

Ecological Impact Assessment

**Rectory Barn, Church Corner,
Whaddon, Wiltshire**

Ecology | Green Space | Community | GIS

Unit 1, Brassmill Lane Enterprise Centre | Bath | BA1 3JN

01225444114 | info@ethosep.co.uk

www.ethosep.co.uk



Report Produced for

Sally Evans

Written by:

Rachel Fayers, Principal Ecologist

Approved by:

Jim Phillips, Managing Director

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SUMMARY

Purpose of the Report	This Report has been produced by Ethos Environmental Planning on behalf of Sally Evans. It provides an assessment of the likely ecological effects associated with the proposed development of an area of land known as 'Rectory Barn, Church Corner, Whaddon, Wiltshire.
Description of the scheme	The development proposals for the site include plans to build a new single dwelling.
Methodology	A desk study and UK Habitat Classification survey were undertaken for the site in June and July 2025, respectively. Detailed surveys for bats, and great crested newt were undertaken in June and July 2025.
Baseline Ecological Conditions	The site comprises of an outbuilding with boundary hedgerow, pond and vegetated garden. Great crested newt are confirmed present in the pond. The site is located within the Greater Horseshoe buffer zone for the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation. The surveys identified 11 species of bat using the site in low numbers, including greater and lesser horseshoe bats recorded very infrequently on a static detector.
Key impacts and mitigation	The development layout has been designed to retain, protect and enhance the most valuable ecological features, the trees in the northwest of the site and the shrubs on the southern boundary of the site. Mitigation measures are described to ensure compliance with protected species legislation for bats, great crested newt, breeding birds and nocturnal mammals.
Conclusion	Assuming the implementation of effective mitigation measures, as set out in this report, no significant adverse ecological effects are predicted. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with relevant national and local planning policies in relation to nature conservation and relevant wildlife legislation.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) report has been prepared by Ethos Environmental Planning (Ethos) on behalf of Sally Evans. The EclA was written by Rachel Fayers BSc (Hons), Principal Ecologist, and reviewed Jim Phillips MSc BSc (Hons) MCIEEM, Managing Director at Ethos.
- 1.2 The report provides the results of an EclA in relation to the proposed development of Rectory Barn, Church Corner, Whaddon, Wiltshire BA14 6NR (Central Grid Reference ST 87995 61430), hereafter referred to as 'the site' and shown in Figure 1. The site is located at the northern edge of the Yellow Zone of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS).
- 1.3 The site comprises developed land; sealed surface (existing structures and hard standing), boundary hedgerow, a pond, scattered urban trees and vegetated garden (short sward grassland and introduced shrub).



Figure 1 Site location

- 1.4 The proposed development comprises the construction of a single new dwelling within existing residential garden land, together with associated access, parking and landscaping. The existing outbuilding on site will be retained.
- 1.5 The aims of this EclA report are to:

- provide an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on ecological features on site;
- provide an assessment of the likely effects of the proposed development on Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC;
- identify the measures required to mitigate impacts on site biodiversity;
- identify opportunities to deliver ecological enhancements; and
- to enable the Local Planning Authority to assess whether the proposals comply with relevant planning policy or legislation.

1.6 This report has been produced following the approach set out in CIEEM's 'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' (CIEEM, 2017).

2 POLICY AND LEGISLATION

2.1 National Policy

- 2.1.1 The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** (published Dec 2024) sets out national planning policy, including policies of relevance to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policies of relevance to the proposed development (parts of paragraphs 187, 192, 193 and 198) are provided in Appendix 1.

2.2 Local Policy

Core Policy 50

Relevant policy taken from the adopted **Wiltshire Core Policy 50**.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

- 2.2.1 Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services. All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development. Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity enhancement

- 2.2.2 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, and
- IV. Where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements.

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

Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC) planning guidance for Wiltshire

2.2.4 The internationally designated sites of the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Chilmark Quarries SAC and Mottisfont SAC are some of our greatest environmental assets. The populations of bats supported by these sites are afforded very high levels of legal protection, placing significant duties on decision-makers to prevent damage to bat roosts, feeding areas and the routes used by bats to travel between these locations.

2.2.5 The site lies within the area covered by the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Strategy protects bat populations associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon SAC and identifies areas of varying sensitivity based on their importance for bat roosting, commuting and foraging.

2.2.6 The site lies on the northern edge of Zone Yellow, defined as an area of moderate sensitivity where development may be acceptable provided impacts on bat habitat connectivity and lighting are appropriately managed.

2.3 Relevant Legislation

2.3.1 The following pieces of legislation have been considered within this assessment with an explanation of their relevance provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Relevant legislation

Legislation	Relevance
The Habitats Directive (together with the Birds Directive) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. It is built around two pillars: the Natura 2000 network of protected sites and the strict system of species protection. All in all, the Directive protects over 1,000 animals and plant species and over 200 "habitat types" (e.g. special types of forests, meadows, wetlands, etc.), which are of European importance. The Habitats Directive and parts of the Birds Directive are transposed into legislation by The Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended) .	Presence of bats foraging and commuting on site. Presence of great crested newt on site
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which provides legislative protection for certain species. The Act also prohibits the	

Legislation	Relevance
spread of invasive plant species, as well as providing the mechanism for the designation and protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;	Potential presence of nesting birds on site.
The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (the NERC act) places a duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities, to consider biodiversity in their work. Local planning authorities are to ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity on a site, no net loss in habitat connectivity and aims to enhance biodiversity.	Potential presence of hedgehog on site Enhancements for biodiversity

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of Assessment

3.1.1 This assessment has been undertaken following the approach set out in the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, 1.3*' (CIEEM, 2018). The assessment has considered 'Important Ecological Features' that are present within the 'Zone of Influence' of the project. Important Ecological Features for this project comprise¹:

- Designated nature conservation sites;
- Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England;
- Legally protected species; and
- Red Listed or rare species (based on Red Data Book lists, Birds of Conservation Concern and species considered to be nationally rare / scarce).

3.1.2 The Zone of Influence (Zoi) is the area over which the project could have an influence on ecological features. The Zoi is likely to vary for different features. However, in general terms the Zoi for this development proposal is considered to comprise the land within the red line boundary as well as immediate adjacent habitat features.

3.1.3 The scope of the assessment was informed by a ecological walkover and UK Habitat classification survey undertaken on 3rd July 2025. The purpose of this was to identify the habitats on site, their potential for protected species and to establish the scope of surveys that would be required to inform a future planning application at the site.

3.1.4 The ecological survey identified potential only for foraging / commuting bats, breeding birds and great crested newts and, therefore, the assessment has focused on these species groups.

3.1.5 The overall assessment has been informed by guidelines provided in CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing.

3.2 Background Data Search

3.2.1 A background data search was received from the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) in July 2025. The search area included records of non-statutory designated sites and protected and notable species within 1km of the proposed development site.

¹ Box 14 in CIEEM's ECiA Guidelines (2018)

3.3 UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.3.1 A UKHab survey was undertaken on 3rd July 2025. The survey incorporated detailed assessment of the land within the development boundary, including a description and mapping of all key features and habitat types. The survey was carried out to identify the range of habitats within the site and the predominant and notable species of flora. This survey was informed by the UKHab classification Version 2 (UKHab Ltd., 2023).

3.4 Bats

- 3.4.1 The methodology for the bat survey has been informed by the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition* (Collins, 2023).
- 3.4.2 Targeted surveys for bats were undertaken as set out in Table 2, with further details of survey methodology provided in Appendix 2.

Table 2 Surveys undertaken for bats

Survey	Description	Date Undertaken
Assessment of habitat suitability	Habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats.	27 th June 2025
Activity survey 1	Surveyors walk a transect of the site recording bat activity with Echometer Touch bat detectors	3 rd July 2025
Static bat detector survey	Song Meter 4 Mini detector deployed at the northern boundary to record the bat assemblage at the site and activity along the northern hedgerow	27 th June – 3 rd July 2025

3.5 Birds

- 3.5.1 The bird survey included an assessment of the habitats on site for their potential to support protected and notable species of bird as well as their potential to support breeding birds.

3.6 Great crested newt

- 3.6.1 The habitats on site were assessed for their potential to support amphibian species, including great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) (GCN). This included an examination of suitable waterbodies and for breeding terrestrial habitat and terrestrial habitats which may provide sufficient structured vegetation in which amphibians may forage or hibernate
- 3.6.2 In addition to the on-site assessment, *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines* (English Nature, 2001) recommend that a desktop analysis of ponds within 500m of the site be undertaken, to identify any potential breeding ponds which may require further

survey. Ponds within 500m of the site were mapped on GIS with an OS OpenData base map at 1:10,000 resolution.

- 3.6.3 Ponds 1 onsite was subject to eDNA surveys on 27th June 2025. The surveys comprised the collection of 40ml samples from 20 locations around the edge of the pond. Samples are mixed together in a bag and six 15ml samples are extracted and stored within preserving fluid. These samples were then sent to ADAS, who analyse the samples for GCN DNA. This technique has been tested by DEFRA and found to have a reliability of 99.3%. Sampling methodology followed best practice guidance within Analytical and Methodological Development for Improved Surveillance of the Great Crested Newt (Freshwater Habitats Trust, 2014).

3.7 Other protected species

- 3.1 The site was assessed for its potential to support a range of other protected species by assessing each species-specific habitat needs. This included searching for suitable habitat for riparian mammals, reptiles, badger, invertebrates, .
- 3.2 Habitats in the surrounding areas were also assessed for their potential to support these species.

3.8 Limitations

- 3.8.1 The site was fully accessible for the survey and all surveys were undertaken in line with best practice. Therefore, there are considered to be no significant limitations to the assessment.
- 3.8.2 Whilst the habitats on site are assessed as having high potential for foraging / commuting bats, the survey approach has considered the small scale of the development proposals. The location of the proposed dwelling is set back away from the existing hedgerow and the proposed larger windows have been located on the eastern and southern elevations, directing light spill away from the key habitat features.
- 3.8.3 One activity survey and one period of static monitoring was undertaken to confirm the habitat assessment. As the results correlated, and the northern/western boundary hedgerow is the key feature for bats, it is deemed that sufficient survey has been undertaken to suitably inform the assessment and mitigation measures.

3.9 Evaluation of Ecological Features

- 3.9.1 In line with CIEEMs guidelines on EcIA, this assessment has focused on relevant Important Ecological Features. The scale of importance of these features has been determined based on available contextual information, which for this project are considered only to include:

- **International** – of international importance and protected through international legislation;
- **National** – of importance in England and protected through national legislation;
- **County** – of importance to the county (Wiltshire) but not sufficiently important to warrant 'National' scale of importance; and
- **Local** – of importance to the local area (Whaddon), but not sufficiently important to warrant County scale of importance.

3.9.2 Potential impacts on Important Ecological Features are identified and assessed; likely significant effects are those likely to result in a change to the conservation status of a habitat or species population or undermine/support nature conservation policy. Mitigation measures have been devised following the mitigation hierarchy; appropriate mechanisms for securing mitigation measures have been identified.

3.10 Personnel

3.10.1 The surveyors on site have been detailed in Appendix 2 Table 6.

4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Designated Sites

Statutory designated sites

4.1.1 The site is located with 1km of two Local Wildlife Sites, shown in Figure 2.

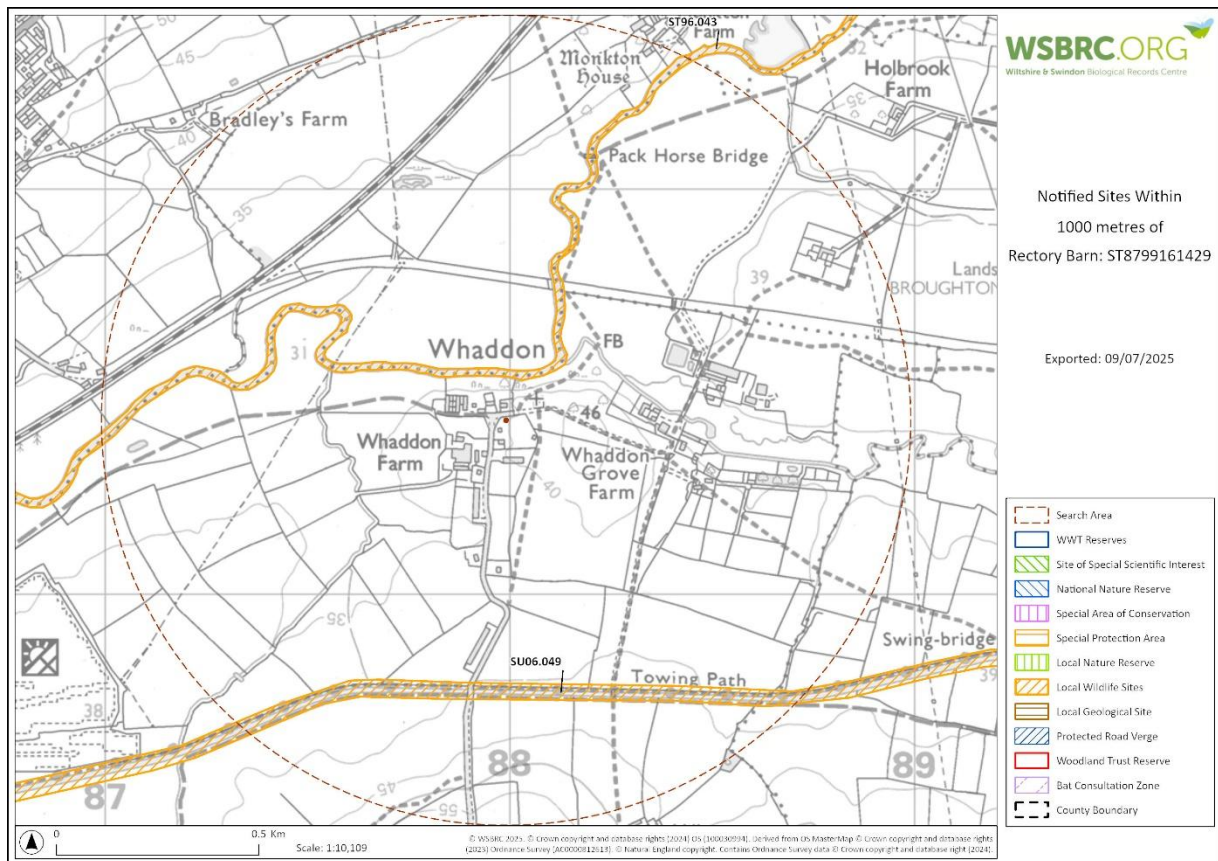


Figure 2 Notified sites within 1km

4.1.2 Bristol Avon River is one of the main river systems draining north-west Wiltshire. It is located 100m north of the site.

4.1.3 The Kennet and Avon Canal is a restored canal located 660metres south of the site.

4.1.4 Due to the small scale of the proposed development, no significant impacts on the Local Wildlife Sites are predicted, and they are scoped out of the assessment.

Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat Special Area of conservation

4.1.5 The site is located within the internationally important designation of Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat Special Area of conservation. This is comprised of an underground network of sites in the Wiltshire and BANES administrative areas,

including four nationally important SSSI's, namely Box Mine, Winsley mines, Combe Down and Bathampton Down Mines, and Brown's Folly. The SAC designation includes the network of caves and man-made tunnels that bats use for hibernation, breeding and mating, though the grassland, watercourses, scrub and woodland surrounding them are also important features for bats to forage and commute.

- 4.1.6 Bats using the sites include the rare Bechstein's Bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*), Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*). All three species are highly mobile throughout the year and use a network of other important roost sites in the surrounding landscape including Iford Manor SSSI, which is the fourth largest breeding colony of greater horseshoe bats in England and one of only 15 breeding roosts in the country. Bats which use the above hibernation sites are known to breed at Iford Manor each year.
- 4.1.7 The network of significant roosts includes sites that are not covered by any statutory designation, such as the breeding colonies of Bechstein's bats at Biss Wood and Green Lane Wood, a pair of ancient woodlands east of Trowbridge. This colony is known to hibernate at Box Mine SSSI and uses the intervening landscape to commute to the sites.
- 4.1.8 The site is located approximately 3.9km from the closest point of the SAC, namely Combe Down and Bathampton Down Mines SSSI. The landscape between the SSSI and the site comprises primarily of urban development and has limited connectivity.
- 4.1.9 The site is located within the Yellow Zone of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy. The development proposals are very small scale and include construction of a single dwelling that will result in the loss of vegetated garden (modified grassland and 4 urban trees). A lighting plan has been recommended to demonstrate that the development will not result in increased light spill to the boundary hedgerow. Given that the commuting features are being retained and protected within proposals, it is considered that there will be no impacts on the SAC. Therefore, this is not considered further within the assessment.

4.2 Habitats

General site description

- 4.2.1 The habitats on site are shown in figure 3 below. The site is dominated by vegetated garden (modified grassland and introduced shrub) with developed land; sealed surface composed of built structures and hard standing. There is a boundary hedgerow at the northern and western boundary, six scattered urban trees and a pond.
- 4.2.2 The site is bordered on the northern and western boundary by a minor country road, and to the south and east by grassland (fields and gardens).
- 4.2.3 The site is situated in a rural area, in a small village. The site is well connected to suitable habitat in the wider environment, with hedgerows, woodland and the River Avon located 100metres north of the site.



Figure 3 UK Hab survey



Photo 1 T2 within vegetated garden (to be removed)



Photo 2 Tree 1 within vegetated garden (to be removed)



Photo 3 Other neutral grassland, boundary hedgerow



Photo 4 T7 within Vegetated garden



Photo 5 Boundary hedgerow



Photo 6 Boundary hedgerow



Photo 7 T6 within vegetated garden



Photo 8 Existing structure

4.3 Bats

Background data search

- 4.3.1 The desk study returned multiple records of bats within the search area and surrounding locality, with records spanning from 1994 to 2023. Confirmed species include barbastelle, serotine, noctule, common and soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat, brown long-eared bat, and both greater and lesser horseshoe bat, alongside several records identified to genus or species group only (e.g. *Myotis* spp., *Nyctalus* spp., and unidentified bats).
- 4.3.2 The majority of records relate to Whaddon and the immediate surrounding area, including the solar farm site, with Daubenton's bat most frequently recorded. These records indicate the presence of a diverse bat assemblage locally, including species of high conservation importance such as barbastelle and horseshoe bats.

Habitat assessment

- 4.3.3 The site is located in a rural area which is considered to have high potential for foraging, commuting and roosting bats. The River Avon forms an important foraging and commuting resource and is located 100metres north of the site. The wider landscape includes a network of hedgerows, woodland pockets, grassland and agricultural fields which all offer foraging and commuting habitat.
- 4.3.4 The site itself contains a native hedgerow at the northern and western boundary. This linked to other hedgerows and habitat in the wider environment and is considered to be the most important feature for bats on site.
- 4.3.5 The pond provides additional foraging habitat, whilst the vegetated garden could be used for some sporadic foraging but is unlikely to be an important resource for commuting/foraging bats at a local level.
- 4.3.6 There is one built structure on site (photo 8) which is being retained within proposals and was not subject to survey.

Ground level tree assessment

- 4.3.7 No features suitable for roosting bats were observed within any of the trees on site. Three trees are proposed for removal to accommodate the development; a whitebeam, Photinia and Lawson's cypress, all of which were in good condition and did not contain any features suitable for roosting bats. Therefore, it is assessed that there are no bats roosting within any of the trees on site.

Dusk activity survey

- 4.3.8 Five bat species were recorded during the activity survey, namely common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, serotine and a *Myotis* species.

- 4.3.9 The activity survey recorded regular bat use of the site, with the pond and adjacent hedgerows supporting the highest levels of activity.
- 4.3.10 Multiple bats were observed foraging over the pond, with at least four individual soprano pipistrelles recorded simultaneously and frequent social calling; additional brief foraging passes were also noted nearby.
- 4.3.11 Commuting activity occurred along hedgerows and across the garden in several directions, and a brief call likely attributable to *Myotis* species was recorded later in the survey.

Static bat detector survey

- 4.3.12 Static automated bat monitoring recorded a total of 2,041 bat passes comprising 11 species. Activity was strongly dominated by common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), which accounted for 1,586 passes (approximately 78%), followed by soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) with 348 passes (approximately 17%). Together, these two widespread and common species accounted for around 95% of all recorded activity, indicating that the site is primarily used by generalist foraging bats typical of lowland urban and semi-rural landscapes.
- 4.3.13 Lower levels of activity were recorded for a range of other species, including noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), Nathusius' pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), and Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), each contributing a small proportion of total passes. Occasional records were also obtained for brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).
- 4.3.14 Notably, very low levels of activity were recorded for greater horseshoe (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), with two and one passes respectively. While these records represent minimal activity, horseshoe bats are of high conservation significance and their presence indicates at least occasional use of the wider area. No passes were recorded for barbastelle, Bechstein's bat, or Natterer's bat.

Summary and nature conservation importance

- 4.3.15 Overall, the results indicate a bat assemblage typical of the wider landscape, with high levels of activity from common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle and comparatively low levels of activity from less common and conservation-significant species. The assemblage of bats using the site is typical of a rural site such as this and is not considered to be of particular importance for nature conservation. Bats are therefore considered further on a precautionary basis.

4.4 Birds

- 4.4.1 The desk study returned numerous bird records within the search area and surrounding locality, spanning 1997–2024 and comprising a diverse assemblage of farmland, wetland, woodland and urban-associated species. Notable records include a range of raptors (e.g. red kite, sparrowhawk, kestrel, hobby and barn owl), farmland and open-country species such as skylark, yellowhammer, linnet and grey partridge, and wetland or water-associated birds including little egret, grey heron, lapwing, snipe and common tern.
- 4.4.2 Species associated with garden and residential habitats that are of conservation concern were also recorded, including house sparrow, starling, song thrush, bullfinch, greenfinch, swift and spotted flycatcher. Overall, the data indicate the area supports a diverse bird community associated with a range of habitats, including several species of recognised conservation importance.
- 4.4.3 No evidence of breeding birds was found on site. However, due to the presence of trees and introduced shrub, breeding birds are considered further on a precautionary basis during vegetation clearance.

4.5 Great crested newt

- 4.5.1 The data search identified records of common frog within 1km of the site.
- 4.5.2 There is one pond on site, located in the south-west corner, adjacent to the boundary hedgerow. eDNA survey of the pond came back positive for GCN (see Appendix 2) and they are confirmed present on site.
- 4.5.3 The terrestrial habitat on site is dominated by vegetated garden and developed land; sealed surface which has low value for amphibians due to the short sward of the modified grassland. However, due to the close proximity to the pond it is likely that it is used by GCN in their terrestrial phase for commuting and foraging. The boundary hedgerow has high value for foraging, commuting and hibernating GCN.

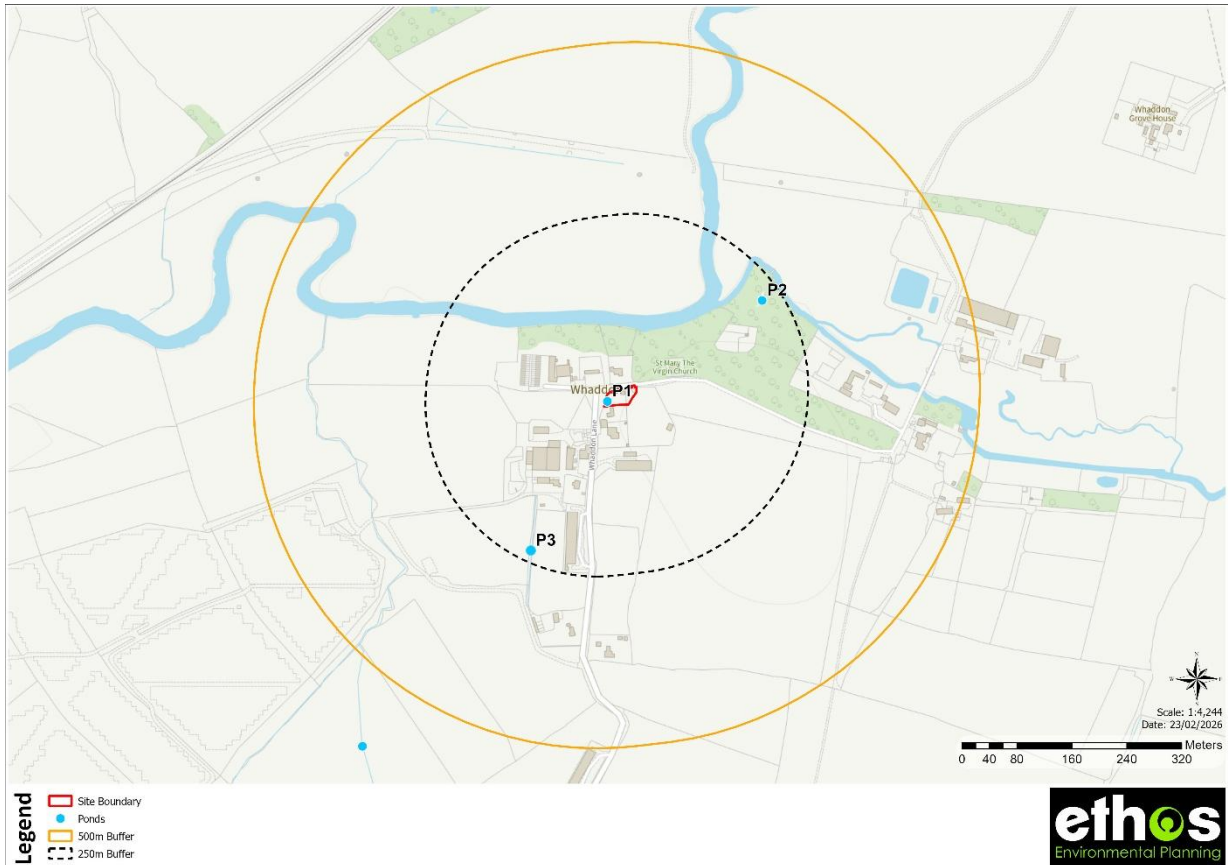


Figure 4 Ponds within 500m



Photo 9 Existing pond on site with confirmed GCN presence

4.6 Other Protected Species

- 4.6.1 No evidence of badger was recorded on site, however, due to the site's rural location it is considered likely that they pass through the site for occasional foraging and commuting purposes.

- 4.6.2 There are records of hedgehog within 1km of the site and they are considered likely present in the local area. It is likely that they use the site for occasional foraging and commuting.
- 4.6.3 The grassland on site is short sward and considered unsuitable for reptiles due to the lack of cover. They are not considered further, and the precautionary method statement for GCN will also protect reptiles during site clearance.
- 4.6.4 There is no habitat for riparian mammals on site, and they are not considered further.

4.7 Summary

- 4.7.1 A summary of the important ecological features on site and their scale of importance for nature conservation is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Important ecological features on site

Important Ecological Features	Scale of Importance
Great crested newt	Local
Bats	N/A - precautionary
Breeding birds	N/A - precautionary
Badger / hedgehog	N/A - precautionary

5 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1.1 The proposals comprise the development of a single self-build dwelling within part of the residential garden (curtilage) of Rectory Barn, Whaddon. The dwelling is anticipated to be single storey and would incorporate an existing outbuilding, with access taken from Whaddon Lane via the existing access point. The property is intended for occupation by the current owners of Rectory Barn, enabling them to downsize and remain living locally.
- 5.1.2 The layout of the development has been developed to minimise impacts on ecology as follows:
- The proposed access point will utilise an existing access point and gate in the north-east corner of the site. This will avoid the need for any hedgerow / vegetation removal.
 - The main development footprint is vegetated garden which is assessed to not be of importance for nature conservation.
 - The location of the proposed dwelling has been chosen to be set back as far as possible from the existing hedgerow at the northern and western boundaries, as well as avoiding the pond with confirmed GCN presence.
 - The design and placement of proposed windows have been carefully considered to minimise light spill on the northern and western boundary hedgerows. The larger windows have been sited on the southern and eastern elevations where there are less impacts to bats.

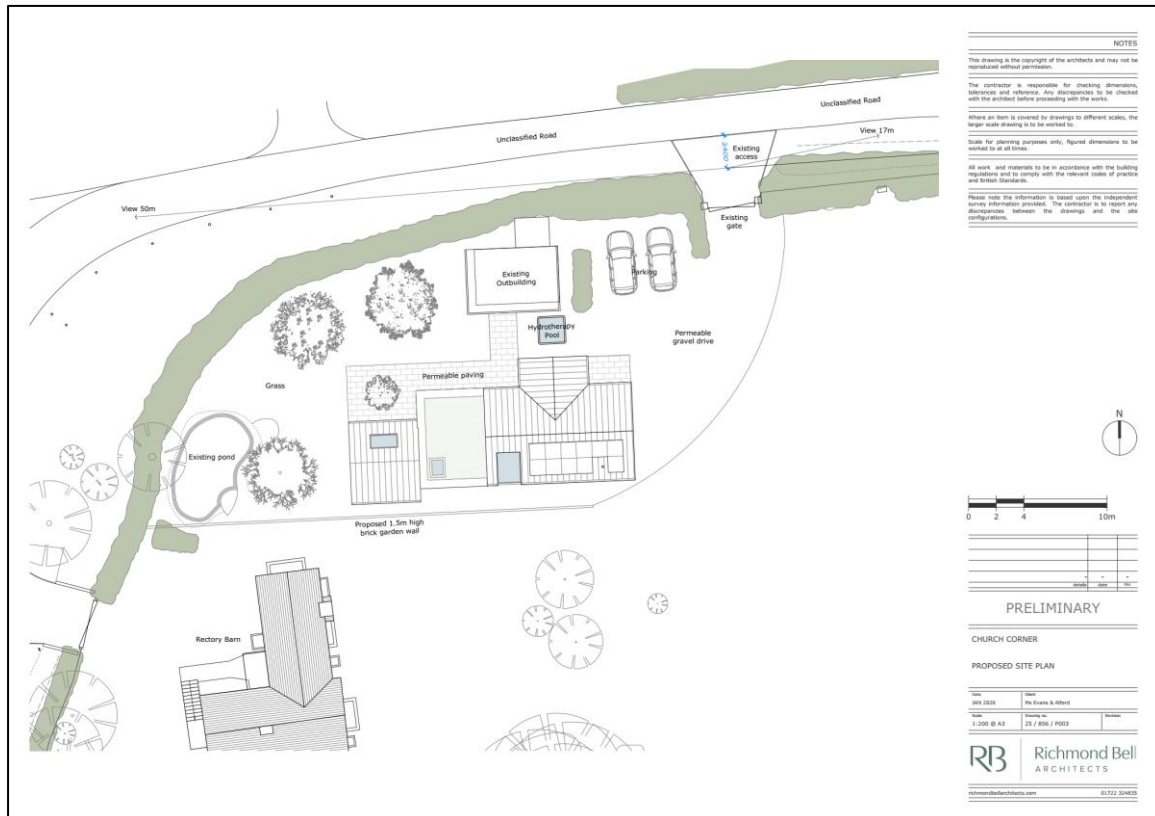


Figure 5 Development proposals

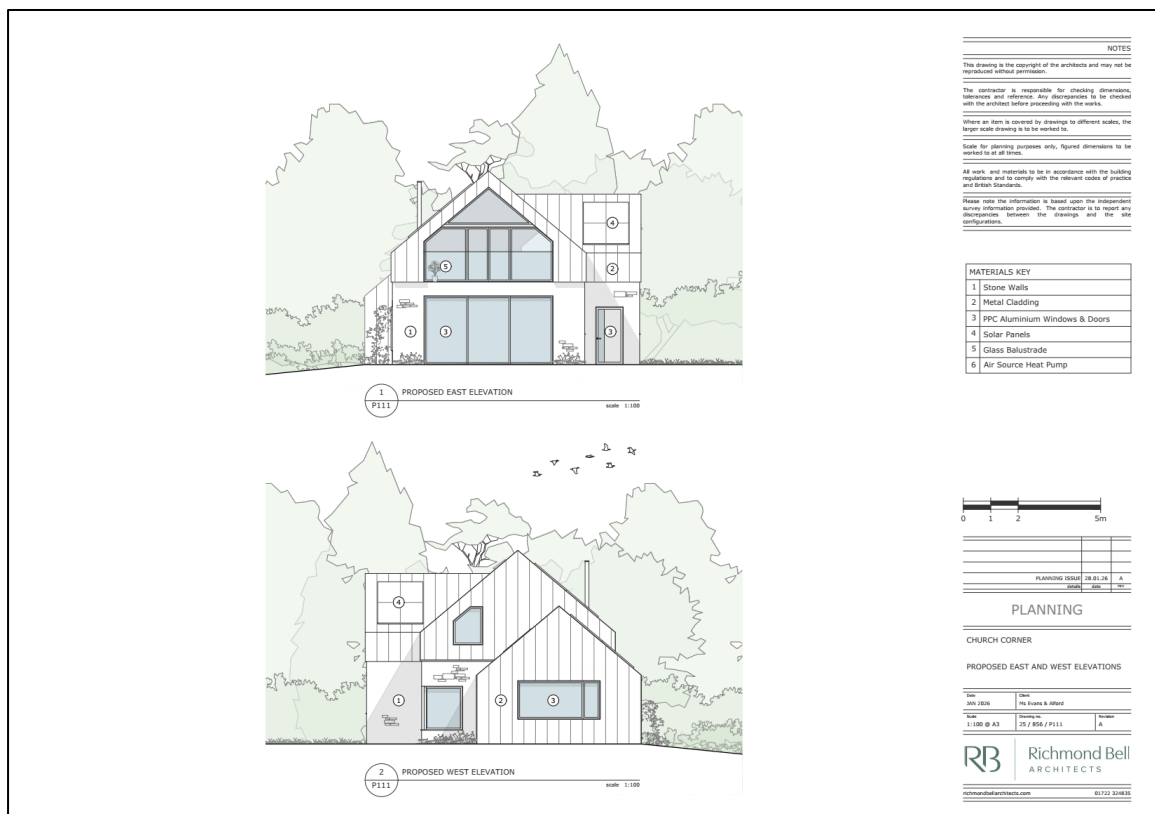


Figure 6 Proposed elevations (east and west)



Figure 7 Proposed elevations (north and south)

6 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

6.1 Foraging / Commuting bats

- 6.1.1 In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for impacts to commuting bats using the northern and western boundary hedgerow. However, the proposed building is set back from the hedgerow and larger windows are not located on the northern or western elevations, reducing the potential for light spill in these directions. It is therefore expected that post-development light levels along the hedgerow will remain comparable to baseline conditions. A lighting plan will be required to demonstrate predicted post-development lux levels and confirm that light spill is appropriately controlled. Given the high confidence that the proposed design measures will maintain baseline light levels, it is considered that the detailed lighting strategy can be secured by planning condition.
- 6.1.2 Overall, with the implementation of the above mitigation, no significant effects on foraging and commuting bats are predicted as a result of the development.

6.2 Great crested newt

- 6.2.1 Great crested newts are confirmed present in the pond on site and, are assumed to also use the vegetated garden due to it being adjacent to the pond. The boundary hedgerow is also assumed to be used by GCN for foraging, commuting and hibernating. The pond and the hedgerow are assessed to be the key features for GCN in relation to the site and this is reflected in development proposals with their retention and protection – the location of the proposed structure is set back away from the hedgerow and pond.
- 6.2.2 Additional impacts may occur during construction of the proposed 1.5m high brick garden wall which will run along the southern site boundary. This will pass adjacent to the retained pond and hedgerow and will require excavation works.

Construction impacts

- 6.2.3 In the absence of proposals there is potential for impacts to GCN during the construction phase, comprising potential for injury / killing of individuals. As the pond and hedgerow are being retained, mitigation will focus on the construction footprint as follows:
- 6.2.4 To allow the works to proceed legally, a mitigation licence will be required. It is advised that the scheme registers under a district-level licensing agreement with Natural England to allow the works to proceed legally.
- 6.2.5 A method statement will be required during site clearance and during construction of the brick wall which will run adjacent to the pond and hedgerow. These measures would be detailed within the licence agreement with Natural England.

- 6.2.6 The removal of part of the vegetated garden on site as part of the proposals will slightly reduce the availability of GCN foraging/commuting habitat in the local area. However, the habitat which is to be lost is short sward modified grassland and urban trees (making up vegetated garden) which are unlikely to be an important resource for the local GCN population. Nevertheless, a licence will be required to compensate for the loss of terrestrial habitat; as detailed above, the scheme could register under a district-level licensing agreement to allow the works to proceed legally. This would require a compensation payment to Natural England to compensate for the loss of terrestrial habitat.
- 6.2.7 As the proposed brick wall will run up to the edge of the boundary hedgerow, GCN will still be able to commute along the hedgerow to other habitat in the wider environment. Whilst the proposed wall will form a barrier to species movement to the south-east, they will be able to access these areas by using existing boundary features.
- 6.2.8 Overall, if the above mitigation measures are implemented, no impacts are expected to the local GCN population.

6.3 Breeding birds

Construction impacts

- 6.3.1 The trees and hedgerows have the potential to support nesting birds and in the absence of mitigation, impacts on birds could occur during removal of the four urban trees. Adopting the precautionary approach, good practice measures to avoid impacts on nesting birds will be utilised. This will comprise vegetation clearance being undertaken outside nesting season (March to August, inclusive), or a pre-works check for nesting birds if works are to be undertaken within nesting season.
- 6.3.2 Overall, with the implementation of suitable mitigation during and post-construction, no significant effects on birds are predicted as a result of the development.

6.4 Badger and Hedgehog

Construction impacts

- 6.4.1 The site has the potential to support badger and hedgehog and in the absence of mitigation, impacts on these species could occur during construction, comprising injury or mortality of animals foraging over the site. Adopting the precautionary approach, good practice measures to avoid impacts on badger and hedgehog will be utilised, comprising appropriate storage of materials to avoid creating refugia, and including ramps in trenches overnight. Full details of protection measures should be included in a CEMP.

Operational impacts

- 6.4.2 The site will remain permeable to terrestrial mammals after development and there are no predicted operational impacts.
- 6.4.3 Overall, with the implementation of suitable mitigation during construction, no significant effects on hedgehog are predicted as a result of the development.

Table 4 Summary of mitigation measures

Important Ecological Features	Mitigation	Mechanism for securing	Residual effect
Foraging / commuting bats	Lighting plan	Planning condition for creation of a lighting plan	None
Great crested newt	Precautionary mitigation during construction. Register the site for District Level Licencing	District-Level licence agreement with Natural England	None
Hedgehog / badger	Include ramps in trenches overnight, appropriate storage of construction materials	Planning condition to follow recommendations in this report	None
Breeding birds	Timing of works and/or pre-works check for breeding birds.	Planning condition to follow recommendations in this report	None

7 ENHANCEMENTS

7.1 Due to the small size of the site and small scale of the development proposals there are limited opportunities to provide ecological enhancement. However, the following measures are recommended and can be detailed within an Ecological Enhancement Plan which can be secured by Planning Condition.

- Proposed areas of amenity grass should use a species mix with value for invertebrates, such as Emorsgate Seeds Flowering Lawn Mixture.
- Bat and Bird boxes should be installed on the proposed structure to increase roosting and nesting opportunities. Recommended boxes have been provided in Table 5.

Table 5 Recommended provision

Provision	Description	Installation
Vivara Pro UK Build-in WoodStone Bat Box 	The Build-in WoodStone® Bat Box has been specifically designed to fit into the cavity of house walls, with the entrance sitting flush with the outside bricks. It has been redesigned to match the standard brick size in the UK. Manufactured from hard-wearing woodstone® and plywood with removable wooden side panels so that several boxes can be placed side by side to create one large chamber, the Woodstone® Bat Box is a great choice for new-builds and renovations. Woodstone® is designed to last for years. It is breathable so there will be no problems with condensation and woodstone® maintains a consistent temperature inside, providing excellent insulation for roosting bats. Thanks to the sloping entrance ramp, droppings will fall out of the box, creating a maintenance-free habitat for a variety of bat species	Two boxes should be installed on the southwest face into the garden and on the northwest face. The box will be positioned at least 2.5m above ground level and away from artificial light sources.
Habibat Starling Nest Brick 	The Starling Box is a large, solid box made of insulating concrete with an internal nesting space which can be incorporated into the fabric of a building as it is built or renovated. This box is faced in standard Staffordshire Smooth brick (Red or Blue), and is ideal for new builds. It is supplied unpainted so it can be matched as closely as possible to the building. It is also available as an unfaced box which can be rendered to match your building.	This box should be installed in the southwest facing into the garden The box will be positioned between 1.5m and 3m off the ground. It will be positioned near vegetation to provide cover.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 The site comprises predominantly modified garden habitat of low ecological value, together with a boundary hedgerow and pond that provide the main ecological interest. The pond supports great crested newt and the hedgerow provides a commuting and foraging corridor for bats; both features are retained and protected within the development layout.
- 8.1.2 Potential impacts relate primarily to construction activities and artificial lighting. These will be appropriately managed through a sensitive lighting strategy, great crested newt licensing and construction mitigation, and standard good practice measures to protect nesting birds and terrestrial mammals.
- 8.1.3 With the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measures set out in this report, the development is not expected to result in significant adverse ecological effects and is considered compliant with relevant planning policy and wildlife legislation.

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APPENDIX 1 POLICY

National Policy - NPPF

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** (published Dec 2024) sets out national planning policy, including policies of relevance to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Policies of relevance to the proposed development (parts of paragraphs 187, 192, 193 and 198) have been summarised below:

Para 187: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*
- 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;*

Para 192: To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

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

Para 193: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles, notably:

- 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;*
- 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*

Para 198: c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Local Policy

The relevant policies from the Bath and North-East Somerset Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan incorporating the Local Plan Partial Update (2023) are given below:

Policy NE1: Development and Green Infrastructure

Development will be permitted provided:

- a) It can be demonstrated that the proposed development design will maximise opportunities for effective and functional Green Infrastructure (GI) focusing on the use of nature-based solutions to deliver community benefits;
- b) It does not adversely affect the integrity and value of strategic GI corridors; and
- c) The scheme makes a positive contribution to the GI network through the creation, enhancement and management of new, and existing GI assets, linking to active travel routes where feasible to improve accessibility and where possible creating or enhancing linkages with existing or in-development strategic GI projects.

Policy NE3: Sites, Habitats and Species

Development resulting in significant harm to biodiversity will not be permitted. Harm to biodiversity must always first be avoided and minimised. Where avoidance of harm is not possible, mitigation, and as a last resort, compensation must be provided, to at least equivalent ecological value.

5) In all cases:

- a) Firstly, any harm to the nature conservation value of the site should be avoided where possible before mitigation and as a last resort compensation are considered
- b) Secondly, compensatory provision of at least equal nature conservation value is made for any outstanding harm, and
- d) Then, as appropriate:
 - I. Measures for the protection and recovery of priority species are made.
 - II. Provision is made for the management of retained and created habitat features.
 - III. Site lighting details are designed to avoid harm to nature conservation interests, including habitat connectivity and function as part of an ecological corridor.

For protected species this means:

Adverse impacts on European, UK protected species, UK Priority and locally important species must be avoided wherever possible.

- I. Subject to legal tests afforded to them, where applicable; and
- II. Otherwise, unless the need for and benefits of the proposed development clearly outweigh the loss; and
- III. Where impacts have been minimised; and

- IV. It can be demonstrated that it is possible to mitigate and compensate for any loss.

D5: Building Design

- e) Buildings and spaces should be designed to provide new or improved wildlife habitats and features (e.g. spaces for swifts and swallows; bat bricks; new hedgerows and other green infrastructure).

D8: Lighting

- 1) Proposals for artificial lighting will only be permitted where:
 - b) It can be demonstrated that additional lighting on site will have no detrimental impact on visual and residential amenity, the historic environment or local ecology.
- 2) Lighting must be designed to protect wildlife habitats following best practice as set out in current guidance including B&NES 2018 Waterspace Design Guidance and Bats and Lighting in the UK (ILP, 2018)

APPENDIX 2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Bats

Habitats

The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bats. This assessment was also contextualized through examination of suitable habitat and features in the wider landscape and possible flight-lines across the proposed site following natural linear features such as hedgerows.

Ground level assessment of trees

The methodology draws upon guidance within Collins (2023) and the Bat Tree Habitat Key (2018). The surveys were undertaken using binoculars and a high-powered torch to view features from the ground. Details on the potential roosting features were recorded as well as information to identify the specific trees.

Potential roosting features on trees were identified as any feature within a tree that could provide shelter for a roosting bat. These features result from the following three mechanisms:

- Disease and decay;
- Damage; and,
- Associations.

Tree with no potential roost features were assessed as having 'negligible' potential for roosting bats and no further surveys were carried out. Potential features have been categorised following the guidelines set out in table 6.2 (extract below):

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of 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.

Figure 8 Bat activity results

Time	Species	Observation
21:53	Common pipistrelle	Bat commuting observed crossing the site
~22:00 onwards	Soprano pipistrelle and common pipsitrelle	Continuous foraging activity by soprano pipistrelle over the pond with frequent social calls. A common pipistrelle joined at 22:04. At least four bats recorded foraging simultaneously

Time	Species	Observation
22:17	Soprano pipistrelle	Activity reduced; bats continued commuting along the hedgerow with occasional looping flights into the garden.
22:35	Myotis species	Brief bat pass recorded near the hot tub. A small number of bats also observed briefly foraging over the pond.
22:35	Noctule	Bat commuting flight recorded travelling north to south across the garden.
22:40	Serotine	Bat commuting east to west along the hedgerow.
22:51	Myotis species	Very brief bat call recorded, most likely <i>Myotis</i> species.

Figure 9 Environmental data 03/07/25

Date	03/07/2025	
Sunset	21:27	
Start/end time	21:25	23:30
Temperature (°C)	16	14
Humidity (%)	73	77
Cloud cover (oktas)	1/8	2/8
Avg. wind speed (Beaufort scale)	Light air	Light breeze
Rain	None	

Client:
Rectory Lodge, Steph Green, Ethos Environmental Planning
1040079-SG-Ethos, Rectory Lodge, version 1



RSK ADAS Ltd
Spring Lodge
172 Chester Road
Helsby
WA6 0AR

Tel: 01159 229249
Email: Helen.Rees@adas.co.uk

www.adas.uk

Sample ID: ADAS-9675			
Client Identifier: Rectory Lodge		Grid references/coordinates: Not Supplied	
Description: pond water samples in preservative		Condition on Receipt: Good	
Date of Receipt : 02/07/2025		Volume: Passed	
Determinant	Result	Method	Date of Analysis
Inhibition Control [†]	2 of 2	Real Time PCR	08/07/2025
Degradation Control [§]	Within limits	Real Time PCR	08/07/2025
Great Crested Newt*	12 of 12 (positive)	Real Time PCR	08/07/2025
Negative PCR Control (Nuclease Free Water)	0 of 4	Real Time PCR	As above for GCN
Positive PCR Control (GCN DNA 10 ⁻⁴ ng/μL) [#]	4 of 4	Real Time PCR	As above for GCN
Report Prepared by:	Dr Helen Rees	Report Issued by:	Dr Ben Maddison
Signed:		Signed:	
Position:	Director: Biotechnology	Position:	MD: Biotechnology
Date of preparation:	09/07/2025	Date of issue:	09/07/2025

eDNA analysis was carried out in accordance with the stipulated methodology found in the Technical Advice Note (WC1067 Appendix 5 Technical Advice Note) published by DEFRA and adopted by Natural England.

** If all PCR controls and extraction blanks give the expected results a sample is considered: negative for GCN if all of the replicates are negative; positive for GCN if one or more of the replicates are positive.*

[†] Recorded as the number of positive replicate reactions at expected C_t value. If the expected C_t value is not

[§] No degradation is expected within time frame of kit preparation, sample collection and analysis.

[#] Additional positive controls (10⁻¹, 10⁻², 10⁻³ ng/μL) are also routinely run, results not shown here.

Surveyors on Site

Table 6 Surveyors

Ecologist	Position	Qualifications/ Licences	Experience	Role
Jim Philips	Managing Director	MSc BSc (Hons), MCIEEM Class 2 Bat Licence Class 1 GCN Licence	Jim's experience in ecology covers a wide range of projects and clients and his focus is on interpreting relevant policy and legislation to ensure projects are delivered efficiently and meet the needs of the client. He holds survey licenses for bats and great crested newts in England and Wales and is a registered consultant on Natural England's Bat Low Impact Class Licence (BLICL) and Earned Recognition (ER).	GCN eDNA survey, walkover, report checker
Rachel Fayers	Principal Ecologist & Business Development Manager	BSc (Hons), ACIEEM Class 2 Bat Licence (NE) Class 1 GCN Licence (NE)	Rachel is a practised ecologist and conservationist with over 15 years' experience in the field and is a licensed bat and GCN worker. Rachel is a competent field ecologist and writes and checks a full suite of ecology reports. More recently she has also taken on a role looking at business development opportunities for Ethos whilst still keeping up with practical and reporting skills.	Report author
Becky Morris	Ecologist	PhD, DIC, MSc, BSc, MCIEEM Class 1 GCN Licence	Becky has sixteen years' experience working as an Ecological Consultant, specialising in botanical surveys. She holds a great crested newt survey licence.	Bat activity survey, UKHab survey