

ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

21st April 2025

College Farmhouse, Upavon, Wiltshire,
SN9 6DT

On behalf of: Kate Scruby & David
Hollinghurst

Agent: Favonius Architects

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This report has been prepared to identify the presence of protected species and habitats within the site, where this falls within the scope of the agreed works.

This report has been produced using all reasonable skill and care, and a Quality Assurance (QA) review process has been conducted prior to issue of this report.

SURVEY DATA LIFESPAN AND VALIDITY:

Survey data can be considered valid for 12 months from the survey date in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Advice note (CIEEM, 2019) due to the presence of and/or potential for mobile species to be present within the site.

It must be noted that update surveys will be required in the event a Natural England mitigation licence is required. In the event roosting bats are present, the licence application must be informed by up-to-date survey data from the then current bat survey season (May to August). An update building inspection will also be required within 3 months of the application.

The results of the surveys and this assessment are representative at the time of the surveys taking place.

ABR Ecology Ltd cannot accept responsibility for third party data supplied within this report.

This document has been prepared in accordance with CIEEM's Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017).

At the time of writing, standard methodologies have been used which are accepted by Natural England and other statutory bodies. No responsibility will be accepted where standard methodologies change and where Government, national bodies and industry subsequently modify standards.

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Non-technical summary

- ◆ ABR Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Kate Scruby and David Hollinghurst to produce an Ecological Assessment informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at College Farmhouse, Upavon, Wiltshire, SN9 6DT. The survey was conducted to inform a householder application for the construction of a new garage with home working offices on the second storey with an associated gravel drive/turning area.
- ◆ The PEA was undertaken on the 9th January 2025 by experienced Natural England class 2 licensed bat ecologists and experienced botanists Becci Hoyle MCIEEM and Russell Hoyle ACIEEM. Former PEA surveys of the site were conducted on the 6th December 2022 and 22nd July 2022.

Habitats:

- ◆ Habitats within the application site include buildings (u1b5-818 and u1b5-827), introduced shrub (u1-516-847), other developed land (u1b6-804), modified grassland (g4-32-33-108-510-516), 22 rural trees (u-32) and a line of trees (w-33). A non-native hedgerow (h2b) is also present on-site.
- ◆ Four trees will be lost as part of the development; these will be replaced within the site to ensure no net loss in trees; refer to Section 4 of this report.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):

- ◆ The applicant's agent has advised that the application will fall under the criteria for a householder application and therefore mandatory BNG under the Environment Act 2021 is not required for this application.

Badgers:

- ◆ No evidence of badgers was recorded on-site, and no further action is recommended for this species.

Barn owls:

- ◆ A barn owl box is situated within a barn in the west of the site with pellets, feathers and white splashing (droppings) recorded. The barn supports a barn owl roost; however, this building is not subject to impacts as part of this planning application. No evidence of barn owl was recorded in the remaining buildings on-site. Therefore, no impacts on barn owls are anticipated as part of this application.

Bats:

- ◆ Potential Roosting features (PRFs) were observed within some of the trees on-site. The trees with PRFs are not being impacted as part of this development. However, should plans change resulting in impacts on these trees, then mitigation and compensation for the loss of these potential roosts would be required.
- ◆ Should 12 months pass without works commencing, and/or any material changes occur to the trees (such as deterioration) or if the proposals for the site change, this

report would no longer be valid and an update site visit to reassess the trees would be required.

- ◆ The outbuildings around the courtyard are known to support known roosts for brown long-eared and lesser horseshoe bats. No impacts on these roosts are anticipated by the proposed works provided that a lighting mitigation strategy is followed as detailed in Section 4 of this report.

Dormice:

- ◆ Dormice are not considered to be impacted by the proposals and no further action is recommended for this species.

Great crested newts (GCN):

- ◆ Great crested newts (GCN) are not considered to be impacted by the proposals and no further action is recommended for this species.

Hedgehogs:

- ◆ The site possesses suitable habitat for hedgehogs and mitigation for this species is detailed in Section 4.

Nesting birds:

- ◆ The vegetation on-site provides suitable habitat for nesting birds and a bird's nest was identified within a tree on-site. A mitigation strategy is provided in Section 4 of this report.

Reptiles and common amphibians:

- ◆ The habitats on site offer very limited habitat for reptiles and common amphibians in its current state. On this basis, no further action is recommended for these species.

Biodiversity enhancements:

- ◆ To enhance the site for biodiversity, enhancements will include a bird and bat box in the new garage as detailed in Section 4.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 ABR Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Kate Scruby and David Hollinghurst to produce an Ecological Assessment to inform a householder application for the construction of a new garage with home working offices on the second storey with an associated gravel drive/turning area at College Farmhouse, Upavon, Wiltshire, SN9 6DT (central grid reference: SU 13459 55227) (herein referred to as 'the site' / 'onsite').
- 1.2 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was conducted on the 9th January 2025 by experienced Natural England class 2 licensed bat ecologists and experienced botanists Becci Hoyle MCIEEM and Russell Hoyle ACIEEM. Former PEAs of the site were conducted on the 6th December 2022 and 22nd July 2022.
- 1.3 A site plan is provided in Appendix A and proposed elevations in Appendix B.

Site context

- 1.4 College Farmhouse, located in Upavon, Wiltshire is a historically significant Grade II listed building with courtyard, outbuildings, gardens and a paddock, nestled within a rural landscape characterised by arable farmland, pasture, hedgerows, and mature trees. The area supports a variety of native wildlife, including birds, bats, other small mammals, and invertebrates. The presence of waterbodies including ponds and streams further enhances local biodiversity.

Purposes and aims of this assessment

- 1.5 This assessment primarily aims to determine the biodiversity value of the site and looks to identify the presence/likely absence of protected and vulnerable species onsite. This report also aims to evaluate whether there will be any potential development impacts on protected species and habitats and identifies whether mitigation and/or protected species licensing is required to ensure the development complies with legislation and national and local planning policy.

Relevant planning policy and legislation

- 1.6 Full details of relevant planning policy and legislation are provided in Appendix C of this report; the following policy and legislation in respect of biodiversity is applicable to this application:
 - ◆ *The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 – Section 15*
 - ◆ *The Environment Act 2021*
 - ◆ *Annex II and IV of the EC Habitats and Species Directive 1992*
 - ◆ *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*
 - ◆ *Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System*

- ◆ *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – Section 1 and Schedules 5 and 9*
- ◆ *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Sections 40 and 41*
- ◆ *The Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015)*

1.7 It is the responsibility of the applicant(s) to ensure that the proposed development proceeds in full compliance with legislation, national and local policy, and in accordance with all conditions of the obtained planning consent.

2. Methodology

Desktop data search

- 2.1 Internationally protected sites including Ramsars, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) were identified within a 7.5 kilometre (km) radius and nationally designated sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) were identified within a 1km radius of the site using the Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside website (MAGIC 2025).
- 2.2 Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC, 2025) were contacted to provide records of any protected, vulnerable and notable species and notified sites within a 1km radius of the application site.
- 2.3 A search was conducted on the MAGIC website (MAGIC, 2025) to identify the presence of nearby priority habitats, European Protected Species (EPS) licences and known great crested newt breeding ponds.
- 2.4 This information was used to evaluate the potential of the site for protected and vulnerable species and to determine whether there is potential for development impacts on these species, surrounding habitats and protected sites.

Botanical survey (UKHab)

- 2.5 A botanical survey of the site was conducted on 9th January 2025 by experienced Natural England class 2 licensed bat ecologists and experienced botanists Becci Hoyle MCIEEM and Russell Hoyle ACIEEM.
- 2.6 The survey involved a detailed flora survey of habitats, and each flora species was allocated an abundance in accordance with the DAFOR scale, using local (L) as a pre-fix where a species was restricted in distribution across the habitat:

D – Dominant

A – Abundant

F – Frequent

O – Occasional

R – Rare

- 2.7 Habitats on site were classified and coded in accordance with the UKHab Classification System, using the UK Habitat Classification Definitions document Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023¹) and UKHab Field Key Version 2.1 (UKHab Ltd, 2023²). Other features of ecological interest were identified using ‘target notes’.

Protected species assessment

Badgers

- 2.8 A walkover was conducted during the site visit looking for potential evidence of badgers *Meles meles*. Evidence of badgers can include the presence of setts

(underground burrows), ‘snuffle marks’ (nose marks and scratches from badger foraging within the earth), latrines (territorial marking sites), scats, hair, footprints and well-worn paths.

Barn owls and other nesting birds

- 2.9 A search was conducted for evidence of barn owl *Tyto alba* and other nesting birds within and around the buildings and vegetation during the site visit. Evidence of nesting birds can include the physical presence of chicks and/or adult birds, nesting material, eggs and/or egg casings, feathers, white splashing (droppings), and pellets (for barn owls).

Bats- Ground-Level Tree Assessment (GTLA)

Survey conditions, equipment and timings

- 2.10 Survey information for the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) is provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Weather conditions, equipment and timings for survey

Survey date	Time of survey	Surveyors	Equipment available for use	Weather conditions		
09/01/2025	10:30am	Becci Smith MCIEEM and Russell Hoyle ACIEEM	High-powered torch, mirrors, sealable bags, FFP3 face masks, gloves, extendable ladder, endoscope, binoculars	Temp:	Okta cloud cover:	Beaufort wind force:
				2°C	0/8	1/12

- 2.11 The surveying ecologists have received training in Working at Heights (and in-house training in the use of ladders for PRA surveys), Manual Handling, and Emergency First Aid At Work to ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation (The Work at Height Regulations 2005, Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981).
- 2.12 A Ground-Level Tree Assessment (GTLA) was undertaken in accordance with The BCT Guidelines (Collins, 2023). A systematic search was made of any trees onsite for bats and where present, information was compiled on the potential and actual bat entry/exit points (where possible); potential and actual bat roosting locations; and any evidence of bats found.
- 2.13 The inspection was carried out systematically and consistently around all parts of each tree (from all angles and close to the trunk and further away). Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) that can be exploited by bats include the following (Table 2 below):

Table 2: Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) for bats in trees

PRFs formed by disease and decay	PRFs formed by damage	PRFs formed by association
Woodpecker holes Squirrel holes Knot holes Pruning cuts Tear outs	Lightning strikes Hazard beams Subsidence cracks Shearing cracks Transverse snaps	Fluting Ivy

Wounds	Welds	
Cankers	Lifting bark	
Compression	Desiccation	
Forks	Fissures	
Butt rots	Frost cracks	

2.14 Trees were categorized in accordance the scale shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Categories for assigning tree potential for roosting bats

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

2.15 The above assessment was further refined for any trees with identified Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) which were categorized in accordance with the following scale (Table 4 below) (Collins, 2023):

Table 4: Categories for assigning tree potential for roosting bats

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

2.16 Trees were identified as ‘confirmed’ bat roosts where bat evidence was recorded. If droppings were present, a sample of the bat droppings were collected and couriered to Swift Ecology Ltd for DNA analysis to confirm the species of bat present.

Dormice

2.17 An assessment was conducted to evaluate the suitability of the habitats on site for the dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, a small, nocturnal mammal which occupies habitats such as hedgerows, scrub, woodland and treelines. The dormouse requires good habitat connectivity and suitable food resources providing fruit, nuts, nectar and/or insects throughout the year.

Great crested newts

2.18 The habitats on site were assessed for their potential to support the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN). GCN occupy both aquatic and terrestrial habitats, spending most of their life cycle on land and a short period of the year for breeding and egg-laying. Suitable terrestrial habitats can include grassland, woodland, hedgerows, scrub, and tall herb communities; and suitable overwintering (hibernation) sites can include piles of materials such as rubble/logs and at the base of buildings/stone walls.

2.19 GCN are known to travel up to 500 metres (m) from their breeding sites; for this reason, an aerial assessment was made prior to the site visit to determine if any waterbodies were present onsite and around the site (offsite). Any accessible

waterbodies were assessed under the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (Oldham et al, 2000, 2008) to determine the suitability of the waterbody to support great crested newts.

Reptiles and common amphibians

- 2.20 An appraisal of the habitats on site was conducted to evaluate their suitability for common British reptiles, such as slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, grass snake *Natrix natrix* and adder *Vipera berus*, and common amphibians such as common frog *Rana temporaria*.
- 2.21 Suitable habitats for reptiles and amphibians include those with a varied structure, offering a range of niches for basking and foraging. Typical habitats include rough and unmanaged grassland with shorter margins, heathland, woodland, scrub and ruderal vegetation. Potential overwintering (hibernation) sites can include piles of materials such as rubble/logs, rockeries and at the base of buildings/stone walls.

Survey limitations and assumptions

PEA, PRA and GTLA surveys

- 2.22 Evidence of crevice-dwelling bats may have been missed due to the concealed nature of bat roosts. Binoculars were used to identify any potential bat droppings on the exterior features of the trees.
- 2.23 Bats and nesting birds are highly mobile species, and it is therefore possible for bats and nesting birds to occupy the property at any time in the future, particularly if any alterations/changes occur to the property. The PRA only provides a 'snapshot' in time and does not account for seasonal variation; bats and nesting birds may have been overlooked due to seasonal constraints. As such, it is not possible to have complete certainty that bats and nesting birds are not present, rather, there was no indication of bat/nesting bird presence at the time of survey.
- 2.24 The GLTA can be constrained by canopy cover and by the angle of the surveyor and some PRFs may not be visible from ground level. Where PRFs are present at height, these cannot be inspected from ground level.
- 2.25 An aerial search for waterbodies is constrained by the accuracy of OS maps. Several websites were accessed to minimize the chances of missing waterbodies, however, garden ponds within residential properties are often unmapped and it is possible that waterbodies have been missed as part of this assessment.
- 2.26 The site visit provides a 'snapshot' of the site and does not take into account seasonal variation. Species may have been overlooked due to the constraints of the season and time in which the survey was undertaken. A lack of evidence of a species does not confirm its absence from site, rather there was no indication of its presence at the time of survey.
- 2.27 Often bats leave no visible sign of their presence on the outside of the trees, and even when they do, wet weather can wash evidence away.

Data validity and survey data lifespan

- 2.28 The data within this report should not be seen as comprehensive. Data obtained from the data search (WSBRC, 2025) is unlikely to provide a complete record of species within the search area. It is possible that a species may occur within the vicinity of the site that has not been identified within the data search.
- 2.29 Survey data is considered valid for 12 months from the survey date in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Advice note (CIEEM, 2019) due to the presence of and/or potential for mobile species to be present within the site.
- 2.30 Survey data is only intended for the proposals outlined within this report. If any material changes to the site occur and/or if the nature and/or extent of the proposed development changes, an update visit to reassess the site will be required, and any conclusions provided herein may not be relied upon.

3. Results

Desktop data search

Internationally, nationally and regionally protected (statutory) sites

- 3.1 MAGIC (2025) was used to identify any international statutory sites located within 7.5km of the application site and national/local sites within 1km of the site. Results are presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Internationally, nationally and regionally protected (statutory) sites

Site name	Distance from site	Designation	Site description
River Avon	163m east	SAC	The Avon and its tributaries comprise a large, lowland river system. It includes sections running through chalk, greensand, and clay, with transitions between them. Five aquatic Ranunculus species occur in the river system, but stream water-crowfoot <i>Ranunculus penicillatus</i> ssp. <i>pseudofluitans</i> and river water-crowfoot <i>R. fluitans</i> are the main dominants. Some winterbourne reaches, where pond water-crowfoot <i>R. peltatus</i> is the dominant watercrowfoot species, are included in the SAC. There is an extensive population of Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> along the margins and associated wetlands of the Rivers Avon, Bourne and Wylfe.
River Avon System	163m east	SSSI	"The Avon is richer and more varied than in most chalk streams with over 180 species of aquatic plant having been recorded, one of the most diverse fish faunas in Britain and a wide range of aquatic invertebrates. It rises in the Pewsey Vale as a network of clay streams fed by chalk springs. These converge to a chalk river running through Salisbury Plain. The upper reaches of the rivers are largely fed from chalk springs and in the Avon itself flows are relatively constant. The system has an extremely diverse fish fauna with more species recorded in the Avon than in any other British river. The renowned salmonid fisheries, with wild populations of migratory sea trout <i>Salmo trutta</i> , brown trout and Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> . A wide range of coarse fish are present, including bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> , minnow <i>Phoxinus phoxinus</i> , 3-spined stickleback <i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i> , dace <i>Leuciscus leuciscus</i> , stone loach <i>Noemacheilus barbatulus</i> , pike <i>Esox lucius</i> , grayling <i>Thymallus thymallus</i> , eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i> , perch <i>Perca fluviatilis</i> , roach <i>Rutilus rutilus</i> , gudgeon <i>Gobio gobio</i> , bleak <i>Alburnus alburnus</i> . The system is notable for brook lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> , having particularly important spawning areas in the upper reaches."
Salisbury Plain	2.6km southwest	SAC	The defining habitat type is chalk grassland, also some secondary and ancient woodland is present. Juniper scrub is significant on parts of

			Salisbury Plain and much of Porton Down. SAC is also distinctive in hosting the priority habitat type 'orchid rich sites'. This priority habitat type comprises calcareous grasslands which contain either a rich suite of orchid species, important populations of at least one nationally uncommon orchid species or one or several orchid species considered to be rare, very rare or exceptional in the UK
Salisbury Plain	2.6km southwest	SPA	The site includes unimproved chalk grassland with small blocks of scrub and woodland. The majority of the site has been used for military training since early 20th century and has therefore not been subject to intensive farming. The site supports nationally important populations of two Annex I species. other Annex I species which occur in small numbers include merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> and short eared owl <i>Asio flammeus</i> .
Salisbury Plain	2.6km southwest	SSSI	Salisbury Plain supports the largest known expanse of unimproved chalk downland in northwest Europe and represents 41% of Britain's remaining area of this rich wildlife habitat. Supports 13 species of nationally rare and scarce plants, 67 species of rare and scarce invertebrates and forms a site of international importance for birds. In addition to chalk downland, this site supports scrub and woodland habitats, temporary and permanent pools, and the Nine Mile River winterbourne. The rare and notable plants which occur here include burnt orchid <i>Orchis ustulata</i> , slender bedstraw <i>Galium pumilum</i> , field fleawort <i>Senecio integrifolius</i> and the nationally scarce British endemic early gentian <i>Gentianella anglica</i> . Salisbury Plain is an important stronghold for declining downland butterflies. Other species of interest on Salisbury Plain include the Great Crested Newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> . This newt occurs in dew ponds across the Plain and in pools along the Nine Mile River, together with smooth newt <i>T. vulgaris</i> , common frog <i>Rana temporaria</i> and common toad <i>Bufo bufo</i> . Grass snake <i>Natrix natrix</i> are also often seen near pools, and common lizard <i>Lacerta vivipara</i> , slow worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i> and adder <i>Vipera berus</i> are present.

Impacts on statutory sites

- 3.2 No impacts on the above designated sites are anticipated as part of the works and no mitigation is proposed regarding these sites.

Priority habitats (S.41 NERC Act 2006)

- 3.3 There nearest priority habitat is coastal and floodplain grazing marsh approximately 600m to the south of the site (MAGIC, 2025). Due to sufficient distance from the site, no impacts upon priority habitats are anticipated as part of the proposed works.

Locally designated (non-statutory) sites

- 3.4 WSBRC (2025) were contacted to provide information of any locally designated sites within 1km of the site. Results are presented in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Locally designated (non-statutory) sites

Site name	Distance from site	Designation	Area (ha)	Site description
Salisbury Avon Headwaters	645m north	Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	7.16	A river complex above the SSSI.
Upavon Swamp	650m south	LWS	5.64	A series of former water meadows that are now overgrown with scrub, tall herb and fen communities in the wetter areas and along the ditches.

Protected, rare and vulnerable species

- 3.5 Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC, 2025) were contacted to provide of protected and vulnerable species within a 1km radius of the application site and the results of which are provided in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Records for protected/vulnerable species of interest

Common name	Latin name	Number of records	Latest record	Nearest record to site
Amphibians and reptiles				
Common frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	1	2015	1km northwest
Common toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	2	1978	Within 1km
Grass snake	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	1	2010	260m south
Bats				
Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	9	2009	Within 1 km
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	8	2015	340m north
Myotis sp.	<i>Myotis sp.</i>	2	2018	1km northwest
Pipistrelle sp.	<i>Pipistrellus sp.</i>	4	2015	740m southwest
Serotine	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	2	2009	Within 1 km
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	5	2015	530m east
Birds				
Barn owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	16	2019	660m south
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	2	2004	460m south
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	5	2018	1km northwest
Grasshopper warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>	1	2019	Within 1km
Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	2	2020	Within 1km
Grey partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	1	2005	Within 1km
Hen harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	14	2021	Within 1km
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	2	2021	Within 1km
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	2	2006	660m south
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	7	2021	610m northeast
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1	2015	Within 1km
Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	6	2021	Within 1km
Red kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	13	2021	770m northwest
Red wing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	2	2018	1km northwest
Reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	1	2019	Within 1km

Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	6	2021	Within 1km
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1	2006	280m southeast
Tree pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	1	2006	Within 1km
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	8	2021	970m south
Flora				
Bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	3	2024	Within 1km
Burnt orchid	<i>Neotinea ustulata</i>	1	1947	Within 1km
Corn buttercup	<i>Ranunculus arvensis</i>	2	2019	Within 1km
Invertebrates				
Marsh fritillary	<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	3	2011	Within 1km
Small heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	16	2011	Within 1km
Wall	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	12	2011	190m west
Other mammals				
Brown hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	13	2020	640m east
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	12	2020	190m southeast
Polecat	<i>Mustela putorius</i>	1	2003	960m north
Water vole	<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	3	2014	230m north
Western European hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	48	2022	80m northwest

- 3.6 The above records will be used to inform the assessment of the site and to inform the enhancement potential of the site for protected species.

Botanical survey (UKHab)

Habitats recorded on site

- 3.7 The following habitats (Table 8) were recorded within the site (habitat map with species lists for each habitat are provided in Appendix D and photographs provided in Appendix E of this report):

Table 8: Habitats recorded on site

Habitat	UKHab primary code	UKHab secondary code(s)	Description and UKHAB secondary code(s)	Location within site
<i>Other developed land</i>	u1b6	800, 804	The main drive and parking area.	East to west.
<i>Developed land; sealed surface</i>	u1b5	818, 827	A house and a garden store are present within the site.	North and west of the site.
<i>Introduced shrub</i>	u1	516, 847	Small areas of introduced shrub are present on-site including a flowerbed.	Northeast and southwest.
<i>Modified grassland</i>	g4	32, 33, 108, 510, 516	Areas of short mown grassland with a line of trees along the main drive, a wall between the tree line and the rest of the grass lawn to the south containing 20 scattered trees. Additionally, there are areas of bare ground within the grassland under the two sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> trees (T21 & T22) in the northwest of the site.	South of the site.

Line of trees	w	33	A line of eight trees is present along the northern boundary of the garden.	Northern boundary.
Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	h2b	516	A cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> hedge is present to the north of the garden store.	To the northwest of the site.

1: See Appendix D for list of UKHabs secondary codes

Impacts of development on habitats

- 3.8 The proposed development will increase the developed land; sealed surface by extending the driveway further south and building a three-bay garage with home office above. The works will result in the loss of a section of modified grassland to the south and four trees (sycamore, ash, apple and an unknown species).
- 3.9 The trees will be replaced within the wider garden as detailed in Section 4 of this report.

Protected species assessment

Badgers

- 3.10 There are no badger records within 1km of the site (WSBRC, 2025) and no evidence to suggest badgers are using the site was recorded during the site visit. Therefore, badgers are not considered to be impacted by the proposals and are not discussed further in this assessment.

Barn owls and nesting birds

- 3.11 Evidence of barn owls was identified within the barn to the west of the site (offsite within the applicant's ownership), this included white splashing (droppings), feathers, and pellets. A barn owl box is situated internally at the southern elevation was inspected and no barn owls were found during a former survey.
- 3.12 Although evidence of barn owl was found within the barn, the barn is not subject to works as part of this application and is outside of the red line boundary; no evidence of barn owl was recorded on-site and therefore, no further action is recommended in relation to barn owls.
- 3.13 The introduced shrub, hedgerow and scattered trees provide suitable habitat for nesting birds and a bird's nest (considered to be from the last season) was identified within a tree. Swallows *Hirundo rustica* have been recorded nesting within the main house, however, will not be impacted by the proposals. A mitigation strategy to protect nesting birds using the surrounding vegetation on-site is provided in Section 4 of this report.

Bats – roosting bats in trees

- 3.14 The trees on-site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats; several trees on-site were considered to hold potential for roosting bats offering Potential Roosting Features (PRFs). However, these trees will not be impacted by the

proposed works. The four trees to be removed as part of the works do not contain any PRFs.

- 3.15 From former surveys of the site, the courtyard and associated outbuildings are known to support confirmed roosts for brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* and the existing garden store/garage a confirmed lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros* roost. However, the proposals will not directly impact on any of these buildings or their roosts. The main house will also not be affected by the proposals, and so an update PRA was not conducted upon the buildings on-site.
- 3.16 A lighting strategy will be required as part of the development to ensure that light spill from the new garage does not impact the roosting bats using the buildings in the wider site, including the compensation roost proposed within the garden store immediately northwest of the new garage. This is detailed in Section 4 of this report.

Bats – commuting/foraging habitats and lighting

- 3.17 Bats are known to use the general property for commuting and foraging purposes. Bats are very sensitive to artificial lighting, which can impede their ability to successfully forage and can alter flightpaths (BCT & ILP, 2023). As bats may be using the property during nocturnal hours, it is essential that new lighting is designed to minimise impacts on foraging bats, particularly around areas with mature vegetation such as trees and hedges. Light spill can extend beyond the site boundary and may therefore also impact bats using neighbouring land.
- 3.18 Specifications for new lighting designed to reduce impacts on bats are detailed in Section 4.

Dormice

- 3.19 The habitats on-site are considered to provide limited habitat for dormice. No known dormouse records exist within the local area (WSBRC, 2025) and the nearest European Protected Species (EPS) licence is located approximately 14.2km northeast of the site (MAGIC, 2025). For these reasons, dormice are not considered to be impacted by the proposals and no further action is recommended for this species.

Great crested newts (GCN)

- 3.20 The site falls within a 'Green Zone' for GCN (Natural England, 2025) and there are very limited habitats onsite for GCN. No ponds exist on-site and no standalone waterbodies were identified within 250m of the site; the nearest watercourse, the River Avon, is deemed unsuitable to support GCN due to flow regimes and the presence of fish. There are no known records for GCN within 1km of the site (WSBRC, 2025) and the nearest known GCN breeding pond is approximately 7.3km southwest of the site (MAGIC, 2025). For these reasons, it is considered unlikely that GCN would be impacted by the proposals and no further action is recommended for this species.

Hedgehogs

- 3.21 48 records for hedgehogs are present within the local area with the closest is located approximately 80m northwest (WSBRC, 2025). The site does possess suitable habitat for hedgehogs. It is therefore considered possible that hedgehogs utilise the site; hedgehogs are a priority species due to their historical population decline (Wembridge, D. *et al*, 2022). Therefore, mitigation for hedgehogs is provided in Section 4 of this report.

Reptiles and common amphibians

- 3.22 The site consists predominantly of regularly mown improved grassland with little or no foraging or sheltering opportunities for common reptiles and amphibians. Therefore, no further action is recommended in relation to these species.

4. Biodiversity mitigation and enhancement plan

Replacement tree planting

- 4.1 Four trees (ash, sycamore, apple and an unknown tree species) to the west of the site will be removed to facilitate a new turning area and a new two-storey garage. To compensate for the loss of these trees, four new native trees will be planted. One tree will be planted to the north of the new garage in the grassed area as the existing trees provide connectivity along the western boundary for bats, however, the locations of the remaining three trees will be planted at the applicant's discretion within the site boundary; recommended locations are provided in Appendix F in the northeast of the site within the wildlife area. The new trees will comprise a mixture of native and fruit species such as oak, birch, beech, rowan, whitebeam or lime, apple, pear or plum. The trees must be sourced from British-grown bare root stock between 16-18cm in diameter.
- 4.2 The tree roots will be soaked in water prior to planting, which will take place from September to early May only during a mild spell. The holes must be generous, at least one third larger than the roots of the trees and dug in with well-rotted manure/compost. The trees will be placed in the holes and supported with ties and a stake to ensure they remain upright.
- 4.3 Once the stakes, ties and channels are in place, enriched compost will be backfilled over the roots and bedded in to ensure the tree is stable and upright. Immediately after planting the tree will be kept well-watered for the first month to ensure establishment.

Foraging and commuting bats

- 4.4 The site supports commuting and foraging bats. The following specifications for lighting must be adhered to and are based upon the 'Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night' Guidance Note BN08/23 (BCT & ILP, 2023):
- ◆ Preferably, no new external light fixtures will be installed. If external lighting is required, this will be installed where required for safety purposes only. No external luminaires will be installed where these will cast light spill onto surrounding vegetation.
 - ◆ No external lighting will be erected on the northern and western elevations of the new garage; these elevations will face into the garden store proposed under a separate application that will form mitigation for horseshoe bats.
 - ◆ All luminaires will lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, compact fluorescent sources will not be used.
 - ◆ LED luminaires only will be used due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability.
 - ◆ A warm white light source (2700Kelvin or lower) will be adopted to reduce blue light component.

- ◆ Light sources will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone, 2012).
- ◆ Internal luminaires will be recessed only (as opposed to using a pendant fitting) where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill.
- ◆ Column heights must be carefully considered to minimise light spill and glare visibility. This must be balanced with the potential for increased numbers of columns and upward light reflectance.
- ◆ Only luminaires with a negligible or zero Upward Light Ratio, and with good optical control, will be used.
- ◆ Luminaires must always be mounted horizontally, with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt.
- ◆ External security lighting will be set on motion sensors and set to a 1-minute (or less) timers.
- ◆ Bollard or low-level downward-directional luminaires will not be installed. This is due to a considerable range of issues, such as unacceptable glare, poor illumination efficiency, unacceptable upward light output, and increased upward light scatter from surfaces. The site supports roosting horseshoe bat, and any bollard lighting would be detrimental to the on-site population.
- ◆ Only if all other options have been explored, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres can be used to reduce light spill and direct it only to where it is needed. However, due to the lensing and fine cut-off control of the beam inherent in modern LED luminaires, the effect of cowls and baffles is often far less than anticipated and must not be relied upon solely.

Hedgehogs

- 4.5 The site likely supports hedgehogs due to the suitability of the habitats in the vicinity and hedgerows which provide connectivity. There are numerous records within the area, the closest being 80m to the northwest. The following measures will be followed to ensure they are protected during works:

- ◆ During works, any trenches/pits will be boarded over at the end of each working day or alternatively a 130mm wide ramp/board will be installed in each trench/pit to allow hedgehogs to escape.
- ◆ Materials must be stored on pallets raised off the ground and away from surrounding vegetation to discourage hedgehogs from taking refuge within them.

Nesting birds

- 4.6 The following mitigation strategy will be fully implemented to ensure nesting birds are protected during site preparation and vegetation clearance works, with enhancements for birds made under 'biodiversity enhancements' below:

- ◆ Any vegetation clearance/pruning works will preferably be undertaken in the winter months outside of the nesting bird season. Works would preferably take place between the 1st September and 28th February when birds are least likely to be nesting.
- ◆ Should the above works take place between the 1st March and 31st August, then pre-works checks for signs of nesting birds will be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. If an active nest is encountered, all works will cease immediately, and the nest will be left undisturbed. The ecologist will establish a minimum 5m works exclusion zone around the nest and this will be marked out with hazard tape; a second site visit by the ecologist to check the status of the nest will be required before works can continue in this area.
- ◆ Works may only continue when the nest is deemed to be unoccupied/no longer active by the ecologist.
- ◆ **If a bird's nest is encountered at any other unsupervised time, all works in the area must cease immediately the ecologist must be contacted immediately to provide further advice.**

Biodiversity enhancements

- 4.7 Features will be included within the proposed development to enhance the site for biodiversity (Appendix F for plan and specifications). The new garage will feature the following:
- ◆ One 'PRO UK Build-In Woodstone Bat Box' or similar approved (<https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-build-in-woodstone-bat-box>) will be installed in the southern elevation as close to the eaves as possible.
 - ◆ One 'Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box' or similar approved (<https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-woodstone-house-sparrow-nest-box>) will be installed in the northern elevation as close to the eaves as possible.

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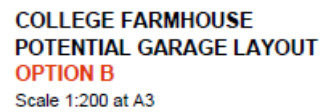
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Appendix A – Site plan



[illegible]

Appendix C – Relevant legislation and planning policy

Legislation and UK BAP priority habitats/species

Legislation

In England, all bats, dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*, otters *Lutra lutra*, white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* and great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* are legally protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

A number of species are also listed under Annex II of the EC Habitats and Species Directive (1992), including barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, great crested newt, white-clawed crayfish and otter.

The above-named species and adders, slow worms, grass snakes, common lizards, common frog *Rana temporaria*, palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus*, smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*, water voles *Arvicola amphibius* and several invertebrate species are also protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) (1981) (as amended). Schedule 9 of the WCA (1981) includes non-native, invasive species including (but not limited to) Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and signal crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*. Badgers *Meles meles* are legally protected under The Protection of Badgers Act (1992).

All birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of The WCA (1981) (as amended) and it is thus an offence, to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; intentionally take, and damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.

A number of sites designated for nature conservation are afforded legal protection due to being of European importance. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) (protected under the EC Habitats and Species Directive (1992), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds (protected under the EC Birds Directive) and Ramsar (Ramsar Convention, 1975). Other protected sites include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and Protected Road Verges which are designated under the WCA (1981) and strengthened by The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) (2006).

SPAs and SACs were previously included in the Natura 2000 sites and following amendments to the legislation, are now included under the 'National Site Network'. Ramsar sites do not form part of the 'National Site Network' however, are afforded the same protection. These changes allow the Government to continue commitment to the international commitments under the Bern Convention, the Oslo and Paris Conventions (OSPAR), Bonn and Ramsar Conventions.

Following a consultation in 2019, the Government announced that it would mandate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for developments in England to reverse the widespread loss of biodiversity. The Town & Country Planning Act 1990 will be amended and the Environment Bill received Royal Assent on 9th November 2021; this legislation was enacted into UK law on 2nd April 2024 for small sites.

Schedule 14 Parts 1 and 2 of The Environment Act 2021 concerns BNG as a condition of planning permission.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2024) sets out requirements for the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and this is supported within Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (updated July 2019). The Natural Environment PPG addresses principles targeting biodiversity conservation, including individual site and species protection through to supporting ecosystem services, and the use of Ecological Networks to support the national Nature Recovery Network. In particular, the PPG promotes the delivery of measurable BNG through the creation and enhancement of habitats alongside development.

Priority species and habitats

Several species and habitats are listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) (JNCC, 2016) as priority habitats/species due to their vulnerability or rarity as listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) and Section 40 places a duty on all public authorities to conserve biodiversity. These are known as habitats / species of ‘principal importance’ under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006).

These include several terrestrial and freshwater habitats, including some hedgerows and streams, and several species such as hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*), barbastelle, Bechstein’s bat, both species of horseshoe bat, brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), water voles, white-clawed crayfish and otter.

National and local planning policy

NPPF – The National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, 2024) sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied. In the context of this report, Section 15 of NPPF is relevant and applicable, Section 15 states:

‘Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.’

New developments and projects are supported where plans promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue measurable net gains for biodiversity.

To ensure this application is compliant with Section 15 of NPPF, habitat enhancements will be required to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain as an outcome of the development.

Section 15 of NPPF also gives consideration to sites with potential to impact on irreplaceable habitats, and states:

‘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.’

To ensure this application is compliant with Section 15, this application should be accompanied by a suitable arboricultural report to assess the presence of potential ancient or veteran trees.

Wiltshire Core Strategy

The Wiltshire Core Strategy (Wiltshire Council, 2015) was adopted in January 2015 and includes the following relevant policy:

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 [refer to full strategy for details] 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 obligations or agreements.*

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

It is the applicant's/landowner's responsibility to ensure that the proposed development proceeds in full compliance with this report and/or any update version report thereafter, that works are undertaken lawfully, in compliance with national and local policy, and in accordance with all conditions of the obtained planning consent(s).

Appendix D – Habitat map and species lists



Species lists for habitats:

Species	Scientific name	DAFOR scale abundance
Modified grassland		
Annual meadow-grass	<i>Poa annua</i>	Frequent
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Rare
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Rare
Common chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	Occasional
Common mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Rare
Common sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Occasional
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Locally frequent
Curled dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	Locally occasional
Cyclamen sp.	<i>Cyclamen sp.</i>	Rare
Daffodil sp.	<i>Narcissus sp.</i>	Locally occasional
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Locally occasional
Dandelion sp.	<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	Rare
Groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>	Locally rare
Herb-Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Locally frequent
Ivy	<i>Hedera sp.</i>	Locally dominant
Lesser celandine	<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Locally abundant
Pendulous sedge	<i>Carex pendula</i>	Locally occasional
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Dominant
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Occasional
Smooth sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Occasional
Springy turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	Locally frequent
Wood avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>	Locally occasional
Introduced shrub		
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Locally frequent
Common mallow	<i>Malva sylvestris</i>	Locally occasional
Common sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Locally frequent
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Locally occasional
Ivy	<i>Hedera sp.</i>	Locally dominant
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Locally dominant
Violet sp.	<i>Viola sp.</i>	Locally occasional
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	Dominant

Appendix E – Photographs



Photo 1: Line of trees along the main driveway (east) and modified grassland to the south of the site.



Photo 2: Scattered trees within the modified grassland to the south.



Photo 3: Introduced shrub to the southwest of the site.



Photo 4: Main house and driveway.



Photo 5: Evidence of nesting birds within one of the trees on-site.



Photo 6: Some trees onsite contain PRFs however, these trees will not be impacted by the proposed works.



Photo 7: Area of site where new driveway and garage/office building will be constructed.

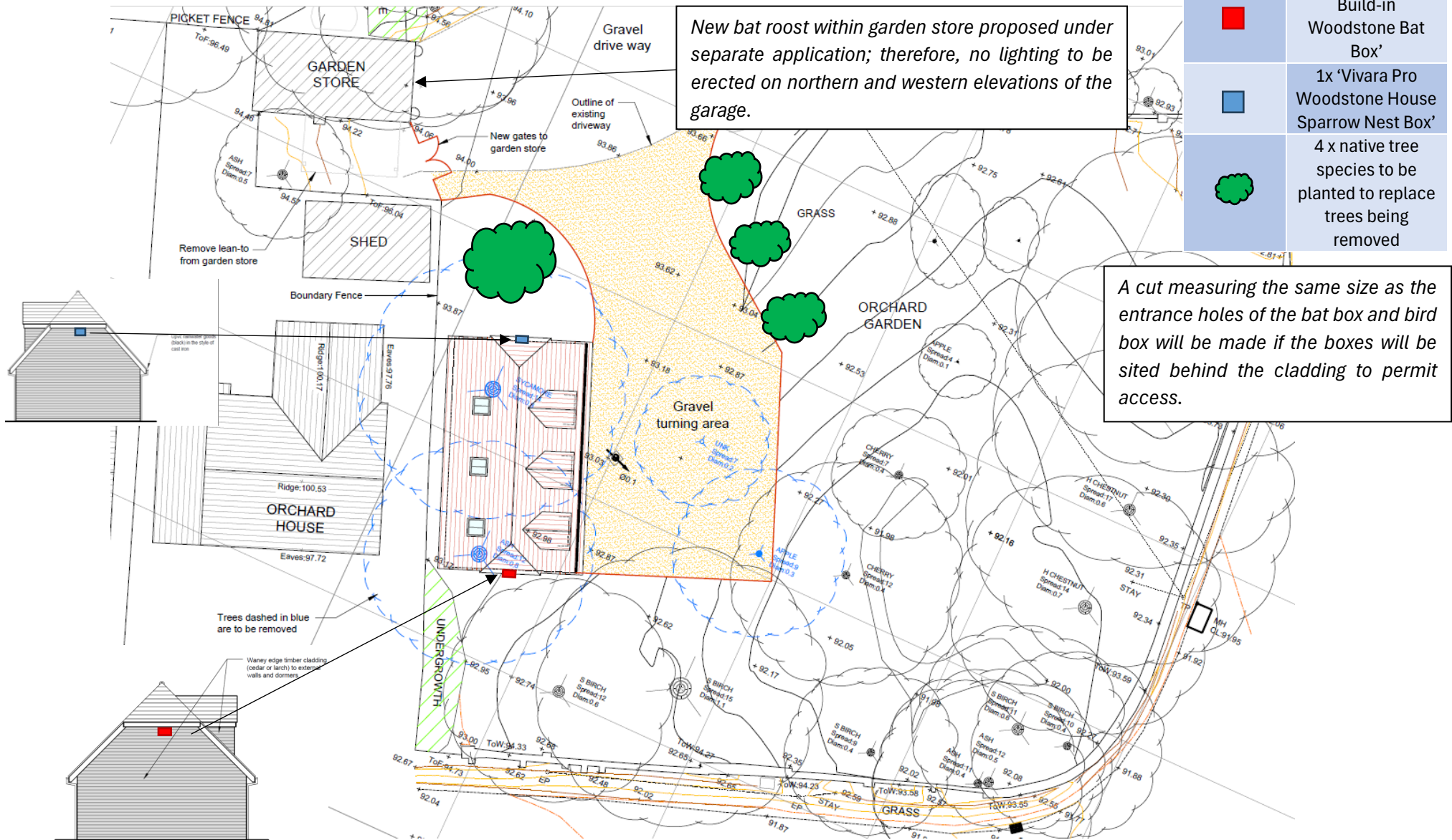


Photo 8: Area of site where new driveway and garage/office building will be constructed.



Photo 9: Four trees including a sycamore will be removed as part of the proposed works.

Appendix F - Biodiversity enhancement plan



One 'Vivara Pro Build-in Woodstone Bat Box' will be installed in the new dwelling at eaves level in the southern elevation and away from external light sources.



One 'Vivara Pro Woodstone House Sparrow Nest Box' (or similar) will be installed in the northern elevation of the new garage as close to the eaves as possible.



Four new native trees will be planted to replace those being lost. The trees will provide nesting/roosting and foraging opportunities for local birds and bats and support invertebrate populations.

