



ALDER ECOLOGY UK LTD

Working for the Client - Working with Wildlife

Beaufort Building, Bristol road, Allington, Chippenham,
SN14 6NA
AEUK 1718

Preliminary Ecological Assessment

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13th February 2026



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Project: Beaufort Building, Allington

Contents

1. BACKGROUND	3
2. INTRODUCTION	8
3. FIELD STUDY	8
4. LEGISLATIVE AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE	9
5. LIMITATIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT	9
6. DATA REVIEW	10
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

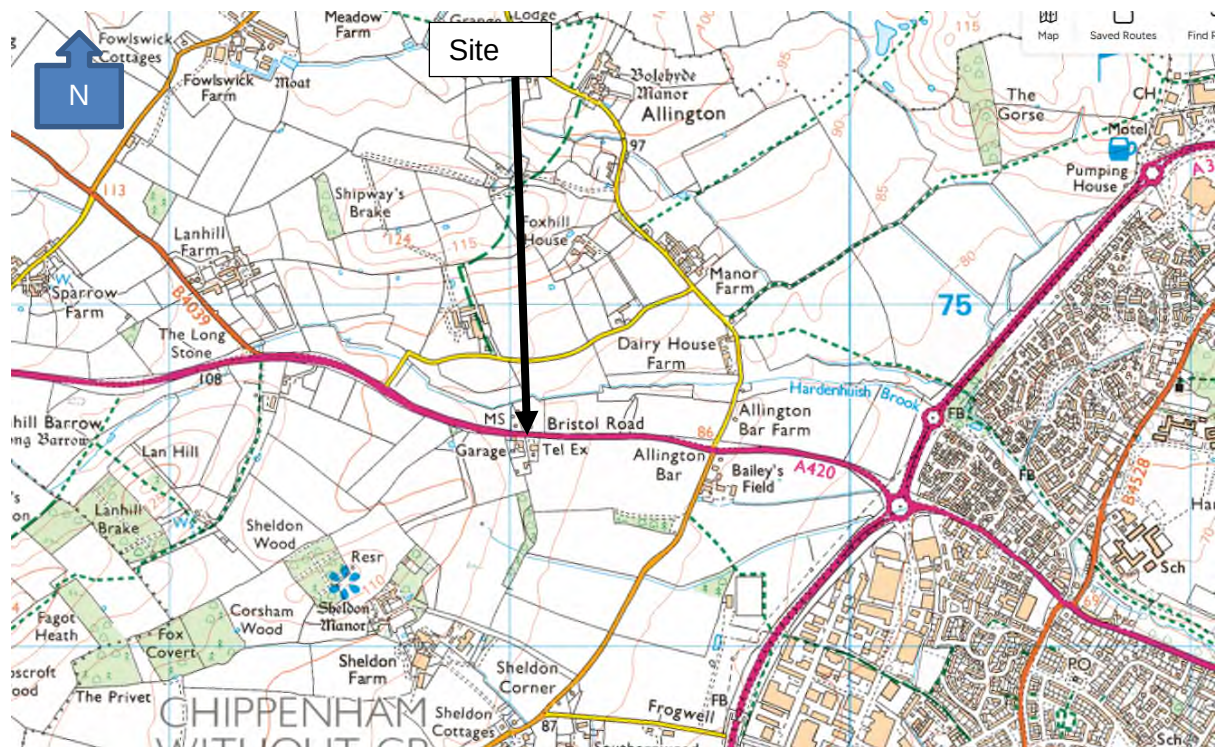
This report presents the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) on the proposed re-development of the land of the commercial property Beaufort Building, Allington, Chippenham Wiltshire, England, SN14 6NA National grid reference ST 89067 74612 what3words locator (reserves.kilowatt.crucially) hereafter referred to as the “site”. The survey was commissioned by Mr Brendan Pocock and undertaken by Alder Ecology UK Ltd. The survey comprised an inspection of the land on site, a commercial unit with amenity grassland and hard standing.

The site (survey area) is a small plot approximately 0.037 hectares (0.093 acres) which is situated within a rural location, although the red line boundary is slightly smaller than the figures above and includes 22sqm of amenity grassland habitat. This application relates to the proposed provision of replacement units which will be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain under the provisions of the requirements.

Proposed works

The proposal is for the provision of a replacement building removing seven individual buildings of contrasting style.

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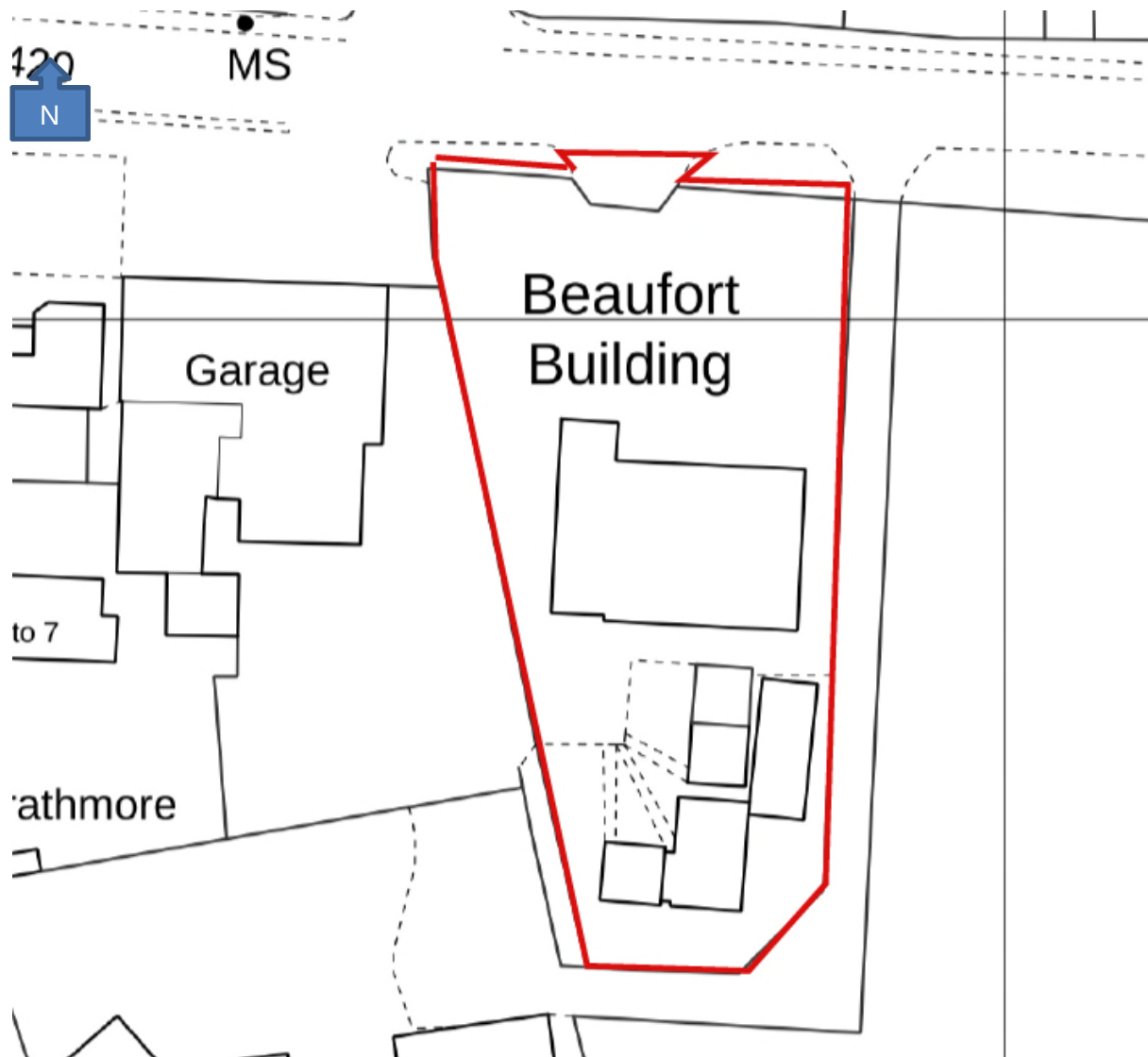
Map 1 showing site location

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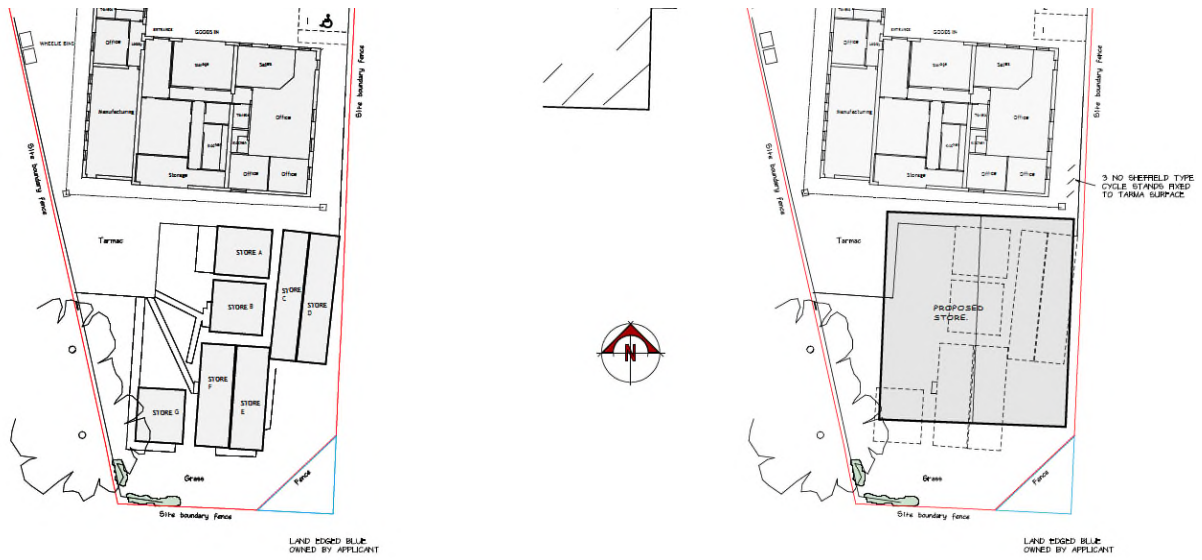
Map 2 showing the approximate site survey boundary and surrounding habitat

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Map 3 Existing site plan showing red line site boundary.

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Map 4 showing proposed site plan. See full submission for details.

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2. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) undertaken on 10th February 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 February 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.

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6. DATA REVIEW

Table 1 Protected habitats 5km search SN14 6NA

Site Name	Protected status	Distance from site to closest record	Comment
West Yatton Down	SSSI	3.7km NW	Unimproved limestone grassland
Honey brook Farm	SSSI	4.1km SW	Unimproved calcareous grassland
Rack Hill	SSSI	4.2km NW	Grazed limestone grassland
Danke Down	SSSI	4.8km NW	Oolitic limestone grassland

Table 2 Protected and Notable Species Historic Records 2km search SN14 6NA

Name	Records	Distance from site to closest record	Date of most recent record	Comment
Badger	3	2km	2023	
Bird assemblage	81	2km	2025	See table 3 below
Brown hare	22	2km	2024	
Common Toad	4	2km	2025	
Hazel Dormouse	2	2km	2004	
Hedgehog	101	2km	2024	

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Slow wren	1	2km	2017	
Water vole	1	2km	2004	

Bird assemblage

Of the 81 species of bird historically recorded within 2km of the site a total of 16 species are listed on section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as Species of Principle Importance for Nature Conservation (Priority species) and 4 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.

Species	Number of records	Priority species	Schedule 1 species
Barn owl	2		Yes
Brambling	3		Yes
Bullfinch	54	Yes	
Common Cuckoo	4	Yes	
Corn bunting	2	Yes	
Fieldfare	17		Yes
Herring gull	43	Yes	
Grasshopper warbler	1	Yes	
House sparrow	277	Yes	
Lapwing	6	Yes	
Lesser redpoll	1	Yes	

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Linnet	17	Yes	
Marsh tit	9	Yes	
Redwing	11		Yes
Skylark	47	Yes	
Song thrush	124	Yes	
Spotted flycatcher	9	Yes	
Starling	253	Yes	
Willow tit	4	Yes	
Yellowhammer	49	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 on buildings, the site habitat is poor quality and commercial.

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7. PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES



Plate 1 showing the site Beaufort building, Allington, Chippenham



Plate 2 showing site conditions looking north

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Plate 3 showing the impact zone in yellow approx. 22msq of amenity grassland lost



Plate 4 showing amenity grassland lost 22msq

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Plate 5 buildings with no potential for birds or bats



Plate 6 shipping container and brick store no potential for birds or bats

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Plate 7 south of east side shipping container hard standing crushed bricks and chippings



Plate 8 rear (south) side of the site showing low quality habitats but not impacted by works

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Plate 9 store G tight finished roof negligible potential for birds or bats



Plate 10 gable (south) of store G negligible potential for birds or bats

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8. RESULTS

Habitats

Habitat Description

The site supports a limited range of generally low quality natural habitats and is a site actively used for commercial purposes. The site contains a limited amount of amenity grassland, a mix of building types and hard standing in the impact zone. The habitat around the site is a mixture of amenity grassland, laurel hedge, hard standing and fencing. The site is well served by security lighting.

Table 4 Habitats on site

Habitat	National importance	Regional importance	Local importance	Site importance	Distinctiveness
<i>Amenity grassland</i>				Yes	Low
<i>Bare ground</i>				Negligible	Low
<i>Hard standing</i>				Negligible	Low
<i>Buildings</i>				Negligible	Low
<i>Non-native hedgerow</i>				Negligible	Low

Amenity grassland

The site contains areas of amenity, low quality, and species poor grassland associated with the buildings. In some areas the grassland exists only as tufts of grass growing through crushed stone and brick 'soil'. This type of amenity grassland is common within commercial sites and has very limited value for wildlife. A small proportion (22msq) of the amenity grassland will be impacted by the proposed scheme and is assessed to be of site value and low distinctiveness. The amenity grassland is easily re-created and amenity grassland will still be present as a site habitat once the development is completed.

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Bare ground

The site contains patches of bare ground within areas of the amenity grassland where things have been stored or not grown due to underlying rubble and crushed bricks. The bare ground is assessed to be of negligible value and low distinctiveness.

Hard standing

There are areas of hard standing around the building footprints such as crushed stone and bricks, gravel, tarmac and paving stones which provides little value on site for wildlife. The hard standing is assessed to be of negligible value and low distinctiveness.

Buildings

The site contains seven single storey buildings in a mix of styles from shipping containers, brick structures and wooden structures now used as storage buildings. None of the buildings has potential for use by birds or bats and were well sealed and maintained. The buildings on site have been assessed to be of negligible value and low distinctiveness.

Non-native hedgerow

The site on the south and south west boundary contains a non-native laurel hedgerow which has negligible value for local wildlife and suppresses ground flora and grasses around the hedge base further reduces site quality. The non-native hedgerow has been assessed to be of negligible value and low distinctiveness.

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

	European importance	National importance	NERC section 41 species	Local BAP species
Bats	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bird assemblage		Yes	Yes	Yes
Hedgehog			Yes	Yes
Reptiles			Yes	Yes
Amphibian species			Yes	Yes

Bats

The site has limited resources for bat foraging other than in the fields opposite the site and along hedgerows adjacent to the site which are connected to the wider landscape containing woodland and wetlands. The immediate site has limited value for foraging bats and has negligible potential to be used by night roosting or night feeding bats within the buildings on site. The site is assessed to be of low value to foraging bats and negligible value to night roosting or night feeding bats.

Birds

The wider landscape (within 2km) has records of a total of 16 species which are listed on section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as Species of Principle Importance for Nature Conservation and 4 species listed as schedule 1 birds. The wider landscape around the site does have potential to support some of the listed bird species for foraging and nesting but none on site and especially inside the impact zone. The area inside the redline boundary has limited resources for bird species but is assessed to be of low value to foraging birds. The site is assessed to be of low value to common, NERC and schedule 1 bird species as a limited foraging resource and negligible value as a breeding site within the buildings.

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Hedgehog

There are over 100 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 limited habitats of this site the adjacent fields and hedgerows. The habitats on site are low value for foraging and sheltering hedgehog but they may use the site if they can gain access. The proposed works are unlikely to significantly impact upon hedgehog habitat as better habitat is provided in the wider landscape. 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 and grass snake as there is very little cover. The grassland habitat can be used by reptiles but in this instance only for moving through the site as opposed to feeding. The site has been assessed to be of low value for common reptile species.

Amphibian species

The site does not contain suitable foraging habitat within the grassland and bare ground habitat for common amphibian species and contains no areas suitable for breeding amphibian species. The local area does not contain ponds suitable for breeding amphibians. The site is assessed to be of negligible 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; Beaufort Building, Allington, Chippenham will not negatively impact on protected habitats or protected species and the site is a low quality site for wildlife.

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 habitats that are locally significant or nationally significant. 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.

Due to the proximity of the site to SSSIs (within 5km) it is confirmed that the site is located inside the Natural England (NE) SSSI, Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) and will therefore require NE consultation to ensure any risk to the SSSI's located within 5km of the site can be assessed.

The proposed works does not 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. Further surveys will not be required to inform any planning decision for the site in order to comply with local and national policies for protected species.

As the site habitat amenity grassland is under 25msq it would be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) but it is recommended that measures to promote local wildlife can be included in the scheme with planting of native vegetation (trees and hedgerows) within the wider site boundary.

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 and in particular the impact zone. The site does provide very limited opportunities for foraging, and commuting wildlife as part of the wider landscape. Any development of the site will not require further surveys for protected species.

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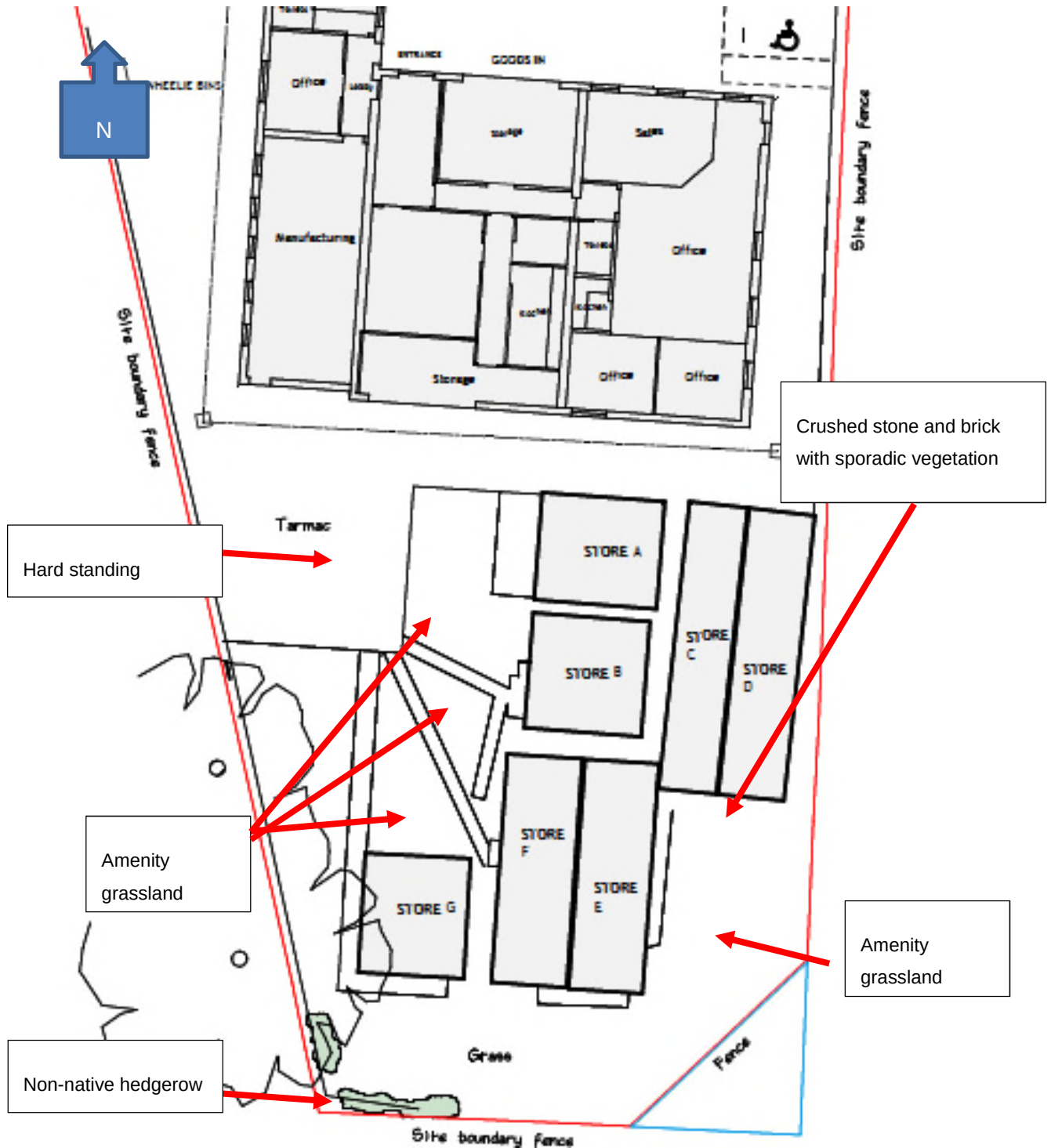
10.RECOMMENDATIONS

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
- Provide on-site native species hedgerow within the site boundaries and native trees.
- Any landscape design for the site if required should where possible aim to use 80% native species in any design to help local native wildlife species.

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11. Appendix 1 - Habitat Map



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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

