
NEW DWELLINGS AT COMMON FARM, QUEMERFORD, WILTSHIRE

ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

On behalf of

SAM AND LUCY MILLER

Final Report

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Prepared by



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1 Introduction

The clients are seeking planning permission from Wiltshire Council to construct two self-build semi-detached residential dwellings on a small plot of land, approximately 0.1ha, at Common Farm, Quemerford, Wiltshire, SN11 0BE. The design proposals include:

- ❖ Two new bungalows, which integrate wildlife features;
- ❖ New vehicle driveway;
- ❖ Removal of a maximum of two poplar trees to facilitate the new driveway;
- ❖ Residential planting including new hedges and trees; and
- ❖ Wider landscape planting in field north of development plot including native hedgerow and woodland / groups of trees.

The study area encompasses one small plot (now used as a site compound area), which is bounded by the existing access track to Common Farm to the west, arable land to the east, residential dwellings to the south and grass paddock to the north. The existing southern boundary hedgerow will be retained and protected.

Plans and photographs showing the existing site and the proposed development are presented in Appendices A and B.

As part of the planning process an ecological survey and appraisal of the development site and proposed development has been undertaken. This report contains appropriate ecological baseline information, and an appraisal of predicted, potential impacts on designations and protected/notable habitats and species. Any potential adverse impacts are addressed with proposals for mitigation/compensation, while opportunities to provide ecological enhancement are also identified.

Malford Environmental Consulting was commissioned to undertake the ecological survey and appraisal of the site and proposed development, and to provide a report to fulfil the requirements of nature conservation legislation and planning guidance. The ecological work was undertaken by Dr Stephen Dangerfield who has over 30 years' professional experience, is a Chartered Environmentalist, a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, and holds Natural England (EPS) survey licences for great crested newt and bats.

This planning application is exempt from formal Biodiversity Net Gain as it covers:

- **a development of two self-build dwellings (as defined in Section 1 (A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015) on land less than 0.5ha.**

2 Methodology

2.1 Desk-based study

A review of OS maps and satellite imagery was undertaken to establish the local context within which the study area sits and to identify whether any natural features of interest, particularly ponds, were located within 250m of the site.

Records of designated sites and protected/notable species from the last twenty-five years within a 1km radius of the development site were obtained from the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC).

The Magic map (www.magic.defra.gov.uk) was reviewed for statutory designated nature conservation sites within a 5km radius of the study area. This search zone is considered to be appropriate for the location and size of proposed development, and allows notable and relevant sites, habitats and species to be highlighted and taken into consideration through the ecological appraisal process.

2.2 Field survey

A habitat and ecological survey of the development plot and connecting habitat was first undertaken on 19th April 2022 and again on 11th February 2026, with industry-standard habitat categorisation nomenclature used to describe the site. The survey focused on:

- ❖ A habitat survey to determine type, quality and extent of habitats present. Botanical lists of each habitat type were recorded as far as possible given the seasonal constraints. Rare/scarce and invasive plants were highlighted if found.
- ❖ A survey to determine the presence of, or the potential for the study area to support, protected and rare/scarce animals, which included looking for the following:
 - Potential/actual badger (*Meles meles*) setts, as well as latrines, tracks and other signs (foraging holes, hairs, etc);
 - Potential reptile habitat and terrestrial habitat for amphibians, particularly great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*);
 - Waterbodies that had the potential to support great crested newt or water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*); and
 - Potential for breeding birds to use the site.
- ❖ An assessment of trees within the application site for the potential to support roosting bats. The tree potential bat roost survey was undertaken by licensed bat surveyors in accordance with best practice bat survey guidelines^{1,2}.

¹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London

² Andrews, H (2018). *Bat Roosts in Trees – A Guide to Identification and Assessment for Tree-Care and Ecology Professionals*. Pelagic Publishing

The aim of a habitat and ecological survey is to identify the habitat types present and their relevance to nature conservation, based on species assemblage and structural diversity. It is also to identify the actual or likelihood of protected species inhabiting or frequenting the study area based on field signs or habitat quality/structure etc. The identification of protected, sensitive, threatened or scarce habitat or species within the development site or potentially affected by the proposed development could trigger the need for, and subsequent recommendation, for further Phase 2 surveys at an appropriate time of year. For this particular project no further ecological surveys were considered appropriate or necessary.

2.3 Impact appraisal

2.3.1 Appraisal process

The ecological appraisal of the proposed development is undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine³, which are in full accordance with the mandatory requirements of the UK EIA Regulations. The ecological assessment will seek to obtain the best possible biodiversity outcomes by integrating the following key principles:

- ❖ **Avoidance:** seek options that avoid harm to ecological features (for example, by locating on an alternative site).
- ❖ **Mitigation:** Adverse effects should be avoided or minimised through mitigation measures, either through the design of the project or subsequent measures that can be guaranteed (for example, through a condition or planning obligation).
- ❖ **Compensation:** Where there are significant residual adverse ecological effects despite the mitigation proposed, these should be offset by appropriate compensatory measures.
- ❖ **Enhancements:** Seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity over and above requirements for avoidance, mitigation or compensation.

2.3.2 Defining important ecological receptors and value

The CIEEM EcIA guidelines state that one of the key challenges in EcIA is to decide which ecological features (habitats, species, ecosystems and their functions/processes) are important and should be subject to detailed assessment. Such ecological features will be those that are considered to be important and potentially affected by the project. It is not necessary to carry out detailed assessment of features that are sufficiently widespread, unthreatened and resilient to project impacts and will remain viable and sustainable.

However, effort should be made to safeguard biodiversity in its entirety, as emphasised by the Convention on Biological Diversity and developed in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020. The EU Strategy and national policy documents emphasise the need to achieve no net loss of biodiversity and enhancement of biodiversity.

³ CIEEM (2018). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

The importance of an ecological feature will be considered within a defined geographical context. The following frame of reference will be used:

- ❖ International and European
- ❖ National
- ❖ Regional
- ❖ Metropolitan, County, vice-county or other local authority-wide area
- ❖ River Basin District
- ❖ Estuarine system / Coastal cell
- ❖ Local

Various approaches can be adopted for defining local importance, including assessment within a district, borough or parish context or within another locally defined area.

2.3.3 Characterising ecological effects

When describing ecological impacts and effects, reference should be made to the following characteristics as required:

- ❖ Positive or negative
- ❖ Extent
- ❖ Magnitude
- ❖ Duration
- ❖ Frequency and timing
- ❖ Reversibility

The assessment only needs to describe those characteristics relevant to understanding the ecological effect of the impacts and determining its significance.

2.3.4 Defining significance of ecological effects

The CIEEM guidelines define an 'ecologically significant effect' as an effect that either supports or undermines biodiversity conservation objectives for 'important ecological features' or for biodiversity in general. Significant effects should be qualified with reference to an appropriate geographic scale. However, the scale of significance of an effect may not be the same as the geographic context in which the feature is considered important.

Significant effects encompass impacts on structure and function of defined sites, habitats or ecosystems and the conservation status of habitats and species (including extent, abundance and distribution). A significant effect is sufficiently important to require assessment and reporting so that the decision maker is adequately informed of the environmental consequences of permitting a project.

2.4 Biodiversity Net Gain exemption

The Environment Act 2021 covers targets, plans and policies for, *inter alia*, 'improving the natural environment' and 'nature and biodiversity'.

The Act brings in new requirements in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Environment Act establishes the precedent for achieving a biodiversity gain as a condition of planning permission and establishes that a biodiversity gain is met if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat by at least 10%. Furthermore, any habitat enhancement must be maintained for at least 30 years after the development is completed.

The UK Government have set out the types of development that are exempt from mandatory BNG requirements (www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments). This planning application is exempt from BNG as it falls below the threshold in that it is a development of less than 10 self-build dwellings (as defined in Section 1 (A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015) on land less than 0.5ha.

2.5 Survey limitations

There are no constraints on the ecological survey. The development site was fully accessible, and weather conditions during the survey were good (partial cloud, clear and dry at time of survey).

It is concluded that the level of survey conducted is sufficient to categorise the habitats, establish likelihood of presence of protected / notable species, and as such underpin this ecological appraisal.

3 Planning Policy

3.1 National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024, requires that the planning system should conserve and enhance the natural environment (Section 15) by, *inter alia*, ‘protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value’ and ‘minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures’ (para 187).

To protect and enhance biodiversity, plans should ‘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’, ‘promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the restoration and recovery of priority species’ and ‘identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity’ (para 192).

Local planning authorities should apply the following principles (para 193):

- a) If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any border 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 or ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements 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.

3.2 Wiltshire

The Wiltshire Core Strategy (Adopted January 2015) sets out the relevant policies relevant to biodiversity, as follows:

Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and geodiversity

Protection

Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.

Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraph 6.70 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity enhancement

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

Local sites

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

- i. Cannot reasonably be avoided
- ii. Are reduced as far as possible
- iii. Are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest and
- iv. Where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements.

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

4 Baseline Conditions

4.1 Designations

The development site is not covered by any local, national or European nature conservation designation.

There is one locally designated site within 1km, which is Calne Without Meadows Local Wildlife Site (Ref. SU06.001) covering 1.49ha of wet meadow and pond along the River Marsden. This is located 450m southwest of the development site and is physically separated by the busy A4 road and residential development. This site is not relevant for this study.

There are no national nature conservation designations within 2km of the development site, and no European nature conservation designations within 5km of the development site.

Designated sites are not relevant for this study and are not discussed further in this report.

The development site is not located within a Bat Consultation Zone and is therefore not within a potential core foraging area for a bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

4.2 Habitats and botany

4.2.1 Introduction

The development plot is bounded by: existing residential property to the south; the farm access road, double row of poplar trees and residential property (under construction, planning ref. PL/2024/09508) to the west; arable land to the east; and grass paddock to the north.

There are no ponds within the development plot and there are no ponds shown on the 1:25,000 OS map located within 250m of the development site. The nearest ponds are located 450m+ to the south and southwest of the development site and are physically separated by the busy A4 road and residential development; ponds are not relevant for this study.

One nationally notable plant, dwarf spurge (*Euphorbia exigua*), and two county notable plants, narrow-leaved everlasting pea (*Lathyrus sylvestris*) and spotted medick (*Medicago arabica*), have been recorded within 1km of the development site.

Photographs of the development site are shown in Appendix B.

4.2.2 Development plot

In 2022 much of the development plot was being used for storage of material associated with construction of residential houses to the west. The site was compacted ground with spoil heap / stored material (e.g. clinker, topsoil, concrete pipes), some of which had been colonised by grasses and ephemeral/ruderal vegetation. This included the paddock grasses (see below) as well as small amounts of plants associated with disturbed ground such as bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg), nettle (*Urtica dioica*), red dead nettle (*Lamium purpureum*), dock/thistle, cleavers (*Galium aparine*), silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), speedwell (*Veronica* sp), field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) and willowherb (*Epilobium* sp).

To the north was poor semi-improved grassland, which was horse and/or alpaca grazed, with a restricted botanical diversity. The grass is dominated by common grasses including meadow foxtail (*Alepocuris pratensis*), rough meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*), creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and cock's-foot (*Dactylus glomerata*). Forbs include creeping and meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*, *R. acris*), clover (*Trifolium* sp), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), black medick (*Medicago lupulina*), common vetch (*Vicia sativa*), dissected-leaved crane's-bill (*Geranium dissectum*), lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) and cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*). The grassland continues northwards encompassing a further ca. 0.4ha – which is under the control of the applicant.

The road verges comprise the same grassland but are maintained very low through regular mowing.

In 2026 the development plot is being used as a site compound for the construction of two new residential dwellings located immediately west of the access road (planning ref. PL/2024/09508). The site comprises bare ground / compacted clinker with storage heaps, welfare facilities and storage of vehicles / materials. The northern fringe is species-poor grassland dominated by a few common grasses (as described above) and forbs such as cleavers, red dead nettle and dissected-leaved crane's-bill.

4.2.3 Boundary trees and hedge

There is a double row of Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra 'Italica'*) along each side of the existing access road to Common Farm, and up to two of these trees will be removed to facilitate the vehicle access / driveway into the new development plot.

Along the southern boundary of the development plot is a recently planted hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) garden boundary hedge. This will be retained and protected with an appropriate stand off to protect the root zone.

The eastern boundary is post and wire fence, while the development plot is now contained within Herris security fencing.

4.2.4 Notable habitats or plants

The habitat directly affected by the proposed development is of negligible ecological value. Plants recorded are very common/widespread species, and no notifiable invasive plant species were recorded.

4.3 Bats

There are records of common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*), *Myotis* bats, serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*) and lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) bats located within 1km of the development site.

There are no structures within the development site. The maximum of two Lombardy poplar trees to be removed to facilitate the new driveway do not support any potential bat roosting features (Category 1). Roosting bats are not a constraint for the development, and no further survey is required.

The habitat directly affected by the proposals is of negligible value for foraging bats being a small site compound comprising bare / compacted ground. The existing western boundary tree line and southern boundary hedgerow will be retained *in situ*, while new hedges will be incorporated in the scheme design both around and within the development plot as well as along the boundaries of the northern paddock. It is concluded that there are no predicted effects on foraging/commuting bats associated with habitat loss, and therefore bat activity transect surveys are not considered necessary, which is in accordance with BCT guidelines. Nevertheless, given the rural setting of the site, a sensitive lighting design for the new houses is recommended.

4.4 Other mammals

There are records of badger (*Meles meles*) and hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within 1km of the development site.

There is no evidence of any other protected or notable mammal species found within or immediately adjacent to the development plot. No badger (*Meles meles*) sett was found and no confirmed signs of badger (e.g. latrines) were observed during the survey.

There are no habitats suitable for supporting water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), otter (*Lutra lutra*) or hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*).

Protected mammals are not a constraint for the proposed development, and no further survey is required. Although given the rural setting there is a low potential for locally notable animals, especially hedgehog that has been recorded in the local vicinity, to traverse the site (especially along the southern boundary hedge). Therefore, management of any excavations during the construction phase to ensure no accidental injury to animals is recommended as a purely precautionary approach.

4.5 Birds

There are records of farmland / urban birds within 1km of the development site including skylark (*Alauda arvensis*), linnet (*Linaria cannabina*), yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*). Birds of prey include barn owl (*Tyto alba*), red kite (*Milvus milvus*) and peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*).

The development plot is totally unsuitable for supporting ground nesting birds being a small, enclosed site compound.

There is no evidence that the two poplar trees, which may be removed to facilitate the development, have ever supported nesting birds and no old nests were seen in the trees during the recent February 2026 survey. There are no other trees, shrubs or hedge being removed to facilitate the development.

Nesting birds are not a constraint for the proposed development, and no further survey or mitigation is required.

4.6 Reptiles

There are no records of reptiles associated with the development site or immediate surrounding environs. There are records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) from Quemerford Mill, which is located about 500m away from the development site and associated with the River Marsden valley, but this site is physically separated and disconnected from the development site by the busy A4 road and residential development.

The land within the development plot comprises a bare / compacted ground used as a site compound with a very small fringing area of species-poor grassland, which suffers disturbance, and the site therefore has no-negligible potential to support reptiles.

Reptiles are not a constraint for the development, and no further survey or mitigation is required.

4.7 Amphibians

There are no records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) associated with the development site or immediate surrounding environs, and there are no ponds within the development plot or within 250m of the site.

There are records of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) and toad (*Bufo bufo*) from Quemerford Mill, which is located about 500m away from the development site and associated with the River Marsden valley, but this site is physically separated and disconnected from the development site by the busy A4 road and residential development.

The land within the development plot comprises a bare / compacted ground used as a site compound with a very small fringing area of species-poor grassland, which suffers disturbance, and the site therefore has no-negligible potential to support amphibians in their terrestrial phase.

Great crested newt and other amphibians are not a constraint for the development, and no further survey, mitigation or licensing is required.

5 Conclusion

The development site encompasses a site compound comprising bare / compacted ground used for storage of materials, equipment, vehicles and welfare facilities with a very small fringing area of species-poor grassland, a garden hedge along the southern boundary and a row of Lombardy poplar trees along the western boundary. These habitats are not notable / important, scarce or sensitive. The existing development plot boundary hedge will be retained and protected, while a maximum of two Lombardy poplar trees will be removed to facilitate the new driveway. Plants recorded on site are very common and widespread. No invasive plant species are present.

The maximum of two poplar trees scheduled for removal are not suitable for use by roosting bats. There are no protected / notable mammals inhabiting or using the development plot, but given the rural setting there is a low potential for locally notable animals to move or forage through the site – especially hedgehog along the southern boundary hedge. Consequently, the development has low potential to adversely affect individual foraging animals (e.g. through entrapment), but this potential impact will be removed through implementing appropriate precautionary mitigation (see Section 6.1) and ensuring that external lighting on the new houses is sensitively designed (see Section 6.2).

The development site is totally unsuitable for supporting ground nesting birds, reptiles and great crested newt / amphibians. The two poplar trees have not supported nesting birds and the southern boundary garden hedge will be retained. It is considered that the integrity of any surrounding habitats, communities or species will have negligible-very low reliance upon the habitat associated within the development site.

In accordance with national and local biodiversity planning policy and CIEEM best practice ecological impact assessment guidelines, adverse ecological impacts have been completely removed or significantly reduced by appropriately siting the proposed development within habitat of negligible ecological value.

Ecological enhancement features that will be integrated into the new houses and gardens as well as wider habitat enhancements, which provide an overall biodiversity gain in accordance with national and local policies, are discussed in Sections 6.3 to 6.6.

6 Mitigation and Enhancement

6.1 Protecting mammals during construction

There will be the need for excavations, trenches, pits or pipes to be created or installed as part of the development construction. Therefore, to ensure protection of any common mammals, potentially including hedgehog, that may traverse the site during the construction phase the following actions will be implemented:

- ❖ Any excavations that need to be left overnight will either be fully covered, appropriately profiled (i.e. 1 in 2) or fitted with a ramp at the end of each working day to ensure that any animals that enter the excavation / hole can safely escape.
- ❖ Any open pipework with an outside diameter of greater than 120 mm will be covered at the end of each working day to prevent animals entering / becoming trapped within the pipe.
- ❖ Any excavations or pipes left overnight will be inspected last thing at the end of the working day and first thing the next morning, and if an animal is found an ecologist will be contacted.

6.2 Lighting design for new houses

New residential development should aim to limit the impact of light pollution by keeping external lighting on the new houses to a minimum (in terms of coverage, use and type / luminosity), and directed away from the integrated bat roosting brick (see Section 6.3), to ensure that future ambient night-time light levels are maintained at a low level.

The new houses should restrict the location of external lighting, for example to just doorways, and should be designed in compliance with guidelines on Bats and Lighting in the UK⁴ to ensure significant adverse impact on bats is minimised to an acceptable level. This could include the following elements:

- ❖ Using low powered LED lighting to minimise/avoid ultraviolet and infrared emissions and which have a sharp cut-off;
- ❖ Minimising outward light spill and avoiding upward light spill through the correct positioning of downward pointing luminaires and/or use of shields/hoods; and
- ❖ Limiting the timing of external lighting use, preferably with lights set on a motion detector, ensuring lights are only used as and when required, and ensuring a long period of complete darkness during each night.

⁴ Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018). *Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (Guidance Note 08/18)*. Bats and the built environment series.

6.3 Bat roost boxes

To provide new roosting habitat for crevice-dwelling bats a bat roosting brick will be incorporated into the new development. The bat brick will be integrated into the fabric of an east-facing elevation, with the bat brick placed as high above the ground as possible (e.g. at the apex of a gable elevation) – see Appendix A. This location provides sufficient height and warmth.



A range of bat bricks can be viewed on-line (e.g. www.nhbs.com or www.wildcare.co.uk) with a 'Habibat' plain and brick-faced bat tube shown here. These tubes can be integrated and then faced with render, brick or stone. This or equivalent should be used depending on availability at time of purchase.

Clear lines of flight to the bat tube entrance will be maintained, and no external lighting must be used adjacent to or shine directly at the entrance slot (see Section 6.2)

6.4 Bird nesting boxes

A pair of swift nesting boxes will be incorporated into the new development. Integrated nest-boxes, i.e. ones integrated into the fabric of an external wall, will be used. Swift nest boxes will be installed on the west-facing side elevation near the apex of gable – see Appendix A. This location provide sufficient height and shelter from direct sunlight.

The provision of swift boxes recognises the fact that swift populations are in decline and therefore the scheme aims to provide additional breeding sites for this species. Swift nesting boxes are also readily used by a range of other small passerine birds such as house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and are seen as a 'universal bird box' for new development.

A range of alternative nest boxes are available and can be viewed on-line (for example www.nhbs.com or www.wildcare.co.uk), with a Vivara Pro Cambridge swift box (chamber and entrance brick) is shown here. This or an equivalent should be used.



6.5 New garden hedge and tree planting

The new development will include new mixed native hedges along the western, northern and eastern boundaries of the development plot.

The new development will include new domestic hedge to separate the two plots.

The new development will include native specimen or native cultivar trees within and around the boundaries of the development plot.

The new boundary hedges will include a mix of eight native species, the garden hedge could be single species such as beech, and the trees will include a mix of six native / native cultivar varieties as shown on the Proposed Site Plan (Drawing No. 2520.03.02 Rev: 27/11/2025) and the Landscape Parameters Plan (Drawing No. WHL-1958-03) - see Appendix A.

6.6 Wider landscape planting and management

The proposed scheme will include a continuation of the new mixed native hedges along the western and eastern boundaries of the northern grass field.

The proposed scheme will include planting of groups of native trees within the northern grass field.

The retained northern grass field could be managed as a traditional hay meadow (i.e. annual late summer cut with aftermath grazing) while maintaining the field margins as a long sward throughout the growing season to encourage wildlife, particularly farmland birds.

The hedges will include a mix of eight native species, and the trees will include a mix of native species such as oak, field maple, hornbeam, horse chestnut etc., as shown on the Landscape Parameters Plan (Drawing No. WHL-1958-03) - see Appendix A.

7 Residual Effects

In accordance with biodiversity planning policies and CIEEM best practice guidelines adverse ecological impacts have been completely removed or significantly reduced by the correct positioning and design of the proposed new houses, which impacts habitats of negligible – very low ecological value.

The development is proposed within an existing site compound and therefore the only residual adverse ecological impact is the removal of a maximum of two Lombardy poplar trees to facilitate the new driveway. This residual adverse impact is not considered to be significant.

As part of the scheme design and landscaping new mixed native hedge around the development plot and wider grass field, new domestic hedge within the development plot, native / native cultivar trees within the development plot and wider grassland, one integrated bat roosting box and two integrated swift nesting boxes will be planted or installed. Furthermore, the northern grass field could be managed as a traditional hay meadow.

The new habitats will enhance the site for a range of wildlife including protected/notable species found in the local landscape including invertebrates, birds and small mammals.

The proposed development will not alter the functioning of the retained habitats and, critically, the scheme design and new planting/habitat creation will significantly enhance the overall habitat and structural diversity found within and adjacent to the development site. This will contribute to biodiversity targets and benefit a range of local wildlife species and groups.

Given the absence of a significant residual ecological impact associated with the proposed development combined with appropriate habitat creation/enhancement that enhances the development plot and wider habitat for a range of wildlife, the residual ecological effect of the proposed development is concluded to be positive in a Local context.

The proposed development complies with both national and local planning policies (NPPF and Wiltshire Council Core Policy 50) to maintain and enhance biodiversity (providing an overall biodiversity gain), in particular for those habitats and species found within or adjacent to the development site area and some which are identified as priorities in the UK and Wiltshire.

Appendix A Proposed Scheme and Landscape Plans





KEY:

- Site
- Other land under the applicant's control

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Appendix B Site Photographs



Development plot looking north (left) and east (right) in April 2022



Development plot looking north in February 2026



Development plot looking east (left) and south (right) in February 2026



Southern boundary of the development plot with retained garden hornbeam hedge



Row of Lombardy poplar trees along Common Farm access road, with the end one or two trees removed to facilitate the new driveway into the development plot