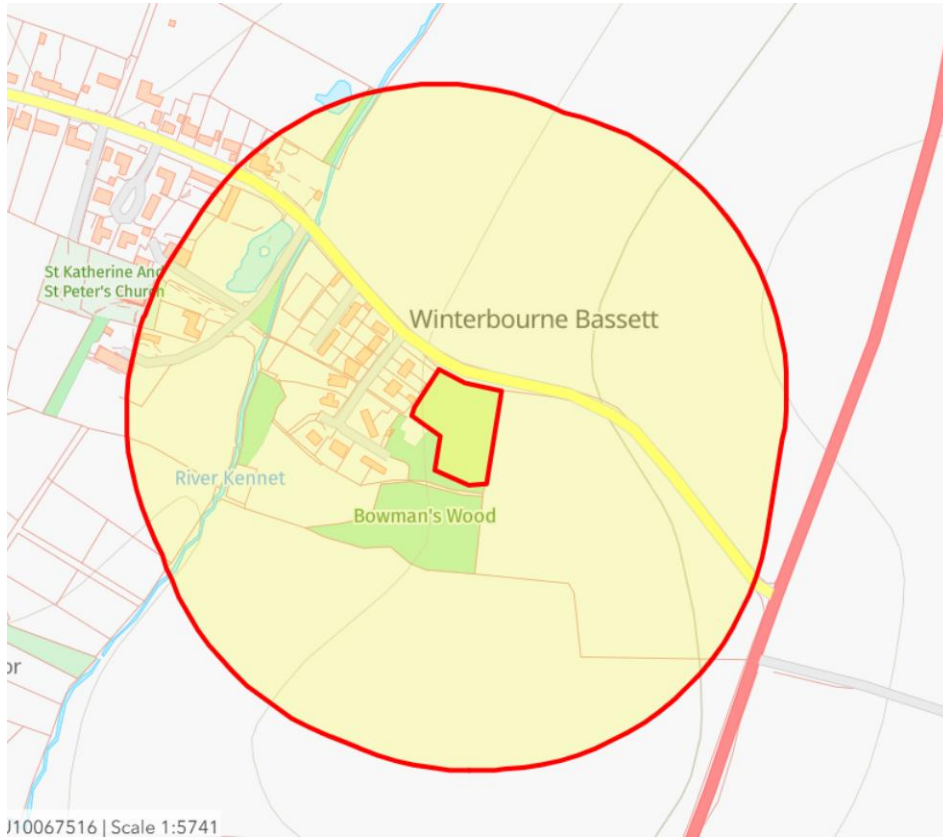


Figure 5: Ponds located within 250 meters of the site.

Appendix 4



Figure 6: Priority Habitat Woodland

Appendix 5 Survey images



Figure 7: Recently cleared field



Figure 8: Rubbish within field



Figure 9: southern section of field, cleared



Figure 10: Current entrance to field with two trees



Figure 11: Building B1



Figure 12: Internal of building B1



Figure 13: Building B2



Figure 14: Structure B3



Figure 15: Hedgerow H1



Figure 16: Woodland adjacent to the site



Figure 17: Hedgerow H2



Figure 18: Hedgerow H3



Figure 19: Hedgerow H3



Figure 20: Hedgerow H4



Figure 21: Trees with PRF-I



Figure 22: Rubbish piles and Hedgerow H2