



BENGROVE LTD

Ecology-BNG-Wildlife

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SOUTHVIEW FARM

Client: Coulston Estates Ltd

Date Issued: 26 February 2026

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Contents

SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1. Scope and Purpose of the Report	6

2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY	8
2.1. Legislation	8
2.2. National Planning Policy Framework	8
2.3. Local Plan	9
2.4. Biodiversity Net Gain	10
2.5. Local Nature Recovery Strategy	10

3. METHODS	11
3.1. Desk Study	11
3.2. Field Surveys	12
3.3. Assessment for Bats	13
3.4. Biodiversity Net Gain	14
3.5. Limitations	14

4. RESULTS	15
4.1. Designated Sites	15
4.2. Habitats and Ecological Networks	15
4.3. Amphibians	17
4.4. Badgers	17
4.5. Bats	17
4.6. Birds	19
4.7. Dormice	19
4.8. Otters and Water Voles	19
4.9. Reptiles	19
4.10. Section 41 & Other Species	20

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT	21
5.1. Designated Sites	21
5.2. Habitats and Ecological Networks	21
5.3. Amphibians	21
5.4. Badgers	22
5.5. Bats	22
5.6. Birds	23
5.7. Reptiles	24
5.8. Other Species	24
5.9. Biodiversity Net Gain	24

SUMMARY

Southview Farm comprises an unoccupied farmhouse and ancillary land off Drynham Lane, on the edge of Trowbridge on which there is already a planning permission in place for redevelopment of the site. A new planning application has been prepared for development of the site that is similar in scale and extent to the 2024 permission but with some of the details of layout and arrangement changed.

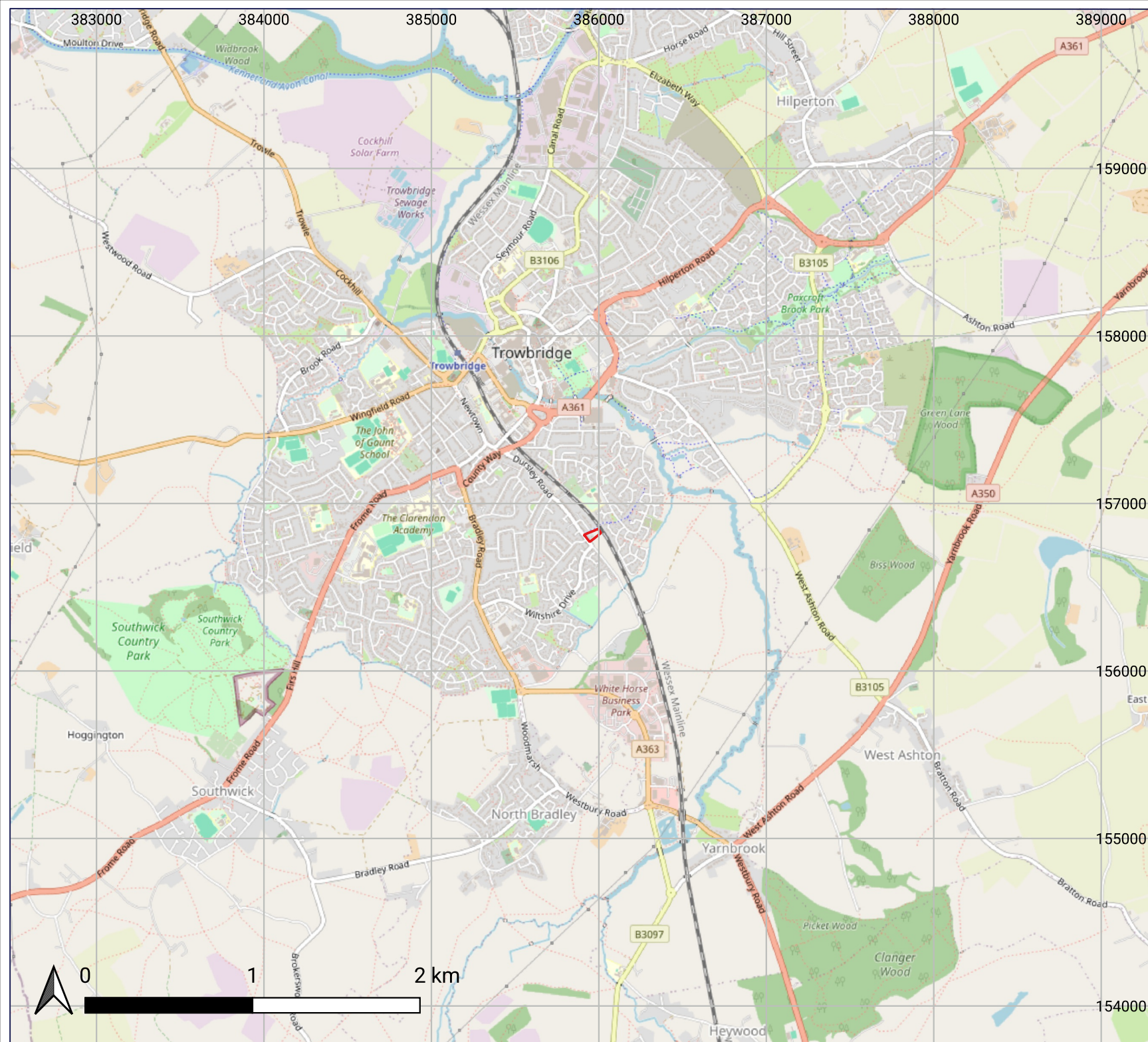
The impacts of the redevelopment of the site on bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC was the foremost ecological consideration for previous applications and has informed this assessment. The proposed development would be unlikely to have any significant effects on other wildlife such as reptiles, amphibians or dormice, but in addition to considerations of impacts on the SAC, the farmhouse has in the past been used as a roost by small numbers of Common Pipistrelle bats.

Measures to avoid or mitigate potential impacts on wildlife during construction will be secured in a Construction Ecological Management Plan. The ecological impacts of redevelopment of the site will be mitigated and compensated in accordance with the Biodiversity Net Gain procedure: any planning permission will be covered by the deemed net gain condition requiring the agreement of a Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to commencement. There is a small on-site loss of lower-distinctiveness habitat units on site that can easily be offset, and there will be a small net gain in linear habitats.

The landscape design includes an area of woodland and species-rich grassland to the rear of the site by the railway line, enclosed behind a 1.2m wooden fence. This will provide good habitat for wildlife and serve to protect the key commuting corridor along the railway line. A lighting strategy prepared for the project shows that this area will not be illuminated by artificial lighting as a result of the development. A separate shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment has been prepared to delineate the avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures that are embedded in the proposals. The assessment concludes that, subject to the application of suitable measures, there would be no adverse effect on the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC as a result of the development, either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

The application is accompanied by an outline Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan that sets out the details of how the woodland and grassland will be established and managed to benefit wildlife. The Plan sets out how this will be monitored over the statutory net gain period of 30 years and mechanisms for redressing any issues with achieving the required net gains.

This report concludes that the proposed development would not have any significant adverse impacts on wildlife



 Red Line Boundary

OpenStreetMap

Project	Southview Farm Nursery
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	Site Location Plan
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:30000
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope and Purpose of the Report

1.1.1 Southview Farm comprises an unoccupied farmhouse and ancillary land off Drynham Lane, on the edge of Trowbridge. The site is within the land granted planning permission for the erection of up to 261 dwellings in 2022 (planning reference 19/11459/OUT), and an additional planning consent was granted in 2024 for the redevelopment of the farmhouse and ancillary land (planning reference PL/2023/11008). In each of these previous applications, the impacts of the proposals on bats associated with the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC was the foremost ecological consideration. The 2022 outline planning permission came with a Landscape and Ecological Parameters Plan that set the spatial priorities for the Southview Farm site, and this was followed in the 2024 consent.

1.1.2 A new planning application has been prepared for development of the site that is similar in scale and extent to the 2024 permission, but with details of the use and layout changed. The description of the development is:

"Demolition of redundant stone barns; erection of children's nursery with new access, car parking, secure garden and associated landscape and drainage works (Class E); installation of new vehicular access and parking area to retained Southview Farmhouse, erection of replacement rear conservatory, erection of car port, associated erection of boundary treatment, and associated drainage and landscaping."

1.1.3 This report sets out the potential ecological effects of the new proposals and how they have been addressed through the design process to ensure that the pre-requisites that made the previous applications acceptable have been maintained.

1.1.4 The purpose of this report is to:

- provide an assessment of the ecological importance of the site's habitats;
- set out whether any protected or notable species are likely to use the site;
- confirm whether the application will be subject to the biodiversity net gain requirement;
- verify which ecological matters should form material considerations for the planning application;
- identify potentially significant ecological impacts;
- set out how the mitigation hierarchy should be applied to the project.

1.1.5 The report follows the approach set out in the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (Version 1.3 updated September 2024). This report is accompanied

by a separate shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain Metric and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

2. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Wildlife in the UK is protected through various pieces of legislation and planning policy. This forms a framework through which projects are assessed for their impacts on habitats and species and the background against which recommendations are made for the grant or refusal of planning permission.

2.1. Legislation

2.1.1 The main pieces of legislation protecting wildlife in the UK that are relevant to this project are:

- The *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended); and the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. These regulations cover the protection of European designated sites (the Natura 2000 Network, made up of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas); and European Protected Species listed in Annex IV to the Habitats Directive, whose natural range includes any area in Great Britain.
- The *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended); the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*; and the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)*. Together these acts provide specific protections for a number of UK species (with some overlap with the species listed on Annex IV) and list invasive species for which there are legal provisions; nationally designated sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and set out the species of principle importance for conservation (Priority Species).
- The *Environment Act 2021* which inserted *Schedule 7A* into the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* making it mandatory for all developments (with some exceptions) to deliver at least 10% net biodiversity gain. The Acts and related regulations make it a requirement that planning applications are submitted with details of the biodiversity value of onsite habitats.

2.2. National Planning Policy Framework

2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – last updated 7th February 2025 – sets out the government's planning policy for England. Chapter 15 sets out the policies relating to the natural environment, and the elements of particular relevance are:

2.2.2 Paragraph 187 sets out that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing...sites of biodiversity...value (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

2.2.3 Paragraph 193 sets out that, when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

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

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.

2.3. Local Plan

2.3.1 The land falls within the administrative area covered by the Wiltshire Council Local Planning Authority. The current Development Plan comprises:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 20th January 2015), including policies saved from former local district plans. Biodiversity and Geodiversity policies:
 - Core Policy 50
 - Draft Local Plan Policy 88
- Chippenham Site Allocations Plan

- Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan
- Minerals and Waste Plans
- 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans

2.3.2 Core Policy 50 is the current policy, but the Local Plan review is targeting a Biodiversity Net Gain of 20%, above the 10% required.

2.4. Biodiversity Net Gain

2.4.1 The planning application would be within the scope of the requirement to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain, introduced by *Schedule 7A* of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* (inserted by the *Environment Act 2021*). Any such planning permission would be granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met (the pre-commencement biodiversity gain condition). The planning application will therefore be submitted with the following:

- Baseline pre-development habitat plan;
- Completed statutory biodiversity net gain metric setting out the pre-development baseline habitat value; and
- A management plan detailing how post-development biodiversity values will be secured, managed and monitored in perpetuity.

2.5. Local Nature Recovery Strategy

2.5.1 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Wiltshire and Swindon has now been adopted and published. When completing a statutory metric, the baseline habitats will therefore be set as low strategic significance. Post-development habitats can be set to high strategic significance if:

- The location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Habitat Map as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of that LNRS; and
- The proposed intervention is consistent with the mapped potential measure in the LNRS for the habitat parcel

3. METHODS

3.1. Desk Study

- 3.1.1 The potential for the project to have adverse impacts on European designated sites – Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR); Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); Special Protection Areas (SPA) – was assessed using desktop information and the site survey. There is no fixed distance at which this area of analysis must be set. It need not be so wide as to capture any and all Natura 2000 sites nor all of the land where their qualifying features may be encountered: there is an inverse relationship between the distance from a site and the concentration of qualifying species – a very wide search area would be meaningless.
- 3.1.2 Given the scale of the project and its location and landscape context, a 10km area of analysis has been adopted as sufficiently broad to capture any Natura 2000 sites whose qualifying features might conceivably use the site on anything more than an occasional basis.
- 3.1.3 The Government's Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) map was used to search for the following protected habitat and species data within 2km of the site:
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
 - National Nature Reserves (NNR);
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNR);
 - Priority Habitats Inventory (a spatial dataset of habitats identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and listed as being of principal importance for the purpose of conserving or enhancing biodiversity, under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act);
 - Records of Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys (2017-2019) for District Level Licensing (updated annually); and
 - Records of granted European Protected Species License (EPSL) applications.
- 3.1.4 Spatial data for all of the above (except for the EPSL records) are available under the Open Government Licence (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>) via Natural England's ArcGIS REST API services. This service was used in the maps and plans produced for this report, along with 'OS Open Data – Local' shapefiles provided by Ordnance Survey.
- 3.1.5 To determine the likelihood of Great Crested Newts being present on Site, the following steps were followed:
- 1) Results from the 500m EPSL licence searches obtained during the data search were checked for records of Great Crested Newts within the wider landscape.

- 2) The Site's Red Line Boundary was added to QGIS and a 500m buffer created around it.
 - 3) The following data sources were then added to the same project:
 - a. Several shapefile layers taken from Natural England, reproduced under the Open Government Licence. Including,
 - i. [Great Crested Newts eDNA Pond Surveys for District Level Licensing \(England\)](#)
 - ii. [Surveyed priority ponds \(England\) - Overview](#)
 - iii. [Priority Habitats Inventory \(England\)](#)
 - b. A georeferenced snip of a 500m buffer around the Site, taken from MAGIC – used to help locate ponds via satellite imagery.
 - c. Historical, Ordnance Survey, 25-Inch maps (1873-1888) of the southwest of England from the [National Library of Scotland](#), available under the CC-BY, NLS licence.
 - d. Shapefiles from Ordnance Survey's [OpenMap – Local](#) dataset (this provides shapefiles for ponds, rivers, buildings etc), available under the Open Government Licence.
 - 4) Using the above sources, the 500m area around the Site was manually searched for any possible waterbodies that could support a population of newts, and point markers created at their locations.
 - 5) Where ponds did fall within 500m of the Site, consideration was then given to any functional barriers to movement across the landscape (flowing water, large roads, urban areas etc). Based on this, the likelihood that newts would use the site was considered.
- 3.1.6 Whilst they give an indication of habitats and species in the area, the above are not a substitute for field surveys and assessment. For example, where the Priority Habitats inventory or eDNA records suggest there may be protected habitats or ponds suitable for newts within or adjacent to the Site, they are likely to require field assessment to verify the record.

3.2. Field Surveys

- 3.2.1 The land covered by this application has been surveyed in association with the previous planning permissions, of which the following are most relevant:
- Habitat surveys in 2015 and 2023
 - Ground-level tree assessment for bats in 2023
 - Internal and external building inspections in 2015 and 2023
 - Three bat surveys of the farmhouse in May, June and July 2016; and in three in May 2023
 - Bat transect and static detector surveys in April to October 2015 / 2016
 - Dormouse presence / absence surveys in 2015
 - Surveys of ponds within 500m for great crested newts in 2015
 - Reptile presence / absence surveys in 2015

3.2.2 The UKHabs survey was updated for the purposes of this report in August 2025. The purpose of the survey was to classify the habitats according to the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0¹. Each of the site's habitats were mapped, and a species-list compiled for each distinct area. Plant species lists were compiled for each of the main habitats, and each species assigned to an estimate of abundance according to the DAFOR scale for species lists:

- **D**ominant
- **A**bundant
- **F**requent
- **O**ccasional
- **R**are

3.2.3 Each habitat parcel was also assessed against the criteria in the relevant Statutory Biodiversity Metric condition assessments sheets.

3.3. Assessment for Bats

3.3.1 The buildings were re-inspected and surveyed for bats in August 2025.

3.3.2 The building was assessed for its potential to support roosting bats by an external inspection. The external inspection was undertaken from the ground using binoculars. The inside of the building is not accessible for safety reasons.

3.3.3 Bat emergence surveys were undertaken using Night Vision equipment and acoustic detectors on the 10th, 20th and 31st of August 2025.

Table 3-1: Dates and Data for Bat Emergence Surveys in 2025

Date	Sunset Time	Start / End Time	Temp @ Start / End	Cloud Cover	Wind	Rain
10/08/25	20:41	20:26 / 22:11	22 / 18	1	1	0
20/08/25	20:28	20:07 / 21:52	17 / 14	2	1	0
30/08/25	19:58	19:45 / 21:28	16 / 14	1	3	0

¹ UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

3.4. Biodiversity Net Gain

- 3.4.1 The Statutory Net Gain Metric v1.0.4 macro-enabled spreadsheet was used to calculate the baseline habitat units on Site, and to indicate the predicted net gain post-development.
- 3.4.2 Condition assessments were completed in the field, using the Coreo app to collate the data.

3.5. Limitations

- 3.5.1 The entire site was accessible during the habitat survey, and the site could be thoroughly searched for evidence of protected species. It was possible to search 30m around the edges of the land parcels in most areas.
- 3.5.2 It was possible to thoroughly view the exterior of the building for signs of bats, but it was not safe to enter the building. Any new evidence of bats inside the building would not therefore have been found, but the impact of this is mitigated because there are no new access points i.e. it is less likely that the bat roosting situation will be different from previous surveys than if the external condition of the building had significantly deteriorated.
- 3.5.3 The emergence surveys were conducted late in the season and relatively close together. The effect of this on the results is mitigated as this is the third round of emergence surveys and the external condition of the building has not significantly changed.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Designated Sites

Areas of higher value for nature conservation in England are protected at various levels: from sites supporting ecological features of European importance to locally important sites. Development projects can have adverse impacts on designated sites directly, or through indirect effects where an important species might rely on the proposed development site. Local designations provide an indication of the habitats and species that are uncommon and valuable in the local area, and a benchmark of the ecological value of local habitats.

4.1.1 There are two European designated sites within 10km of the site:

- The Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats (SAC) is approximately 7.4km north-west of the site boundary
- Salisbury Plain (SAC and SPA) is approximately 7.1km south-east of the site boundary

4.1.2 There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 2km of the site:

- Picket and Clanger Wood (SSSI) is approximately 2.2km south-east of the site boundary.
- Gripwood Quarry (SSSI) is approximately 5km north-west of the site boundary

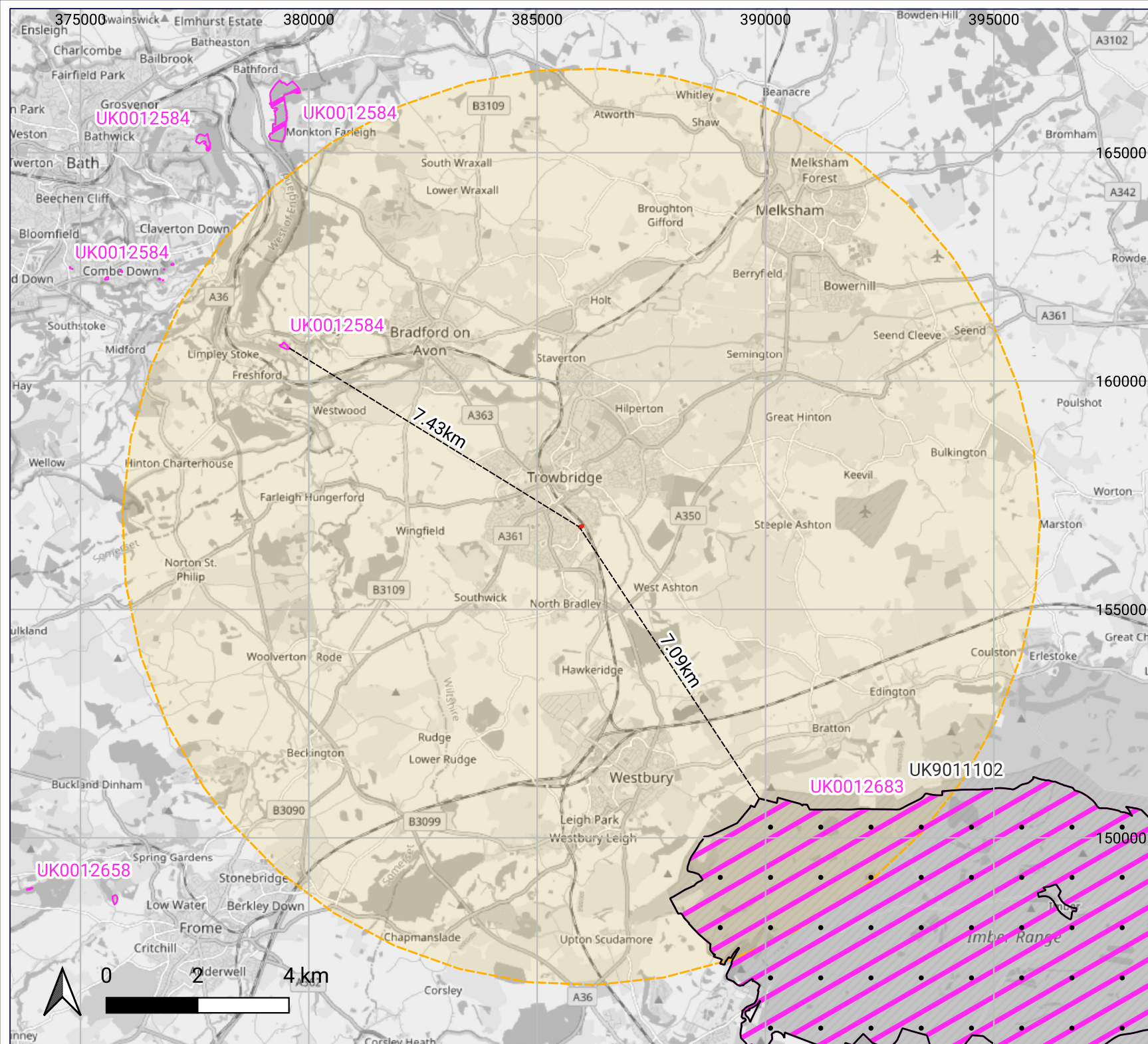
4.1.3 There is one Local Wildlife Site within 2km of the site: Biss Meadow Country Park is approximately 650m north-east of the site.

4.2. Habitats and Ecological Networks

4.2.1 The site is within the Avon Vales National Character Area (NCA 117). The NCA is an *“undulating, low-lying landscape of mixed, predominantly pastoral agriculture and small limestone-built towns, cut by the (Bristol) River Avon and its tributaries, and surrounded to the west, south and east by higher land.”*

4.2.2 There is no ancient semi-natural woodland on or adjacent to the site: the nearest ancient semi-natural woodland is a small stand at Biss Farm approximately 1.2km east of the Site.

- 4.2.3 The site and the adjacent land are not mapped as Priority Habitats on the Priority Habitat Inventory. The nearest mapped Priority Habitat is a woodland approximately 580m south of the site, just south of Drynham Lane.
- 4.2.4 The site consists of the house and gardens with a driveway; areas of brambles and a parcel of agricultural land to the south and east.
- 4.2.5 The front garden (to the west of the house) once had lawns and flowerbeds, but these are increasingly becoming overgrown with ruderals and brambles. Dense bramble scrub occupies a large proportion of the northern edge of the site. The gardens are bordered by a stone wall overgrown with Ivy to the front and there are ornamental *Leylandii* hedges.
- 4.2.6 The field to the south and east of the farmhouse comprises modified grassland that was previously used as pasture land. The grassland is dominated by a mix of Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Creeping Bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*). Palatable grasses such as Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) would once have been more dominant in the sward but their cover is reduced since the field has become less intensively managed. There are few broad-leaved herbs aside from those typical of low-intensity improved pasture such as Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).
- 4.2.7 The eastern edge of the site backs onto the railway line, which forms a green infrastructure route on a north-south axis through Trowbridge.



- Red Line Boundary
- Special Protection Areas (England) © Natural England
- Special Areas of Conservation (England) © Natural England
- Shortest distance to features
- 10km Zone of Influence

OpenStreetMap

Sac_code	Sac_name
UK0012683	Salisbury Plain
UK0012658	Mells Valley
UK0012584	Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats

Spa_code	Spa_name
UK9011102	Salisbury Plain

Project	Southview Farm Nursery
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	European Designated Sites
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:110000
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn





- Red Line Boundary
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) © Natural England
- Local Nature Reserves (England) © Natural England
- Shortest distance to feature
- 2km Zone of Influence

OpenStreetMap

Ref_code	Name
1000946	Picket and Clanger Wood SSSI
1481648	Southwick Country Park (LNR)
1009633	Green Lane Wood (LNR)

Project	Southview Farm Nursery
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	Nationally Designated Sites
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:25000
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn

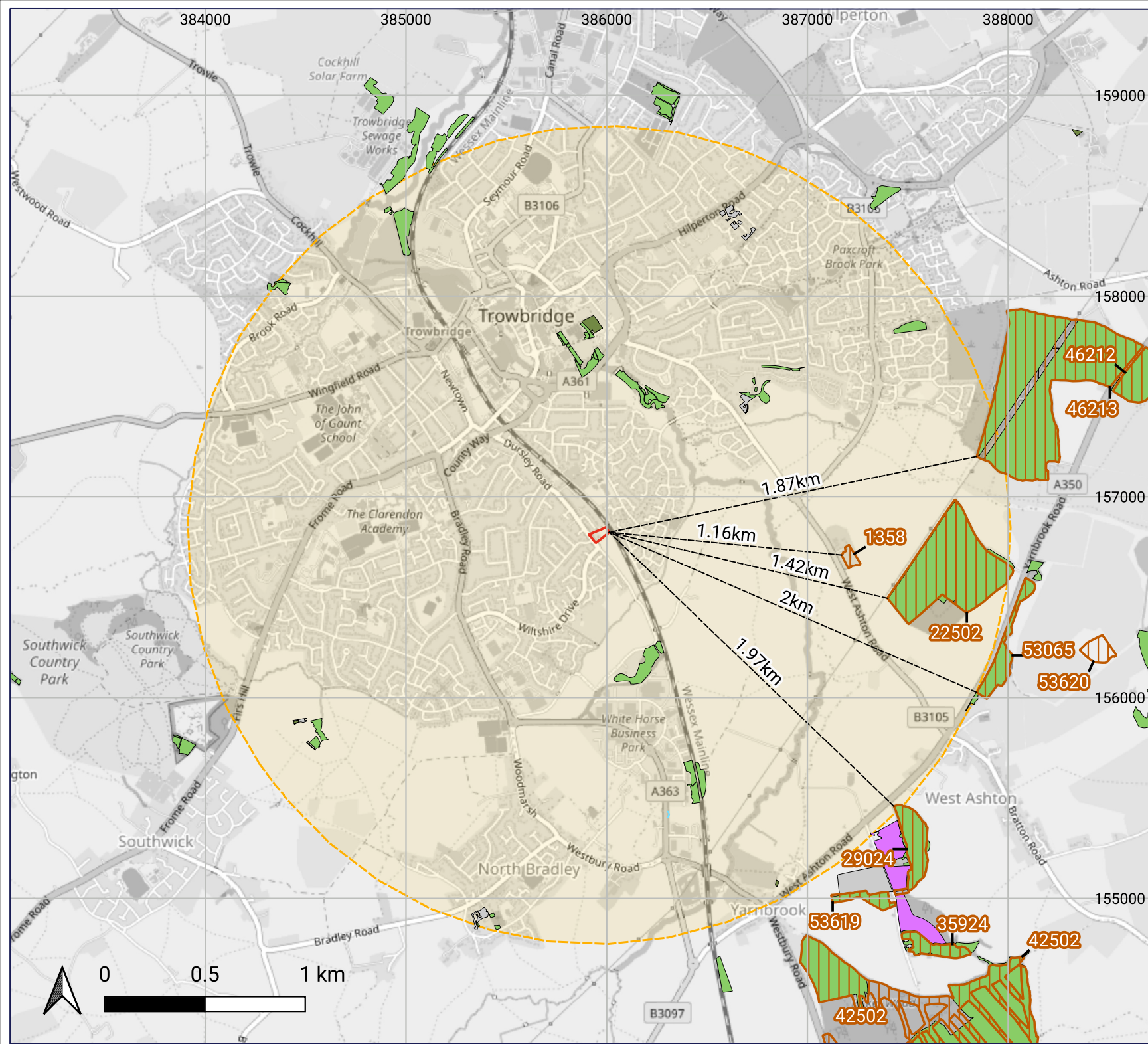


- Red Line Boundary
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Ponds
- Traditional orchard
- 2km Zone of Influence

OpenStreetMap

Objectid	Name
53620	The Brake
53619	Flowers Wood
53065	Castle Lodge Wood / Church Plantation
46213	Smiths Well Wood
46212	Smiths Well Wood
42502	Picket/Clanger/Round Wood
35924	Kettle Lane Wood
29024	Woodside Wood / East Flowers Wood
22502	Biss Wood
1358	

Project	Southview Farm Nursery
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	Priority Habitats
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:25000
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn





- Red Line Boundary
- Existing Large Urban Tree
- Existing Medium Urban Tree
- Existing Small Urban Tree
- Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
- Bramble scrub
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland
- Ruderal/Ephemeral

Google Satellite

Parcel	UKHabs Code
F1	g4
GD1-3	g4 - 519,828
F2	h3d - 519
ST2, ST4, GD4-5	h3d - 519,828
GG1	u1b5 - 519
ST1, ST3, FH1	u1b5 - 519,825
DW1	u1f - 81,82,519

Project	Southview Farm, Trowbridge
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	Baseline Habitats (UKHabs)
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:500
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn

4.3. Amphibians

- 4.3.1 There are no ponds within 500m of the site. Nine ponds were identified during surveys in connection with the original outline planning application for the Elm Grove development, four of which supported great crested newts, but none of these are within 500m of the Southview Farm site.
- 4.3.2 Other amphibians such as Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), Palmate Newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*), Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) and Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) may be present in the wider area, and it is possible there are garden ponds used by these species that were not picked up in the pond search. If this is the case, then small numbers of these species could be found within the overgrown gardens at Southview Farm during their terrestrial life stages.

4.4. Badgers

- 4.4.1 There are no signs of badgers using the site, and no setts were found in the wider area in the recent surveys or in previous surveys of the site and surroundings. Badgers are present in the wider area and whilst the gardens are unlikely to be used for sett digging they could be used for foraging.
- 4.4.2 Badgers could enter the site during construction, and suitable precautions will be required.

4.5. Bats

- 4.5.1 There are numerous desktop records of bats within the search area, including horseshoe bats and barbastelles.
- 4.5.2 It was established during the surveys for the outline planning application that low numbers of greater and lesser horseshoe bats were using boundary hedges as commuting habitat but they did not appear to be using the open fields. The grassland and gardens within the site are not key foraging habitats for horseshoe bats or Bechstein's bats. Radio-tracking studies on Bechstein's bats roosting at Picket & Clanger Woods have shown them foraging amongst a variety of habitats but the closest area identified as a foraging site was around 600m to the south of Southview Farm.
- 4.5.3 There is one tree on site that has potential bat roosting features – a mature Willow adjacent to the farmhouse. The trunk of the tree is split and there is a large cavity inside. Emergence surveys were carried out on the tree in 2023 and no bats were roosting in the tree at that time. The cavity was inspected with an endoscope in 2025 and there was no evidence of bats roosting in the tree.
- 4.5.4 The farmhouse is a two-storey building with a hipped roof covered with slates. The brickwork walls are rendered and the windows are all fully boarded up and sealed. There are some small crevice-gaps under slipped roof tiles and small gaps in the

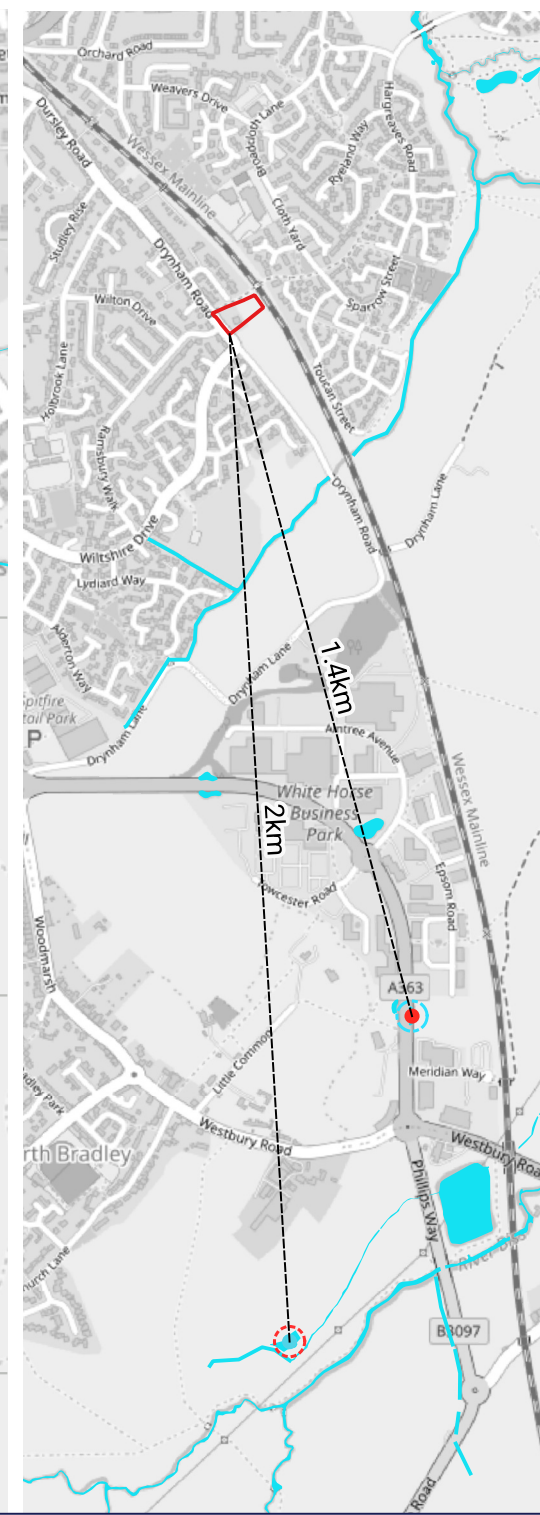
wooden soffit boxes. The long barn on the northern edge of the site is a single-storey building that had clay tiles on a timber roof, but it is almost completely collapsed and has no bat roosting potential.

- 4.5.5 During the three emergence surveys of the farmhouse in 2016, a small number of Common Pipistrelles emerged from one corner of the building in May but no bats emerged or re-entered on the following two surveys. It was concluded that the building was used as a transient roost by small numbers of probably male bats. A single Common Pipistrelle emerged from the same point on the building on one of the surveys in 2016, but again was absent from the other two surveys.
- 4.5.6 On the first emergence survey in 2025, the only bats recorded were Common Pipistrelles and Noctules. The first observation of a Pipistrelle was at around 25 minutes after sunset, suggesting it emerged from a roost nearby, but it did not emerge from the farmhouse. Bat activity was in general quite limited, with only six observations of bats across the survey. On the second survey, no bats were recorded at all. On the third survey, at the end of August, only four observations were recorded: a Soprano Pipistrelle flew through the site at around 6 minutes after sunset, two Common Pipistrelles flew through the site and one Brown Long-eared bat flew past the site.
- 4.5.7 The combined survey data indicates that the farmhouse is occasionally used by small numbers of probably male Common Pipistrelles as a transitional roost before or after the maternity season. Although the surveys in 2025 did not confirm the emergence of bats from the building, it is assumed for the purposes of this report that the building is still used as a roost.

Ponds within 500m



Closest eDNA Results for GCN

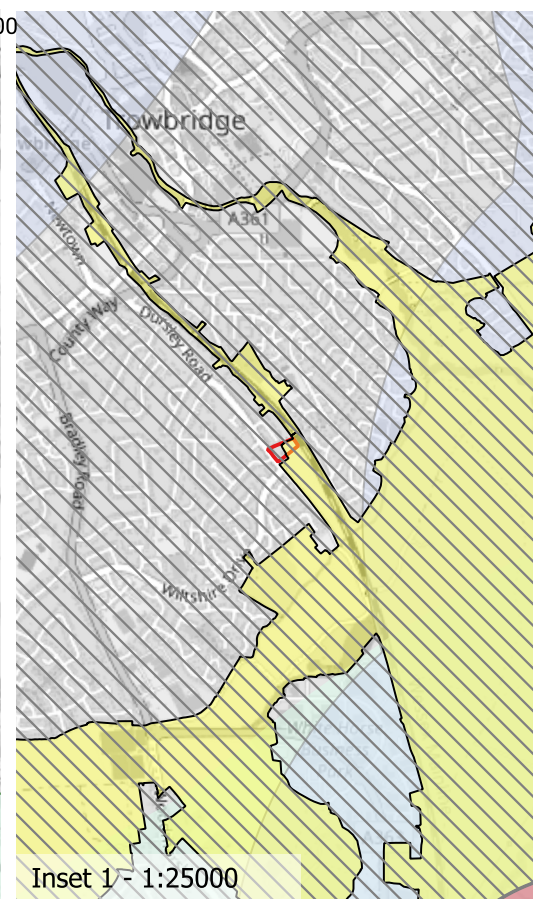


- Red Line Boundary
 - Shortest distance to eDNA results
 - Ponds
 - Ordnance Survey OpenData Local Surface Water (ST)
 - 500m Zone of Influence
- OpenStreetMap

Project	Southview Farm Nursery
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	Non-Priority Freshwater Habitats
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:10000
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn



Site Location Within Yellow Zone



- OpenStreetMap

Project	Southview Farm Nursery
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	Biodiversity Mitigation Layers
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:200000
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn



4.6. Birds

- 4.6.1 There are numerous records of birds in the area, including some notable and priority species such as Barn Owls, Fieldfares, Redwings and House Sparrows.
- 4.6.2 There were no signs of birds nesting on the building, but it is possible that species such as House Sparrows or Feral Pigeons could find places to nest in the wooden soffits. The farmhouse and collapsed barn are not suitable for Barn Owls to nest or perch in.
- 4.6.3 The brambles, garden and hedges are likely to be used for nesting by some of the smaller species such as Wrens, Robins and Blackbirds. Fieldfares and Redwings could visit the gardens to forage in winter, but the site is small and not of significant importance to the populations.

4.7. Dormice

- 4.7.1 There are desktop records of dormice within the area, but the surveys of the Elm Grove site in 2015 did not find any dormouse nests close to the Southview Farm site. The brambles and ornamental hedges are not completely unsuitable for dormice, but lower-quality habitats such as this are much more likely to be used if they are near ancient semi-natural woodland or other optimal habitats. As the site is small and does not have ideal habitat, it is some distance from ancient woodland, and dormice were not confirmed in previous surveys, it is concluded that they do not use the Southview Farm site and they are not considered further in this report.

4.8. Otters and Water Voles

- 4.8.1 There are no watercourses on or adjacent to the site. The closest potential habitat is the stream that runs through the Elm Grove site, approximately 350m south of Southview Farm. The stream was surveyed in 2015 but there was no evidence of otters or water voles having used it. The stream connects into the River Biss, which is known to be used by both species.
- 4.8.2 Considering the apparent absence of both species from the stream and the distance between the stream and Southview Farm, the proposals would not be likely to have any impacts on these species, and they are not considered further in this report.

4.9. Reptiles

- 4.9.1 There are desktop records of slow-worms (*Anguis fragilis*) and grass snakes (*Natrix helvetica*) and surveys of the Elm Grove site in 2016 found grass snakes in the field margins of that site.

- 4.9.2 The overgrown gardens provide good habitat for slow-worms and they could be present here in small numbers. Suitable precautions to avoid accidental killing or injury during construction will be required.

4.10. Section 41 & Other Species

- 4.10.1 The site is not likely to be of significant importance for populations of any *Section 41* species, given its nature, small size and surroundings. Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus*) could use the gardens and their potential presence should be taken into account during site clearance.
- 4.10.2 The absence of rivers, streams and ditches from the site and the adjacent land means that species such as White-clawed Crayfish (*Austrotypus pallipes*) European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) and Beavers (*Castor fiber*), whilst being present in the region, would not be affected by the proposed development. Uncommon but generally widespread invertebrates such as Jersey tiger (*Euplagia quadripunctaria*) or Small Blue (*Cupido minimus*) butterflies could very occasionally be seen on or near the site, but it lacks the traditionally managed, species-rich habitats on which these and other rare invertebrates rely.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1. Designated Sites

5.1.1 The site of the proposed development is not within or adjacent to any statutory sites designated for wildlife features. The proposed development would not have any direct effect on designated sites.

5.1.2 Potential indirect effects on European designated sites are considered in detail in the shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment that accompanies this report.

5.2. Habitats and Ecological Networks

5.2.1 The site's habitats are of low ecological value and the proposed development would not therefore give rise to a significant adverse ecological effect as a result of the removal of these habitats.

5.2.2 The site-level impact of habitat loss will be mitigated by reinstating species-rich grassland and woodland to the rear of the site and the planting of new native trees. These measures will enhance the green infrastructure corridor along the railway line.

5.2.3 The biodiversity net gain metric that accompanies this report shows a slight loss of habitat units (-1.42) and a small positive gain in hedgerow units (+0.16 units). Even in the absence of compensatory measures, this scale of reduction in habitat units would only be notable at a very local level and is not ecologically significant. The net loss in habitat units will be compensated by securing off-site units within the local authority area. By securing these units off-site, they can be delivered in an ecologically suitable location where they can have the greatest strategic benefit.

5.3. Amphibians

5.3.1 The site is sufficiently isolated from any ponds, and the extent of habitat loss so small, that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on any amphibian populations and no great crested newt licence would be required.

5.3.2 In the absence of avoidance or mitigation it is possible that individuals of the commoner amphibian species could be killed or injured during vegetation clearance. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring that vegetation is cleared carefully from the site.

5.3.3 Once construction is ready to begin, any vegetation where amphibians could be present will be cleared in a phased manner:

- Stage 1 – An initial cut to reduce the vegetation height down to a minimum of 150mm above ground where necessary, and remove all arisings
- Stage 2 – the cut area should be left for 24-48 hours to allow wildlife to disperse
- Stage 3 – an Ecologist should conduct a fingertip search of the construction area and if satisfied proceed to:
- Stage 4 – the remaining vegetation is cut to ground-level, working from one end of the patch to the other, with arisings carefully removed.
- Stage 5 – the top layers of soil are carefully removed.

5.3.4 An Ecologist will be present during all the above stages. After soil removal, the area will be maintained as bare earth until construction begins, to minimise the likelihood of vegetation recolonising the area and providing new habitat for reptiles.

5.4. Badgers

5.4.1 A pre-commencement survey will be conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure the current badger situation is known and that the recommendations are correct. Precautions will be taken during construction, including:

- Ensure excavations or trenches left overnight are covered or have an escape route such as a shallow gradient at one or both ends.
- Ensure excavations or trenches are inspected each morning and evening to ensure no badgers have become trapped.
- Open pipework with a diameter of more than 120mm should be properly covered or capped at the end of the working day to prevent badgers entering and becoming trapped.
- During the work, the storage of any chemicals should be contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming badgers.

5.4.2 All site personnel will be briefed concerning the presence of badgers, the avoidance measures to be followed, the relevant legislation, the penalties imposed and who to contact should they need to.

5.5. Bats

5.5.1 The renovation of the farmhouse is likely to involve repairs that would prevent bats from accessing the current roosting location. In the absence of avoidance, mitigation or compensation, this would result in the permanent loss of a bat roost. It is possible that repair works could disturb, injure or kill bats within their roost. With reference to Table 3.2 in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, this type of roost is of 'site' level importance i.e. its importance to the favourable conservation status of bat populations is at the lower end of the scale. With reference to Table 4.2 in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, the loss of this roost would therefore be significant at the site level but not beyond.

- 5.5.2 The loss of the roost could not realistically be avoided whilst also making the building safe and watertight. The risk of harm to bats during work to the building can be mitigated by timing the work and taking precautions to exclude bats from the roost before starting. Considering the nature and scale of the impacts it is not anticipated that the timing of the works would be necessarily restricted, but this may help mitigate potential impacts (i.e. removing potential roosting features in late autumn / early spring may be the best time).
- 5.5.3 The loss of the roost can be compensated by providing alternative roosting habitat in the form of built-in bat boxes. The ideal location for these would be on the eastern elevation of the new nursery building, as this will face onto a dark corridor that contains habitats designed and managed for bats. The provision of two bat boxes in this location would be a net increase in the total amount of roosting sites. For roosts of this kind it would not normally be necessary to demonstrate that the new roosting sites have been provided or occupied prior to the removal of the existing roosting sites (although this would be preferred if it is possible).
- 5.5.4 Any new artificial lighting must be designed in accordance with the guidance in GN08: Bats and Lighting. Particular care must be taken to avoid or reduce light spill onto retained and new boundary habitats.

5.6. Birds

- 5.6.1 In the absence of avoidance or mitigation, during demolition and vegetation removal it is possible that nesting birds would be disturbed or their nests destroyed, if this is carried out during the nesting season. The removal of habitats is relatively small in proportion to the total area of the site, and the habitat loss might only be expected to impact the territory of a small number of pairs. This could affect common species but some less common or declining species such as wrens, house sparrows, starlings etc. could also be affected.
- 5.6.2 Any vegetation or structures where birds could nest will only be removed outside of the bird nesting season. Where this is not possible, an ecologist will check the area for birds' nests by undertaking a manual inspection and watching the area for bird activity early in the morning. If any active nests are identified, they will be left undisturbed until the young have fledged, or the nesting attempt is completed. The area around any nests will be visited and monitored every 24hrs until the nests are no longer in use. Only when such nests have been vacated will machinery and other plant be allowed into the area.
- 5.6.3 In accordance with Wiltshire Council's emerging Plan policy, new nest boxes (such as swift bricks) should be provided at a ratio of two per dwelling. Swift bricks could be installed on the rear elevation of the farmhouse, and boxes for other species could be integrated into the walls of the new nursery building.

- 5.6.4 Subject to these measures, the residual impact of the project on birds would be the 'tidying up' of the site, albeit this is only restoring it to similar conditions as it was in prior to 2015. There may be fewer natural nesting sites and less undisturbed foraging habitat for birds than at present. This is mitigated to some extent through the planting and management of new woodland and trees. The residual impact is not significant beyond the site level.

5.7. Reptiles

- 5.7.1 The likelihood of slow-worms being present in the habitat that is due to be removed is relatively low, considering the extent of habitat removal and the isolating effects of the adjacent developments. The loss of this small area of habitat would not be ecologically significant. The precautionary working methods described in relation to amphibians would also mitigate the small risk of harm to reptiles during construction.
- 5.7.2 The loss of habitat can be mitigated by the provision of an artificial refugia for reptiles, a proposed location for which is shown on the Mitigation and Enhancement Plan.

5.8. Other Species

- 5.8.1 The proposal to include species-rich grassland as part of the landscaping will benefit a range of species including invertebrates such as butterflies and moths. This grassland, combined with the woodland and tree planting, will create foraging areas for birds, hedgehogs and amphibians.

5.9. Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.9.1 The project will be within the scope of the mandatory requirement to deliver 10% net gain under *Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990* (as amended). There are no irreplaceable habitats within or adjacent to the site, and there is no evidence that there has been any degradation of on-site habitats prior to the relevant date (assumed to be on or after 30th January 2020). The 10% net gain requirement will apply to area habitats and hedgerows, but there are no watercourses of any kind within 10m of the site boundary. The project will achieve 10% net gain through a combination of on-site measures and off-site compensation, in line with the mitigation hierarchy.



- Red Line Boundary
- Proposed Small Urban Tree
- Retained Small Urban Tree
- Lost Tree
- Species-rich native hedgerow
- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Ground level planters
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Vegetated garden

Proposed Parcel Labels

- W1
- U4
- U3
- U2
- U1
- G2
- G1

Google Satellite

Project	Southview Farm, Trowbridge
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	Proposed Habitat Parcels (BNG)
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:500
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn



Recommended Bat Boxes

ID	Type	Aspect	Quantity
B1	1FTH Schwegler Universal Bat Summer Roost on the nursery building	NE	1
B2	3FS Schwegler Bat Colony Box mounted on pole	SE & NW	2

- Trees
- Species-rich hedge
- Fence
- Shortest distance between features
- Grassland
- Woodland
- TWBMS Yellow Zone
- Red Line Boundary
- Dark Zone Buffer

OpenStreetMap

ID	Area (m2)	Habitat
W1	221.489	Woodland
G2	140.528	Grassland
G1	33.221	Grassland
G3	11.548	Grassland

Project	Southview Farm Nursery
Client	Coulston Estates
Title	Ecological Mitigation Plan
Date	27/02/2026
Suitability	For issue
CRS	OSGB36 / British National Grid
Scale	1:325
QGIS	3.44.2-Solothurn





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