

65 Longcroft Road, Devizes

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Report

Final

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Purpose of the Report	To provide the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) conducted at 65 Longcroft Road, Devizes to inform the requirement for further ecological surveys and to identify the need for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and/or enhancement measures.
Surveys Undertaken	An extended UKHab survey was conducted of all areas within the red line planning boundary at the Site to provide a habitat baseline on 16 th December 2025.
Summary of Results	The side porch had low suitability for roosting bats. The main building has potential for roosting bats.
Conclusions	The Site is of low value to foraging and commuting bats.
Further Surveys Required	Further bat surveys to establish whether roosting bats are present/absent are required.
Avoidance	To be informed by further bat surveys. Any rubble and brick piles (or similar) should be removed manually.
Mitigation	To be informed by further bat surveys. Trenches/holes should not be left open overnight during construction or access ramps should be provided to enable any trapped animals to escape.
Compensation	To be informed by further bat surveys.
Enhancement	To be informed by further bat surveys. Habitat refugia/hibernacula piles could be created around the edges of the grassland area to provide shelter for amphibians.
Data Valid Until	December 2026

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Trevor Williams commissioned Johns Associates Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the existing site at 65 Longcroft Road, Devizes to inform a planning application. The site is located at post code SN10 3AX (central Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference SU 01372 60962). The Site consists of an existing two-bedroom semi-detached bungalow, associated gardens and hard-standing driveway.

1.2 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The proposal is to demolish the side porch of the existing dwelling, and construct a single storey dwelling and associated parking, turning and private amenity space next to the existing dwelling.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to identify key ecological constraints to the proposed development and inform master-planning to allow significant ecological effects to be avoided or minimised wherever possible. The information in this report enables any further ecological surveys needed to be identified and appropriately designed. The purpose of the report is to:

- Provide an ecological baseline.
- Identify key ecological constraints to the proposed development.
- Inform master-planning to allow significant ecological effects to be avoided or minimised wherever possible.
- Provide the requirements for further surveys.
- Provide an indication (where possible) of the likely mitigation or compensation measures that will be required as part of the development proposals.

1.4 PERSONNEL

The UKHab Survey was conducted by Katie Tamin BSc (Hons) MSc, a Consultant Ecologist at Johns Associates who has worked in ecological consultancy since 2023. Katie has a BSc (Hons) in Zoology, an MSc in Global Wildlife Health and Conservation, and is a qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

The desk study was conducted by George Jones BSc (Hons), an Assistant Ecologist at Johns Associates who has worked in ecological consultancy since May 2025. George has a BSc in Conservation Biology and Ecology and is a qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

This PEA Report was produced by Katie Tamin and reviewed prior to issue by Liz Johns BSc (Hons) MSc, a Director at Johns Associates Ltd with 30 years of experience as a professional ecologist. Liz has held full membership of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) since 2001 and Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) status since 2005. She is also a full member of the Royal Society of Biology (MRSB).

1.5 SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

65 Longcroft Road, which hereafter is referred to as the 'Site', comprises pre-existing semi-detached bungalow, associated gardens and hard-standing driveway. The Site is located within Devizes in Wiltshire. The area of the Site is approximately 0.047 ha in size and it is situated within a residential setting bordered to the north, east, south and west by other properties. Approximately 180m to the west of the Site is Devizes Leisure Centre and its associated grounds and approximately 260m south of the Site is Devizes Town Football Club and its associated grounds.

At the landscape level, the Site is surrounded by other residential properties. The Kennet and Avon Canal is located approximately 700m to the north of the Site. The A342 road runs to the southeast approximately 120m south of the Site. The Site is located in a suburban setting; connectivity to the wider landscape is sub-optimal for mobile species; roads and fencing present a barrier to dispersal to some mobile species and there is a lack of connecting linear features.

1.6 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

The legislation and national and local planning policies which are relevant to this assessment are provided in Appendix A to this report.

Figure 1: Site Location Red Line Boundary Plan and Context of Site



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 ZONE OF INFLUENCE

The development proposals were reviewed by an ecologist, along with notable species records from the desk study and survey results. Based on these parameters, a zone of influence was determined for the development. The key issues relating to biodiversity receptors and the proposed development are as follows:

- The effects of temporary and permanent habitat loss from land taken by construction areas;
- Damage/harm to fauna;
- The effects of pollution (construction dust and pollution from accidental spillage of fuels, lubricants etc. that may affect terrestrial habitats);
- Noise, visual or light disturbance to fauna;
- The positive effects of ecological enhancement from creation, enhancement and management of habitats within the Site boundary.

Consideration of potential disturbance to ecological receptors from noise, vibration, visual or light was extended across the application Site and adjacent habitats.

2.2 DESK STUDY

A desk study was undertaken to collate all relevant existing information relating to the Site and its surrounding area. The data was used to inform the scope of the Site survey and to enable a full assessment of the likely effects of any development at the Site on any sites, habitats, or species of conservation interest to be carried out. The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was used to conduct the following desk study searches on 6th January 2026:

- Records and citations to a 1 km radius for national statutory designated wildlife sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs).
- Records and citations to a 5 km radius for international statutory designated wildlife sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar Sites.
- Records and citations to a 10 km radius for SACs designated for supporting species of bats.
- Records of European Protected Species Licenses (EPSL) to a 2 km radius for bats and dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*.
- Records to a 1 km radius of pond surveys conducted by Natural England from 2017 to 2019 for great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* and records of GCN EPSL to 1 km radius from Site.
- Locations of ponds within a 500 m radius of the Site.
- Records within a 250 m radius of Priority Habitats listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Act 2006

Google Maps aerial images were used to assess habitats at a landscape level (www.maps.google.com) in proximity to the Site.

2.2.1 Data Search

A data search was conducted with the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) on 6th January 2026 to identify the presence of legally protected and/or notable species records and non-statutory designated wildlife sites within 1 km of the proposed Site.

2.3 FIELD SURVEY

An extended UKHab survey of the Site were undertaken on 16th December 2025 by Katie Tamin BSc (Hons) MSc from Johns Associates Ltd. The weather was 7°C, dry and cloudy with good visibility. This survey was completed in accordance with Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) and BS42020:2013 Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development (British Standards Institute, 2013).

2.3.1 UKHab Survey

The on-Site and off-Site (where accessible) habitats were classified following the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Version 2.0 (2023) guidelines, which provides a more detailed interpretation of baseline habitat survey data than previous habitat classifications systems, such as Phase 1 Habitat Assessments. The professional edition of UKHab "UK Habitat Classification – Professional Edition 1"(UKHab-P) was used which includes Priority Habitat Types, all Annex 1 Habitats and the habitats listed in EUNIS.

The classification of primary habitats is hierarchical with five levels with a list of Secondary Codes; the latter is sub-divided into Essential codes and Additional codes. It is mandator that each recorded habitat parcel is allocated single primary Habitat Code and to record the presence of all Essential Secondary Code features associated with that habitat parcel. Additional Secondary Codes can also be associated with habitat parcels, where it is relevant to the whole parcel. Up to six Secondary Codes can be allocated to a single habitat.

UKHab v2.0 has a total of 268 Secondary Codes, sub-divided into 15 major groupings. Secondary codes are added to habitat parcels to:

- Confirm the identity of habitat mosaic and complexes.
- Add information about habitat origin and modifications.
- Add information on environmental context, management and land use in a consistent manner.

Essential Secondary Codes are identified as 2-digit numbers (10 – 90). Additional Secondary Codes (100 – 853) are 3-digit numbers and cover features including land management, land use (incorporating green infrastructure), environmental qualifiers, species features and hydrological regime descriptors. The UK Habitat Classification v2.0 Secondary Code Groupings are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: The UK Habitat Classification v2.0 Secondary Code Groupings

UKHab v2.0 Secondary Code Grouping	Description	UKHab v2.0 Codes
Secondary Essentials – Grasslands and Heathland	Habitat mosaic types and complexes that occur in the grassland, heathlands, hedgerows and scrub habitat	10 – 19
Secondary Essentials – Woodlands and Trees	Habitat complexes, origins and mosaic types that principally occur in woods associated with trees	25 – 34
Secondary Essentials – Freshwater	Habitat complexes and origins that principally occur in freshwater habitats	40 – 51
Secondary Essentials – Wetlands	Habitat complexes and environmental qualifiers that principally occur in wetlands	55 – 57
Secondary Essentials – All habitats	Habitat descriptors that can occur on any habitat	60 – 63

UKHab v2.0 Secondary Code Grouping	Description	UKHab v2.0 Codes
Secondary Essentials – Coast	Habitat complexes that principally occur on the coast	70 – 77
Secondary Essentials – Built environment	Habitat complexes, mosaics, land uses and green infrastructure principally associated with the built environment	80 – 90
Additional Secondary Codes – Grasslands and Heathlands	Habitat management, land use, environmental qualifier and species features principally associated with grassland, heathlands, hedgerows and scrub habitat	100 – 131
Additional Secondary Codes – Woodlands and Trees	Habitat management, land use, environmental qualifiers and species features principally associated with woods and trees	200 – 217
Additional Secondary Codes – Freshwater	Habitat management, land use, environmental qualifiers and species features principally associated with freshwater habitats	300 – 323
Additional Secondary Codes – Wetlands	Hydrological regime, habitat management and species features principally associated with wetlands	400 – 425
Additional Secondary Codes – All habitats	Additional habitat descriptors that can occur on any habitat	500 – 532
Additional Secondary Codes – Farming	Habitat management and land uses principally associated with farmlands	600 – 618
Additional Secondary Codes – Coast	Land use and environmental qualifiers principally associated with coastal areas	700 – 703
Additional Secondary Codes – Built environment	Land use and green infrastructure descriptors principally associated with the built environment	800 – 853

Where appropriate, maps were supplemented with target notes which provided specific information on habitats present that were too limited in extent to map at the scale at which data is presented, or the presence of species and habitats of ecological interest.

An annotated habitat map together with descriptions of the recorded habitat types was produced, which was subsequently digitised using a geographical information system (ArcGIS). The survey also included identification of any non-native invasive plant species. Flora taxonomy follows the nomenclature detailed in New Flora of the British Isles (4th Edition) (Stace C., 2019). Flora, where appropriate, are given a descriptive score of abundance using the DAFOR scale, as follows:

- D – Dominant
- A – Abundant
- F – Frequent
- O – Occasional
- R – Rare
- L – Locally (to be used as a prefix for any of the above)
- V – Very (to be used as a prefix for any of the above)

ArcGIS Symbology

At the time of production, a complete symbology for all habitats in the UK Habitat Classification Professional Edition (UKHab-P) was not available. The UK Habitat Classification Basic Edition (UKHab-B) symbology has therefore been used, and where necessary to add in habitats not included in UKHab-B we have designed our own hatching system within the Level 2 colours for those habitats – following the guidance provided in the UK Habitat Classification Basic Edition: Suggested Symbology for Maps document (UKHab, 2020).

Minimum Mapping Units

UKHab guidance indicated that UKHab has 3 Minimal Mapping Units (MMU's):

- 25 m² and 5 m length for urban and small-scale development projects, fine scale mapping of designated sites
- 400 m² and 20 m length for landscape scale surveys
- 2500 m² for larger unenclosed upland habitats.

Large scale, simple habitats or feasibility surveys should use a larger MMU. For this project, given the size of the site and the scale of the map the 25 m² and 5 m length MMU has been applied. This will allow all habitats to be clearly visible on the map whilst enabling enough fine detail to remain to clearly show all habitats present.

2.3.2 Species

The survey was 'extended' to assess the suitability of the Site and immediately adjacent habitats to support legally protected and/or notable species, including (but not limited to) plants, badger *Meles meles*, bats, dormouse, amphibians, reptiles and breeding birds. This included recording visible signs of species presence and/or features that may indicate likely presence. Hedgerows/corridors were assessed for likely value for dormice, trees on Site were assessed for their suitability for roosting bats and waterbodies/ watercourses assessed for suitability for great crested newt, otter and water vole. A search for Invasive Non-Native Species e.g. Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* was also conducted within the Site and immediately adjacent areas.

Foraging and Community Habitat for Bats

The overall suitability of the Site and adjacent habitats for foraging and commuting bats was also assessed to determine its importance within the wider local context, particularly with reference to the location of known roosts obtained through the Desk Study. The assessment was conducted using the criteria described in Table 2.

Table 2: Guidelines for Assessing the Potential Suitability of Proposed Development Sites for Bats, Based on Presence of Habitat Features within the Landscape, to be Applied using Professional Judgement (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023)

Suitability	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flightpaths such as a gappy hedgerow or

Suitability	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
	unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flightpaths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flightpaths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.
a. Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute). b. For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance. c. Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten <i>et al.</i>, 2016 and Jansen <i>et al.</i>, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlison, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.	

2.4 LIMITATIONS, CONSTRAINTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The findings of this report are considered valid at the time of survey (16th December 2025). Should there be delays to the project timetable and/or implementation of the proposed development, updated desk study and/or survey work may be required. In this instance, advice should be sought to ensure the data, recommendations and conclusions set out in this report remain valid.

It has been assumed that the development proposals are as described in this document and that all proposed mitigation and enhancement measures will be implemented in full.

The habitat survey was undertaken in December, which is outside of the optimum field survey season to identify flora (from May to August for grassland and March to May for woodland flora), wherein the most accurate picture of the vegetation communities present can be gained. However, due to the Site comprising of mainly urban habitats and low habitat diversity it is not considered a significant limitation and does not affect the validity of the assessment.

No other limitations or constraints with regard to the field survey or desk study were encountered and therefore the assessment is considered valid.

3 RESULTS

3.1 ZONE OF INFLUENCE

The proposed development design was reviewed by an ecologist and a zone of influence for species scoped into the assessment was determined. The zone of influence was assessed as being 20 m from all construction activities. This will include potential foraging habitats for badgers, hedgehogs, bats, amphibians and reptiles and potential nest sites for breeding birds.

3.2 DESK STUDY

3.2.1 Statutory Designated Sites

One local nature reserve (LNR) was identified within 1 km of the Site. No internationally designated sites were highlighted within 5km of the site and no SACs for bats were identified within 10 km of the site. A summary is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Statutory Designated Local Wildlife Sites within 1 km

LNR Name	Reason for Designation	Location from the Site
Drews Pond Wood (LNR)	Drews Pond Woods (LNR) is 5.54 ha in size and is designated for its woodland and meadow. The woodlands contain 29 ancient woodland indicator species, including field rose <i>Rosa arvensis</i> , wood sorrel <i>Oxalis acetosella</i> , and Solomon's seal <i>Polygonatum</i> . The site is home to a host of mammal and bird species, including four species of bat <i>Chiroptera</i> , Eurasian badgers <i>Meles meles</i> and long eared owls <i>Asio otus</i> .	Approximately 970 m southwest from the Site boundary

3.2.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

A total of two non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites were identified within 1 km of the Site, described in Table 4.

Table 4: Non-Statutory Designated Local Wildlife Sites within 1 km

LWS Name	Reason for Designation	Location from the Site
Drews Pond Wood (LWS)	Drews Pond Woods (LWS) is 5.54 ha in size and is designated for its woodland and meadow. The woodlands contain 29 ancient woodland indicator species, including field rose <i>Rosa arvensis</i> , wood sorrel <i>Oxalis acetosella</i> , and Solomon's seal <i>Polygonatum</i> . The site is home to a host of mammal and bird species, including four species of bat <i>Chiroptera</i> , Eurasian badgers <i>Meles meles</i> and long eared owls <i>Asio otus</i> .	Approximately 970 m southwest from the Site boundary
Kennet & Avon Canal (LWS)	Kennet & Avon Canal (LWS) is 230.87 ha in size and is a restored canal used for recreation.	Approximately 700 m north from the Site boundary

3.2.3 Priority Habitats

No priority habitats were identified within 250 m of the Site boundary.

3.2.4 Protected and Notable Species Records

Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) provided protected and notable species records and a summary of species that could be supported by the habitats within and adjacent to the proposed Site.

A summary of records provided by the WSBRC is provided in

Table 5. Note that only records from the last 10 years are included owing to the size of the data set, unless the record is considered to be significant (such as a bat maternity or hibernation roost).

Table 5: Summary of WSBRC Data

Species/Groups	Details
Bats	Records returned included 11 species of bat within a 1 km radius of the Site. Four Annex II species were included within this data: Barbastelle <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> , Bechstein's <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i> , lesser horseshoe <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> and greater horseshoe <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> . All four of these species returned results within the last 10 years, with the most recent being greater horseshoe (2022), followed by lesser horseshoe and barbastelle (2019), and Bechstein (2015). The closest bat record was 150m east of the Site dating from 2016 identified as Soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> .
Dormouse	No records of hazel dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> were returned for the area within 1 km of the Site.
GCN	No records of great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> were returned for the area within 1 km of the Site.
Otter	11 records of Eurasian otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> were returned for the area within 1 km of the Site. The most recent of these was from 2020 and the closest record was 33m south of the Site.
Water vole	Two records of water vole <i>Arvicola amphibius</i> were returned within 1 km of the site. The most recent of these was from 2014 and the closest record was 800m northwest of the Site.
Beaver	No records of beaver <i>Castor fiber</i> were returned for the area within 1 km of the Site.
Amphibians	One species of amphibian was recorded within 1 km of the Site: common toad <i>Bufo bufo</i> . The most recent record for this species was from 2012, located 800m northwest of the Site.
Badger	
Birds	The data search returned 43 species of bird within a 1 km radius of the Site. S41 birds of note include swift <i>Apus apus</i> , lesser black backed gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> , sparrowhawk <i>Accipitriformes nisus</i> , kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyl</i> , woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i> , and greater black backed gull <i>Larus marinus</i> .
Reptiles	Two species of reptile within 1 km were returned by the data search. These species were adder <i>Vipera berus</i> (760m from Site) and slow worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i> (660m from Site). The records were returned in 2011 and 2021 respectively.
Other mammals	Aside from the aforementioned species, two other species of mammal were identified within 1 km of the Site boundary. These species were Eurasian hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i> , and European rabbit <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> .
Plants	Records returned 13 species of plant recorded within the 1 km Site. No invasive species records were returned. None of these species' records were for plants included in the Wiltshire BAP or listed on S41 of the NERC Act 2006.
Invertebrates	Records of 16 invertebrate species were provided by WSBRC for the area within 1 km of the Site. 14 of these were listed on S41 of the NERC Act 2006, and/or the local biodiversity action plan (BAP). Species included: Rove beetle <i>Deleaster dichrous</i> , grey dagger moth <i>Acronicta psi</i> , knot grass moth <i>Acronicta rumicis</i> , garden tiger moth <i>Arctia caja</i> , rustic moth <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i> and common darter dragonfly <i>Sympetrum striolatum</i> .

3.2.5 Granted Protected Species Licenses

Seven European Protected Species (EPS) licenses issued by Natural England were identified within 2 km of the Site. The species covered, license number, data and reason for issue are detailed in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Granted EPS licences within 2 km of the Site

Species covered	License number	Dates covered	Reason for issue	Distance from Site
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	2017-30665-EPS-MIT	06/09/2017 - 06/06/2022	Destruction of a non-breeding roost	1.3 km northeast
Serotine <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> , soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	2018-37551-EPS-MIT	05/11/2018 - 02/11/2023	Destruction of a non-breeding roost.	1.5 km northwest
Brown long eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i> , natterers bat <i>Myotis natterii</i> , serotine and soprano	2015-7620-EPSMIT-1	21/03/2017 - 01/05/2020	Affecting breeding roost, damaging a breeding roost and damaging a non-	1.7 km northwest

Species covered	License number	Dates covered	Reason for issue	Distance from Site
pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>			breeding roost.	
Brown long eared, natterers bat, serotine, soprano pipistrelle	2015-7620-EPS-MIT	05/05/2015-01/05/2020	Destruction of a non-breeding roost. Damaging of a breeding roost.	1.7 km northwest
Daubentons bat <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	EPSM2013-6682	22/11/2013-30/09/2013	Affecting breeding roost, destruction of a breeding roost and destruction of a non-breeding roost.	1.7 km northwest
Brown long eared, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle.	2018-38458-EPS-MIT	01/01/2019 - 31/12/2024	Destruction of a non-breeding roost.	1.7 km northwest
Brown long eared, common pipistrelle, serotine	2017-27444-EPS-MIT	21/03/2017-21/03/2017	Destruction of a non-breeding roost.	1.9 km northwest

3.2.6 Great Crested Newt (GCN) Pond Surveys 2017 to 2019

No ponds located within 1 km of the Site were surveyed between 2017 and 2019.

3.2.7 Ponds within 500 m of the Site

No ponds or waterbodies were identified within 500 m of the Site.

3.3 FIELD SURVEY RESULTS – HABITATS

The Existing UKHab Plan (Figure 2) should be referred to throughout this section. No Schedule 9 non-native invasive species were encountered during the survey.

Modified Grassland - g4

The habitat to the front (see Plate 1) and rear (see Plate 2) of the main building (dwelling) comprised modified grassland – vegetated garden that underwent regular mowing. Species composition was characteristic of the classification, and the sward was dominated by common bent *Agrostis capillaris*. Other species included red fescue *Festuca rubra*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, dandelion *Taraxacum* spp., red dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum*, Geranium spp., smooth cat's ear *Hypochaeris glabra*, ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, and groundsel *Senecio vulgaris*.



Modified Grassland habitat to front of property



Plate 2: Modified Grassland habitat to rear of property

Plate 1:

Sparsely vegetated urban land - u1f

The northwestern area of the Site comprised rubble, gravel, and bricks with scattered vegetation growing throughout. Species included Yorkshire-fog, common bent, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, smooth cat's ear, dandelion and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. The area of sparsely vegetated urban land in the rear garden (U3 – see Plate 3) had more vegetation than the front of the property (U1 – Plate 4 and U5 – Plate 5), where butterfly-bush *Buddleja davidii* was found.



Plate 3: Sparsely vegetated urban land – U3



Plate 4: Sparsely vegetated urban land – U1



Plate 5: Sparsely vegetated urban land – U2

Buildings - u1b5

The Site comprised one main building (B1 – Plate 6) and two small garden shed structures (B2 and B3 – Plate 7).



Plate 6: Main building – B1



Plate 7: Two small garden shed structures (B2 on the left and B3 on the right)

Other developed land - u1b6

The remainder of the developed land classification comprised a driveway (Plate 8), pathway (Plate 9) and garden patio (Plate 10).



Plate 8: Driveway



Plate 9: Pathway



Plate 10: Garden patio

Built linear features - u1e

A wooden fence bordered the Site to the northwest and northeast. There was a wooden fence between the driveway and the rear garden (Plate 11).



Plate 11: Wooden fence

Figure 2: Existing Baseline UKHab Habitat Plan & Target Notes



3.4 FIELD SURVEY RESULTS – SPECIES

3.4.1 Amphibians (including great crested newt GCN)

The Site comprised hard standing, buildings and modified grassland habitat. The short sward height of the grassland was unsuitable for amphibians as it would not provide adequate cover for individuals. GCN is therefore considered to be absent from the Site and is not considered further in this report.

A common toad was observed during the UKhab survey in Sparsely vegetated urban land (U1 – Plate 4). They are listed as a Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and potential impacts will need to be avoided during site preparation and construction phases of the proposed development.

3.4.2 Badgers

[REDACTED]

3.4.3 Dormouse

The semi-natural habitats present within the area surveyed are not suitable for dormouse as they lack the species diversity and physical structure required by this species. Dormouse is therefore considered to be absent from the Site.

3.4.4 Breeding Birds

No birds were observed during the field survey. The limited areas of semi-natural habitat present within the area surveyed are not suitable to support breeding birds due to the lack of physical structure and associated vegetation cover required by these species. In addition, the building was not considered suitable for bird nesting, and no old nests were observed at the time of survey. Breeding birds are therefore considered to be absent from the Site.

3.4.5 Reptiles

The Site was not considered suitable to support reptiles due to the lack of areas of longer vegetation required by these species. Reptiles are therefore scoped out of further assessment.

3.4.6 Bats

Following the Bat Survey Guidelines provided in Table 2, the side porch on Site was assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats. It is considered low suitability due to the sub-optimal habitat within the Site and the surrounding landscape with the nearest optimal green space approximately 600m east of the Site. However, the side porch is not considered to be of negligible suitability due to the triple roman roof tiles (Plate 12), made from a type of clay which provides gaps underneath the tiles, thereby creating an access space favoured by some species of roosting bats.



Plate 12: Side porch triple roman tiles and example of a gap which could be used by roosting bats for access

The main building has potential to support roosting bats with several access opportunities for both crevice and void dwelling bat species. The gable end of the bungalow was observed to have crevices in the mortar under the tiles (Plate 13). Further survey are required to confirm the suitability for roosting bats within the main dwelling.



Plate 13: Gable end of bungalow with crevices in mortar under tiles

The two shed structures in the rear garden were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats owing to their construction.

Overall, the Site had low suitability for foraging and commuting bats. While the on-Site habitats are not well connected to the wider landscape, gappy hedgerows and linked back gardens could be used by a small number of bats as flightpaths.

4 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT, CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES

Owing to the scale and nature of the proposed works and the distance between the Site and Drews Pond Wood LNR, impacts to this statutory designated site as a result of the proposed development are not considered likely.

4.2 NON-STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES

Effects on the two non-statutory sites are not anticipated due to the scale and nature of the proposals and the distance of these sites from the proposed development.

4.3 HABITATS

No habitats of ecological value are present within the Site boundary, and no Schedule 9 invasive species were recorded at the time of survey. The proposed development is exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - further details are provided in Section 5.

4.4 SPECIES

On the basis of the habitats present and the results of the desk study, the Site is considered to offer suitable habitat for a limited range of legally protected/notable species, as described in the following sections.

4.4.1 Bats

The side porch of the main building has 'Low' suitability for roosting bats with several access points and roosting opportunities identified. The main building has potential for roosting bats with several potential access points identified, but further surveys are required to confirm the presence of bat roosts within this building. The data search confirmed the presence of a minimum of eleven bat species within 1 km of the Site. The Site and the surrounding area provide 'Low' suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

The proposals include the demolition of the side porch which will include the removal of two rows of tiles from the main roof followed by the re-alignment and replacement of tiles and the construction of a new bungalow 2m from the existing dwelling.

Bats, and any place a bat uses for breeding or shelter, either currently occupied or unoccupied are protected by European and British law, predominantly by Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which are the principal means by which the Habitats Directive is transposed from European directive into law in England and Wales.

In summary this law states that it is an offence to:

- Deliberately take, injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat (even if bats are absent at the time).
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange a living or dead bat or any part of a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

For a more comprehensive description and exact wording of the legislation please refer to:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/490/contents/made>

Where there is a risk that a bat roost may be present, it is incumbent upon the owner to commission a specialist bat survey to identify bat roosts before any work commences. Maximum penalties for offences relating to disturbance to bats or their roosts can amount to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or fines of up to Level 5 on the standard scale under the Criminal Justice Act 1982/1991 (i.e. £5000 in April 2001) per roost or bat disturbed or killed, or both.

When a bat roost is discovered no work that could affect the roost can be undertaken until Natural England grants a licence for the work. A thorough method statement and adequate mitigation proposals will need to be submitted to support any licence application.

Impact of Proposals

The proposed works have the potential to impact bat(s) and their roost(s) if present within the building. Without mitigation, the works could result in the damage, destruction or modification of bat roost(s) and would require a suitable licence issued by Natural England to enable the works to proceed lawfully.

Further Surveys Required

Side porch

An emergence survey is required to establish presence or likely absence of bats utilizing the side porch. Due to this structure having Low suitability for bats, one dusk emergence survey visit is required between May and August 2026, as set out in the Survey Guidelines for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J. 2023).

Night Vision Aids (NVA) will be required during the emergence survey, comprising of static infra-red or thermal cameras to record all bat activity. Following completion of this bat survey, analysis of all bat sound files and NVA camera footage will be required to characterise any bat roosts present.

Main building (dwelling)

The main building was also assessed to have potential for bat roosts during the extended UKHab survey. A full Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) is required to confirm the suitability of the building for roosting bats and the need for further surveys and/or mitigation. A PRA includes a detailed inspection of the interior of the structure (internal loft inspection) to look for features that bats could use for entry/exit and roosting and to search for characteristic signs of bat presence.

Bat Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement Measures

Further surveys are required before it is possible to produce a robust bat mitigation and compensation strategy for the proposed development, as well as enhancement measures.

4.4.2 Priority Species

A common toad was observed within the Site in an area of sparsely vegetated urban land.

Priority Species Avoidance Measures

Any rubble and brick piles (or similar) should be removed by hand to avoid injury to common toads and to allow for their safe escape.

Priority Species Mitigation Measures

Trenches/ holes/ excavations should not be left open overnight during construction, or an access ramp (such as a scaffold plank at an angle of no more than 45 degrees) should be provided to enable any trapped animals a means of escape. Such excavations should be checked each morning for the presence of animals before work commences.

Priority Species Enhancement Measures

Habitat refugia/hibernacula piles could be created around the edges of the grassland area to provide shelter for amphibians.

5 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

5.1 BNG EXEMPTION STATEMENT

The proposed development meets the conditions to qualify for an exemption as a self-build or custom build. It consists of one new dwelling on a site which has an area of 0.047 hectares. The dwelling will be designed by the householder and on completion they will occupy the dwelling, in compliance with the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

As a result, the proposed development is exempt from biodiversity net gain requirements and planning conditions under Self-build and Custom build applications, Section 8 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the side porch was assessed as providing Low suitability for bat roosting and the main building was identified as having several potential access and roosting features. Further surveys are required (PRA internal loft inspection on the main building and a single emergence survey on the side porch) to confirm the presence/ likely absence of bats at the Site. The results of these surveys will be used to inform a detailed assessment of the potential effects on any bat roosts present, and to determine any necessary mitigation strategies/ licensing requirements for the proposed works.

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APPENDIX A – LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

LEGISLATION

Many species of animal and plant receive some degree of legal protection. For the purposes of this report, legal protection refers to: species included on Annex II of the Habitats Directive 1992 (Council of European Communities, 22/07/1992) , Schedules 2 and 5 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) , excluding species that are only protected in relation to their sale (see Section 9[5] and 13[2]) reflecting the fact that the proposed development does not include any proposals relating to the sale of species.

Legal offences associated with species listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in England and Wales include inter alia:

- Deliberate capture, injury or killing of animals or taking or destroying their eggs;
- Deliberately disturb animals in a way that would significantly affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, breed or rear young;
- Intentional or reckless disturbance of an animal in its place of shelter or protection;
- Damaging or destroying a resting place or breeding site;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstructing access to a place of shelter or protection; and
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead animal or any part of an animal.

All species of wild bird are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) from killing or injury. In addition, it is an offence to take or damage/ destroy their eggs and to damage or destroy a nest whilst it is in use. Species listed on Schedule 1 (such as barn owl) receive additional protection in that it is illegal to disturb birds or their young whilst occupying, or near to, an active nest.

A number of wild plants, habitats and animals (including reptiles, hedgehog and most species of bat) are also included within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 which lists flora, fauna and habitats considered by the Secretary of State to be of principal importance for conserving biodiversity. The publication of the "England Biodiversity List" satisfies the requirements of Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 for the conservation of biodiversity. Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 requires public bodies, including local planning authorities, to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (UK Government, 1992) which makes it an offence to willfully kill, injure or take (or attempt to kill, injure or take) a badger; or to disturb badgers whilst occupying their setts.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

NPPF

There are numerous national and local planning policies associated with flora and fauna (also referred to as biodiversity) that need to be addressed as part of the planning process. The Government has issued its National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2025, which requires impacts to biodiversity to be minimised. Paragraph 194 of the NPPF applies the same protection to Ramsar sites as that conferred by the Habitats Regulations to SACs and SPAs, it also applies the same protection to sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitat sites.

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To protect and enhance biodiversity plans should:

- 192a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation;
- 192b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The NPPF requires development to apply the following principles (Paragraph 193):

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Planning authorities should follow key principles to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity conservation are considered. Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation and complements the NPPF.

The Natural Environment Paper

"The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature" outlines the Government's approach and vision for nature in the UK including protecting and improving our natural environment, growing a green economy and reconnecting people and nature.

Biodiversity 2020

A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, are the country level strategies for England and builds on the natural Environment White Paper. It sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade on land (including rivers and lakes) and at sea. The priorities for action include a more integrated large-scale approach to conservation, putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy, reducing environmental pressure and improving knowledge.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

As well as national policy, there is relevant biodiversity policy contained within Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted in January 2015. Core Policy 50 is relevant to the proposed application and is summarised below.

Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Protection

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

Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity enhancement

All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.

Local sites

Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment. Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:

- i. cannot reasonably be avoided
- ii. are reduced as far as possible
- iii. are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest
- iv. where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning
- v. obligations or agreements.

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

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

The "England Biodiversity List" satisfies the requirements of Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and includes those habitat and species considered to be of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales. This list replaces the UK BAP Priority Habitats and Species.

However, many local authorities/counties still maintain a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) document which includes those habitats and species considered to be a priority within the local area in terms of their biodiversity importance.

The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan produced in 2008 has a separate action plan for the 15 species of bats found in the county. The county is a stronghold for bats, and they utilise a wide range of habitats. Existing roosts, hibernation sites and key flight lines are protected, and more potential hibernation and roost sites should be created.

APPENDIX B - POST-DEVELOPMENT UKHAB PLAN

