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Ecological Impact Assessment

Mill Farm Lodge
Hill Deverill
BA12 7EF

February 2026

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1.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2.	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	5
	Background	5
3.	LEGISLATION & POLICY	7
	General Wildlife Legislation	7
	Bat Legislation	7
	National Planning Policy	8
	Local Planning Policy	10
	Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan	11
4.	METHODOLOGY	12
	Desk Study	12
	Habitat Walkover Survey	12
	Building Inspection	13
	Limitations	14
5.	SURVEY RESULTS	15
	Desk Study	15
	Habitat Walkover Survey	17
	Protected Species	20
6.	IMPACT ASSESSMENT	26
	Designated Sites and Priority Habitats	26
	Habitats	26
	Protected Species	26
7.	REFERENCES	32
	APPENDICES	34

QUALITY CONTROL		
The information which we have prepared and provided is true, and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct.		
Prepared by	Assistant Ecologist Jess Marshall BSc (Hons) MSc	26.02.2026
Approved by	Principal Ecologist Olatz Gartzia BSc MSc ACIEEM	27.02.2026
This report remains valid for 2 years from date of issue. Survey data are valid for 12-18 months from the date the survey was undertaken.		

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The views and opinions contained within the document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to works.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Darwin Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Mr O. Hurd and Ms H. Carter to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of proposals for the buildings and habitats at Mill Farm Lodge, Hill Deverill, BA12 7EF. The assessment was required to support a planning application for the removal of a temporary dwelling and replacement with a permanent dwelling and was informed by a desk study, habitat walkover survey, and external building inspection.
- 1.2. During the habitat walkover survey, the habitats recorded on site comprised modified grassland, non-native and ornamental hedgerow, and artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface.
- 1.3. There was one building on site, which consisted a detached single-storey prefabricated residential dwelling. During the building inspection, the building was assessed as having **negligible potential** to support roosting bats, due to the absence of crevice features externally and no loft void internally.
- 1.4. Habitats and discrete features within the application site provide moderate suitability for nesting birds, common reptiles and amphibians, badgers and hedgehogs, and invertebrates. Due to the size and nature of the development, no further surveys are recommended apart from a pre-commencement site check, if the plans change to remove the hedgerow, trees or habitat piles to the north of the site.
- 1.5. Impacts to the above protected species will come mainly from the construction phase of the project. The visit should be used to identify the areas of habitat to be protected during the construction phase.
- 1.6. There is opportunity for enhancement within the application site. Specifically the installation of bat and bird boxes within the new building during construction. A sensitive lighting plan for bats has also been recommended.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

- 2.1. Darwin Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Mr O. Hurd and Ms H. Carter to undertake an EclA of proposals for the buildings and habitats at Mill Farm Lodge, Hill Deverill, BA12 7EF¹. The assessment was required to support a planning application for the removal of a temporary dwelling and replacement with a permanent dwelling, and was informed by a desk study, habitat walkover survey, and external building inspection.
- 2.2. The proposed drawings on which this assessment is based are provided at **Appendix 1, Proposed Plans**.
- 2.3. The external building inspection followed the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (2023).
- 2.4. The habitat walkover survey followed the Chartered Institute for Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017). Habitats on site were broadly mapped to a minimum of 25m² in accordance with current guidance from *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 UKHab Ltd (2023)*.
- 2.5. The subsequent EclA follows the CIEEM Guidelines for EclA in the UK and Ireland (2018).

Site Overview

- 2.6. The site is located in the small village of Hill Deverill in the county of Wiltshire, situated approximately 4km south of the town of Warminster, in the Wylde Valley. The site comprises a prefabricated single storey home within a grassland field, with farmland to the west (see **Figure 1**).
- 2.7. The wider landscape comprises residential, commercial and agricultural buildings, including a watercress farm. The River Wylde runs 90m east of the site, with a block of woodland, and the A350 runs approximately 140m north-west (see **Figure 2**).

Scope of Assessment

- 2.8. The process of EclA aims to identify, quantify and evaluate the potential effects of development-related or other proposed actions on habitats, species and ecosystems.
- 2.9. Potential effects on the following ecologically sensitive receptors have been considered during the EclA of Mill Farm Lodge:
 - Statutory and non-statutory designated sites; and
 - On-site habitats of intrinsic importance (such as buildings or discrete habitat features).

¹ Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference ST 86875 40634



Figure 1: Site location within the local landscape (Copyright Google Earth, February 2026)



Figure 2: Site location within the wider landscape (Copyright Google Earth, February 2026)

3. LEGISLATION & POLICY

General Wildlife Legislation

- 3.1. Wildlife in the United Kingdom (UK) is protected through European and national legislation, supported by national and local policy and guidance. Development can contribute to conservation and enhancement goals outlined by these various legislation and policy by retaining and protecting the most valuable ecological features within a site and incorporating enhancements to provide biodiversity net gain.
- 3.2. This section provides a brief summary of the principle legalisation and policy that triggers the requirement for preliminary and further ecological assessments in the UK. The presence of protected species within a site are a material consideration during the planning process. Preliminary and any necessary further ecological assessments provide an ecological baseline for a site and evaluation of the potential impact of proposals.
- 3.3. It is the responsibility of those involved with development works to ensure that the relevant legislation is complied with at every stage of a project. Such legislation applies even in the absence of related planning conditions or projects outside the scope of the usual planning process (i.e. permitted development projects or projects requiring Listed Building Consent only).

Bat Legislation

- 3.1. In England and Wales, all bat species and their roosts are legally protected under the European *Habitats Directive (1992)*; the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017)*; the *Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)*; the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000*; and the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006)*.
- 3.2. Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and noctule *Nyctalus noctula* bats are all species of principal importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.
- 3.3. You will be committing a criminal offence if you:
 - Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
 - Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
 - Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat; or
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

- 3.4. The government's statutory conservation advisory organisation, Natural England, is responsible for administering European Protected Species (EPS) licences that permit activities that would otherwise lead to an offence.
- 3.5. A licence can be obtained if the following three tests have been met:
- Regulation 53(9)(a) - there is "no satisfactory alternative" to the derogation, and;
 - Regulation 53(9)(b) - the derogation "will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range" and;
 - Regulation 53(2)(e) - the derogation is for the purposes of "preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment".

National Planning Policy

- 3.6. The *National Planning Policy Framework (2024)* aims to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' details what local planning policies should seek to consider with regard to planning applications.
- 3.7. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
- 187 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);
 - 187 b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - 187 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;
 - 188) Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and local designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement

of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries;

189) Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their settings should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

3.8. Specific policies regarding habitats and biodiversity comprise:

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.

193) 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 of Sites 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 feature 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; and

d) Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around development 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.

194) The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

a) Potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;

b) Listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and

c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.9. The local planning policy for the site is the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015). In particular, Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) provides guidelines for protection and enhancement of the natural environment and refers to the planning guidance for Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Wiltshire, designated for the presence of nationally important bat species.
- 3.10. Wiltshire County Council (WCC), Natural England (NE) and local experts and researchers have jointly prepared the Bat Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015). It is aimed at applicants, agents, consultants and planners involved producing and assessing development proposals in the landscapes surrounding Wiltshire's most sensitive bat roosting sites, which are protected by European wildlife legislation and applies to all types of developments that are subject to planning control.
- 3.11. The guidance gives details on how to mitigate any potential impacts on Wiltshire Bat SACs and to ensure that any potential issues are identified as early in the planning process as possible to prevent unnecessary delays to development projects. The guidance also outlines the ecological documents and plans, which should be submitted in support of planning applications, so as to ensure that the council has all the information required to undertake a reliable Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) should one be required.
- 3.12. In addition to policies relating to bat SACs, the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) includes Core Policy 51 (Landscape), which provides guidance for protecting, conserving and where

possible, enhancing landscape character, including locally distinctive patterns and species composition of natural features (such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and waterbodies). Core Policy 69 (Protection of the River Avon SAC) provides guidelines for the incorporation of measures during construction and operations to avoid and prevent pollution and to minimise disturbance effects.

Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan

- 3.13. The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan was published in 2002 and reviewed in 2008 by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and over 40 delivery partners who make up the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership. It includes habitat action plans for 11 of the most significant of the UK Priority Habitats in Wiltshire, which include woodland, wood-pasture, parkland and ancient trees, hedgerows, calcareous grassland, neutral grassland, traditional orchards, farmland habitats, built environment, standing open water and rivers, streams and associated habitats. In addition, a bat species action plan has also been included, covering all bat species found in Wiltshire, while other priority species have been included under the appropriate habitat action plans.
- 3.14. The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan species list includes species that have national priority and also species having local importance in Wiltshire including county notables. A total of 260 species have been included on the Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan species list.
- 3.15. The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan aims to achieve the following:
- Enable prioritisation and define actions for priority habitats and species in Wiltshire;
 - Create a plan of action that can be delivered through a partnership of statutory, private and third sector organisations;
 - Provide a baseline of current knowledge and a tool to help monitor key habitats and species; and
 - To link objectives, targets and actions to report nationally and enable conservation work carried out in Wiltshire to contribute to national targets and reporting.
- 3.16. In 2012, a landscape scale framework for conservation in Wiltshire was developed, identifying 11 Landscape Biodiversity Areas across Wiltshire and Swindon, made up of a number of priority habitats, designated sites and other areas of conservation significance. This aims to encourage landscape scale planning for species and habitat conservation across Wiltshire.

4. METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

- 4.1. A desk study was undertaken for designated sites, and protected species and habitat records within 2km of the site:
- The MagicMap website was reviewed, to obtain information on any designated sites of nature conservation interest within 2km of the site and details of any EPS licences issued within 1km, extended to 2km for bats;
 - The Wiltshire Council Planning Portal was searched for past and pending planning applications that may have associated ecological documents detailing results of bat surveys;
 - A data search was requested from Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) for non-statutory designated sites, and protected and notable species within 2km; and
 - Google Maps and Ordnance Survey (OS) Leisure Maps was utilised to view aerial photographs and maps to assess the ecological context of the site within the wider landscape.
- 4.2. Natural England has developed a tool to help assess the potential risks to SSSIs by proposed developments. These are known as 'Impact Risk Zones' (IRZs) and they define the area around a SSSI that could be sensitive to development, considering the particular sensitivities of the feature for which the site is designated.
- 4.3. The IRZs help inform whether a development proposal may affect a SSSI and if so, whether it is necessary for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to seek pre-application advice from Natural England. Information on the IRZs was determined from the MAGIC website to determine if the LPA is required to seek consultation for the current development.

Habitat Walkover Survey

- 4.4. Assistant Ecologist Jess Marshall BSc (Hons) MSc conducted a walkover survey at Mill Farm Lodge on 18th February 2026. The weather conditions at the time of the survey were light rain and wind approximately 4°C.
- 4.5. The walkover survey assessed habitats present within the application red line boundary for their potential to support protected species, including:
- Bats;
 - Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* and common amphibians;
 - Reptiles;
 - Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*;

- Other terrestrial mammals, including hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and badger *Meles meles*;
- Schedule 1 birds, including but not limited to; Barn Owl *Tyto alba*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* and Skylark *Alauda arvensis*
- Breeding birds; and
- Invertebrates.

4.6. As there is no running water within the site, in combination with their nationally sparse distribution, it is considered highly unlikely that white clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* would be using the site and they are therefore not considered further in this report.

4.7. The site was also searched for non-native, invasive plant species, with particular care to search for the most commonly occurring and problematic species, such as Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Indian balsam *Impatiens grandiflora* and giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*.

Building Inspection

4.8. Assistant Ecologist Jess Marshall BSc (Hons) MSc conducted an external building inspection at the site at Mill Farm Lodge on 18th February 2026 in accordance with the following methodology:

External Survey

4.9. An investigation was carried out of external features with potential for use by roosting bats, such as gaps under roof and ridge tiles, gaps at soffit boxes or fascias. A search for bat droppings was made beneath each potential entry/exit point identified where accessible. The surveyor used binoculars and powerful, low-heat LED torch.

Potential to support roosting bats

4.10. Each building was assessed for its potential to support roosting bats as detailed in **Table 1** below which is taken from the Bat Conservation Trust 2023 guidelines Table 4.1, Table 7.1 and Table 7.2.

Table 1: Roost classification from the Bat Conservation Trust (2023) guidelines.

Category	Description of roosting habitat	Number of surveys required
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No further surveys
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No further surveys

Table 1: Roost classification from the Bat Conservation Trust (2023) guidelines.

Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by large numbers of bats.	Single survey between May to August
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two surveys with at least one survey between May to August.
High / Confirmed	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by a larger number of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts.	Three surveys with at least two surveys between May to August.

Limitations

- 4.11. Ecological surveys are limited by factors that affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of the year, weather, and migration patterns. The survey was undertaken in February which is a sub-optimal period for identifying many native plant species as many plant species have not grown into recognisable growth forms. Considering the context of the site, the nature of the site, and the habitats to be impacted by the proposals, it is considered unlikely that this would have a significant impact on the reliability of the survey results or conclusions.
- 4.12. Many species of bat in the UK are crevice-dwelling, and bats or signs of bats can be difficult to find within a building.
- 4.13. No other limitations were encountered, or assumptions made during either the desk study or the field survey and it is considered that with the access gained and recording undertaken an accurate assessment of the site's ecological importance has been made.

5. SURVEY RESULTS

Desk Study

- 5.1. There is one statutory designated site within 2km of the application site, and nine non-statutory designated sites within 2km.
- 5.2. There is one statutory designated site within 2km of the site, namely the River Avon System SSSI and SAC, which is detailed in **Table 2**. There are no other internationally designated SACs, SPAs and Ramsar Sites within 5km, but the Salisbury Plain SAC is 5.4km north-east and the site lies within the 6.4km buffer for this designated site.

Table 2: Statutory designated sites within 5km of the site.

Designated sites	Name and designation type	Reason for designation	Approximate distance from site
Within Site Boundaries	The site falls within the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB. The area is designated for its valuable wildlife, habitats, geology and heritage. It is a diverse landscape offering chalk grassland, ancient woodlands, chalk escarpments, downland hillsides and chalk river valleys.		
Within 2km of Site	River Avon System SSSI/SAC	The River Avon and its tributaries are of national and international importance for their wildlife communities. The Avon is richer and more varied than in most chalk streams, with over 18 species of aquatic plant, one of the most diverse fish faunas in Britain and a wide range of aquatic invertebrates. Annex I Habitats: • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation Annex II Species: • Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> • Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> • Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> • Atlantic salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> • Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i>	620m north.
International Sites within 5km of Site	No further internationally important designated sites within 5km of the site.		

- 5.3. There are nine non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site. These are all Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and are detailed in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Non-Statutory designated sites within 2km of the site.

Name and designation type	Reason for designation	Approximate distance from site
Brims Down LWS	A small site at the eastern end of the downs which include Brimsdown SSSI. The site consists of a north-facing slope and a small coombe to the south with some species-rich grassland.	1.8km south-west.
Westcombe and Little Down LWS	An area of unimproved grassland.	1.8km south-east.

River Wylfe West LWS	The headwaters and upper reaches of the river, above the SSSI.	1.6km south.
Broadmead Lane Meadow LWS	A wet meadow on a tributary of the River Wylfe, just downstream from Shearwater.	1.9km north-west.
Southleigh Wood LWS	A large ancient woodland site mainly coniferised, but with semi-natural oak woodland in the west.	1.35km north-east.
Crabbe Farm Meadow LWS	A small wet neutral meadow adjacent to the River Wylfe.	600m north.
Longbridge Dervill Withybed LWS	A small area of wet woodland, swamp and grassland on the floodplain of the upper Wylfe.	770m north.
Cow Down LWS	A complex site consisting of two parcels situated on the steep slopes of Cow Down.	1.1km east.
Longbridge Hill LWS	North and west facing chalk down with unimproved grassland and scrub woodland.	1.7km north-east.

- 5.4. A search of the Wiltshire Council Planning Portal and found no planning applications with the support of an ecological report, nearby and within the last five years.
- 5.5. There are nine areas of priority deciduous woodland site within 1km of the site. The closest is an unnamed patch 150m north-east. This area of woodland is also registered on the National Forest Inventory (Woodland - Broadleaved). There are no areas of ancient woodland within 1km of the site.
- 5.6. Further priority habitats within 1km of the site comprise a network of chalk rivers, including the River Wylfe with its closest point 100m east of the site.

Habitat Walkover Survey

- 5.7. The habitats on site consisted of modified grassland, buildings, artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface and non-native and ornamental hedgerow. This section is to be read in conjunction with **Figure 3. Table 4** below outlines the summary of habitats identified on site, as well as their applicable secondary codes.

Table 4: Habitat applicable codes

Primary Habitat	UK Hab Primary Code	Applicable Secondary Code(s) used	Secondary Code(s) description
<i>Modified grassland</i>	<i>G4</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>Tree</i>
<i>Buildings</i>	<i>U1b5</i>	<i>818</i>	<i>Residential building</i>
<i>Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface</i>	<i>U1c</i>	-	
<i>Non-native and ornamental hedgerow</i>	<i>H2b</i>	-	

Modified grassland (secondary codes: 108, 200)

- 5.8. The majority of the site consisted of modified grassland, which had a sward length of approximately 15-25cm, with some tussocky grasses and some waterlogged areas. It was species poor vegetation, with an average of four species per meter square, dominated by a few fast growing grasses on fertile soils. Species consisted of perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, meadow grass *Poa sp.*, fescue *Festuca sp.*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, and white clover *Trifolium repens*.
- 5.9. Within the grassland, there were a small number of small-medium sized individual trees. These consisted of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, beech *Fagus sylvatica* and apple *Malus domestica*.

Buildings (secondary code: 818)

- 5.10. In the southern part of the site was the single storey residential building, more information can be found about this building in the **Building Inspection** below.

Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface

- 5.11. This area of habitat refers to the area of gravel surrounding the residential building.

Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

- 5.12. There was a very short section of hedgerow in the north-western corner on site, this consisted of privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium*. There was also a very sparse, young hedgerow also consisting of privet along sections of the eastern edge of the site, adjacent to the road. This was on a slightly raised bank.



- Red Line Boundary
- Existing Medium Rural Tree
- Existing Small Rural Tree
- Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

- Buildings
- Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface
- Modified grassland



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Project: Mill Farm Lodge, Hill Deverill,
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Figure 3: Habitat Map

Date: February 2026

Habitat Walkover Survey Photos



Image 1: Modified grassland which makes up the majority of the site.



Image 2: North-west corner of the site, with small ornamental hedgerow.



Image 3: Log piles along the northern boundary.



Image 4: Western fenced boundary.



Image 5: Eastern boundary.



Image 6: Eastern ornamental hedgerow.

Protected Species

Bats

- 5.13. There is one granted EPS licence for bats within 2km of the site: case reference - 2014-3981-EPS-MIT from the dates 14/11/2014 to 14/11/2019, for the damage and destruction of a breeding and resting place for brown long-eared, common and soprano pipistrelle, and serotine bats. This is located approximately 1.3km north-east of the site
- 5.14. The data search from WSBRC returned multiple records for bats within a 2km search radius within the last ten years. These include seven records of serotine bat, one *Myotis sp*, six Daubenton's, three natterer's, one Leisler's, two noctule, one *Pipistrellus sp*, 15 common pipistrelle, 13 soprano pipistrelle, two long-eared *Plecotus sp*, one brown long-eared, and two greater horseshoe bats.
- 5.15. The habitats on site provided low foraging and commuting opportunities for bats at the grassland. The hedgerows on site were short and sparse, with limited suitability for commuting. The trees on site did not provide roosting opportunities for bats.
- 5.16. Habitats in the wider landscape including the River Wyllye and a block of woodland, provide excellent opportunities for bats.
- 5.17. Therefore, it is likely bats will use the site for commuting and foraging.

Building Inspection

- 5.18. The building on site consisted of a single-storey detached prefabricated home. There was no loft void. The walls were constructed of a stone base with concrete render and timber panels externally. The roof was pitched and was constructed of concrete interlocking tiles.
- 5.19. There were no cracks or gaps within the walls or around any windows, and the soffit was very tight to the wall. All the roof tiles were in good condition, with none broken or lifted.

Overall Assessment

- 5.20. Due to there being no suitable crevice features for bats externally on the building, the building was assessed as having **negligible potential** to support roosting bats.

Building Inspection Photographs



Image 7: North and western aspects of the building.



Image 8: Eastern aspect.



Image 9: Tight soffits, no gaps.



Image 10: Western aspect.



Image 11: Southern aspect.



Image 12: Tightly fitted roof tiles.

Great Crested Newt and Common Amphibians

- 5.21. A search of the MagicMap application found no results for great crested newt class survey returns, EPS licences, or GCN pond surveys 2017-2019 within 1km of the application site.
- 5.22. The data search from WSBRC found one record for a great crested newt within the last ten years, which was located 1.8km from the application site. Other amphibian species recorded were 28 records for common toad *Bufo bufo* and five records for common frog *Rana temporaria* within the 2km search radius.
- 5.23. There were four waterbodies (ponds) within 500m of the site. All of these ponds could not be accessed to assess for suitability for GCN as they were on private land. Only one of these ponds was within 250m of the application site. The pond to the south-east had a busy A-road as a barrier to movement, and the pond to the south was part of the watercress farm. The locations of these ponds are shown in **Figure 4**.

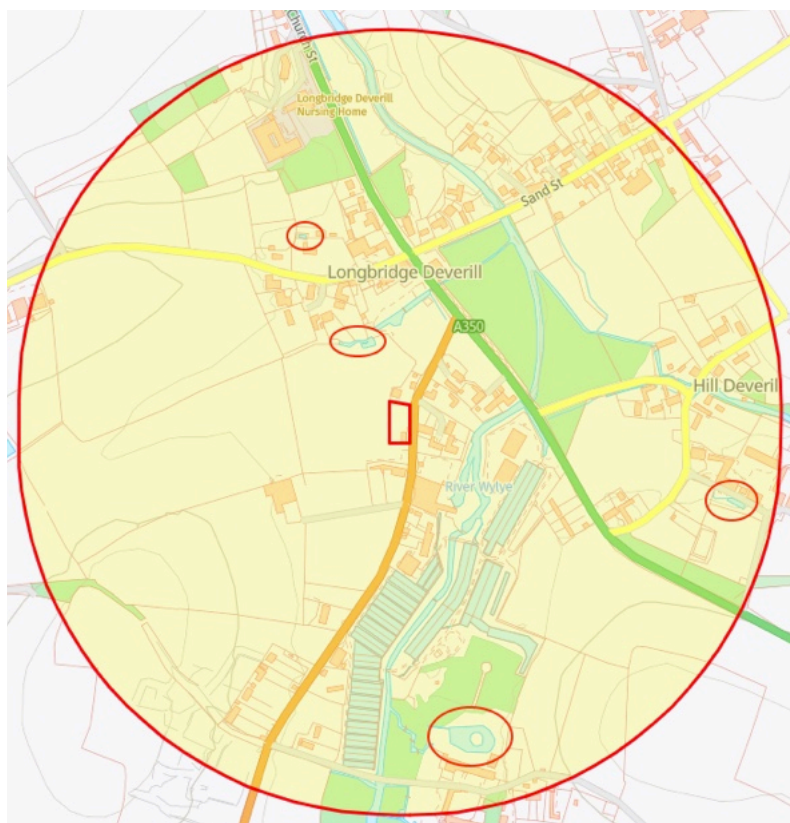


Figure 4: Waterbodies within 500m of the site.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.005
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.0005
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
		Maximum:
		0.005
Rapid risk assessment result:		GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY

Figure 5: Results from the Rapid Risk Assessment for great crested newt mitigation licence.

- 5.24. The areas of land being lost due to the development were input into the Rapid Risk Assessment tool provided in the Method Statement template for great crested newt mitigation licence, see **Figure 5**. As the area of habitats being lost to the development is very small, the development is highly unlikely to commit an offence.
- 5.25. The majority of the site consisted of modified grassland, which had some tussocks and waterlogged/damp areas, which provided some suitability for GCN and other common amphibians. The ornamental hedgerows on site provided limited suitability for amphibians as they were sparse and gappy. There were log piles at the northern boundary of the site, which provided shelter and hibernacula for these species.
- 5.26. Therefore, it is possible that amphibians will use the site on occasion.

Reptiles

- 5.27. There were no granted EPS licences for reptiles within 1km of the application site.
- 5.28. The data search from WSBRC found multiple records for reptiles within a 2km radius and within the past ten years. These included three records for slow worm and one record for common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*.
- 5.29. The modified grassland on site and the ornamental hedgerows provided limited suitability for reptiles. The log piles on site could provide shelter and hibernacula for a range of common amphibians. There was connectivity to garden habitats in the local landscape, with possibility to support common reptiles such as slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, within the garden edge habitats.
- 5.30. Therefore, it is possible that common reptiles such as slow worm may pass through the site on occasion, and use the habitat piles for shelter.

Otters and Water Voles

- 5.31. The data search from WSBRC found five records for otter within 2km of the site, which included signs and tracks. There was one record for water vole, which was 180m from the application site.
- 5.32. There was no running water on site or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest watercourse was the River Wylfe approximately 100m east of the site. There was no evidence of otter or water vole recorded during the habitat walkover survey.
- 5.33. The habitats on site provided no suitability for otter holt making, and limited suitability for foraging. However, the River Wylfe is known to support otters, and therefore occasional commuting onto site cannot be ruled out.
- 5.34. No ditches or water features suitable for water vole were present on site or in the surrounding area, therefore water vole is considered absent from the site and will not be considered further in this report.

Dormouse

- 5.35. A search of the MagicMap application found no records of EPS licences granted for dormouse within 1km of the site. There were also no records of dormouse from the data search from WSBRC, within 2km of the application site and within the last ten years.
- 5.36. No evidence of dormouse, in the form of nests or chewed nuts were found on site during the walkover survey. The grassland habits on site provided no suitability for dormouse, and the hedgerow was sparse and gappy, with non-native species. These hedgerows also had limited connectivity to suitable habitat in the wider landscape, including the woodland.
- 5.37. Therefore, it is unlikely dormice will be present on site and will not be considered further in the report.

Other Terrestrial Mammals

- 5.38. There were multiple records of mammals from the WSBRC data search within the search radius and time frame. [REDACTED] five records of harvest mouse *Micromys minutus* nests, and six records of hedgehogs.
- 5.39. No signs of badgers or badger setts/latrines were recorded on site or within 30m of the site boundary. The grassland habitats could provide some opportunities for badger sett making and good opportunities for foraging and commuting due to the close proximity of open farmland to the west. [REDACTED]
- 5.40. The site provided opportunities for hedgehog at the grassland and the hedgerow in the north-west corner. There is also good connectivity into residential gardens to the north. Therefore it is likely hedgehogs will pass through and use the site on occasion.

Breeding Birds

- 5.41. The data search from WSBRC found multiple records for Schedule 1 birds within 2km of the site and within the last ten years. These included five records for goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, 92 records for red kite *Milvus milvus*, 28 records for kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, 18 records for hobby *Falco subbuteo*, 12 records for peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and 78 records for barn owl.
- 5.42. Species recorded during the habitat survey included crows *Corvus corone*. The habitats on site including the grassland, one of the hedgerows, and the trees provided high quality foraging and nesting opportunities for an assemblage of common bird species, but did not provide suitable habitat for ground nesting birds.

Invertebrates

- 5.43. The WSBRC data search found one record of marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia* within the last ten years, which is in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

- 5.44. The habitats on site were suitable to support an assemblage of common invertebrate species.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Designated Sites and Priority Habitats

- 6.1. There is one statutory designated site, the River Avon System SSSI/SAC, within 2km of the application site, and the site is within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for this designated site.
- 6.2. The development site is within the catchment of this European site which is vulnerable to nutrient impacts. The proposed development will not result in a net gain of residential dwellings as the plans include the replacement of a prefabricated home with a permanent one. Additionally, the current dwelling is already connected to the mains drainage system. Therefore, a Nutrient Neutrality Assessment will not be required in this case.
- 6.3. Furthermore, the development will not increase footfall in the area, and not increase recreational pressure on designated sites.
- 6.4. Due to the size and nature of the development, it is not anticipated that the proposed works will impact statutory designated sites or priority habitats through land take or other direct effects of development.

Habitats

Status of Habitats on Site

- 6.5. Habitats within the site comprised low ecological value modified grassland and ornamental hedgerows. The trees on site provided moderate ecological value for a range of species.

Potential Impacts

- 6.6. A very small area of the modified grassland is due to be removed to create the permanent dwelling. The hedgerow and trees on site are due to be retained. These features could be damaged during the construction phase if heavy machinery is used.

Recommendations

- 6.7. All trees and hedgerows to be retained on site should be protected during works with Root Protection Zones (RPZs), established in accordance with BS 5837:2012 (British Standards, 2012). A 10m buffer will be established around retained trees and hedgerow habitats, and enforced with Heras-type fencing, prior to the commencement of construction works.
- 6.8. Given the above avoidance and mitigation strategies, it is considered likely there will be no residual impacts to the habitats.

Protected Species

Bats

Status of Bats on Site

- 6.9. The grassland provided low foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. There was no suitability for roosting bats at the trees or building on site. The ornamental hedgerow could

provide commuting opportunities to suitable habitat in the wider landscape, including the woodland and river to the east. Therefore, bats likely use the site on occasion for foraging and commuting.

Potential Impacts

- 6.10. The proposed plans include the replacement of the prefabricated dwelling with a permanent one. The trees and hedgerows are due to be retained. The works may result in an increase of lighting in the area, which may cause disruption to the behaviour of bats using the site.

Recommendations

- 6.11. *Lighting:* Any new external lighting should be directed to avoid light spillage onto vegetation, particularly linear habitat features such as woodland edges or potential roosting sites within trees and buildings. Bats are sensitive to light and could potentially avoid the area if access points or the surrounding areas become lit. Appropriate lighting options will prevent a negative impact on bats potentially using the habitats on site and should be approved by a suitably qualified and licensed bat ecologist. Lighting plans should be approved and signed off by a licensed bat ecologist prior to submission, to ensure the scheme is suitable for bats. If appropriate measures are taken to reduce light spillage from the development, it is likely that there will be no negative impacts on local bat populations.
- 6.12. See **Appendix 2** for further information on designing lighting to minimise impacts on bats.

Enhancements

- 6.13. To increase the roosting opportunities for bats in the area, at least one roosting feature will be integrated into the new building. This could be an integrated bat box such as a Schwegler 1FR bat tube or Green and Blue Bat Brick, which are built into the external brickwork of the new building. Integrated bat boxes should be installed at a height of at least 4m, preferably on a south or west facing elevation, away from windows, with a clear flight space beneath.

Great Crested Newt and Common Amphibians

Status on Site

- 6.14. The habitats on site, including the modified grassland and ornamental hedgerows could provide limited opportunities for foraging and commuting GCN and other common amphibians. The habitat piles to the northern boundary of the site provided good opportunities for shelter and hibernacula for these species. There was one pond within 250m of the site. Therefore, it is possible amphibians will use and pass through the site on occasion.

Potential Impacts

- 6.15. The current proposals will impact a small section of the modified grassland habitat which has limited suitability for GCN and other amphibians. If heavy machinery is used on site close to suitable habitat for amphibians such as the hedgerows, or if the habitat piles are removed, this could result in the killing or injuring of individuals if they are on site at the time of construction.

Recommendations

- 6.16. Reasonable avoidance measures (RAMS) will be implemented during the works and include:
- Any ground vegetation within the application boundary should be maintained to a short sward length before the works begins to prevent the habitat becoming suitable for reptiles and amphibians.
 - Should the vegetation grow longer than 30cm then any vegetation clearance should be done by hand and only during the reptile key active season (March-September, inclusive). Weather should be 9 degrees or higher, and dry with no strong winds. This will allow active reptiles and amphibians to move to more suitable habitat nearby, if they are present within the working area.
 - In order to prevent creating suitable refuges for reptiles during construction, all stored materials should be raised off the ground on pallets or skids. Aggregates, such as gravel or sand, must be delivered in bulk bags and stored on pallets.
 - If the existing potential refugia are to be removed, they should be dismantled by hand with a licenced ecologist present to ensure that no individuals of these species are harmed.
 - All contractors on site will attend a tool box talk given by a suitably experienced ecologist, including information on reptiles and common amphibians which may be present within the site and immediate area.
 - Amphibians or reptiles found onsite during the works will be moved to a suitable safe location to be decided by the EcOW based on the location of the amphibian or reptile and the works taking place, likely to be refugia piles installed at the north or east of the site.
 - All works which may impact amphibians or reptiles will be undertaken during the day.
 - Any excavations or trenches on site must be covered whilst works are paused (such as overnight), or a ramp should be provided in order to prevent animals from becoming trapped.
- 6.17. Given the above avoidance and mitigation strategies, it is considered likely that there will be no residual impacts on GCN or common amphibians.

Reptiles

Status on Site

- 6.18. The modified grassland on site and ornamental hedgerow provided limited suitability for reptiles. The habitat piles to the north of the site provided good opportunities for resting and hibernacula. Therefore, it is possible common reptiles may use the site on occasion.

Potential Impacts

- 6.19. The current proposals will impact a small area of modified grassland habitat. If heavy machinery is used on site close to suitable habitat for reptiles, this could result in the killing or injuring of individuals if they are on site at the time of construction.

Recommendations

- 6.20. The same RAMs recommended for GCN and amphibians is suitable for reptiles. Given the above avoidance and mitigation strategies, it is considered likely that there will be no residual impacts on reptiles as a result of the works.

Otters

Status on Site

- 6.21. No evidence of otter was recorded during the habitat walkover survey. There is no running water on site or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest watercourse is the River Wylfe 100m east of the site, and the habitats on site provided no suitability for otter holt making and limited suitability for foraging and commuting. Due to the proximity to the River Wylfe, the presence of otters on site cannot be ruled out entirely and they may use the site on occasion.

Potential Impacts

- 6.22. The proposals do not directly impact any suitable habitat for otters. However, if they are able to access the site during construction works, they may be injured due to the destructive activity or trapped in any excavations.

Recommendations

- 6.23. *Trenches and Excavations:* As a precautionary measure, during construction all trenches and holes are to be covered overnight to prevent wildlife falling in and becoming trapped. Contractors should also ensure that ramps are installed at any excavations or trenches, which must be checked before filling takes place.
- 6.24. Given the above avoidance and mitigation strategies, it is considered likely that there will be no residual impacts on otters.

Other Terrestrial Mammals

Status on Site

- 6.25. The habitats on site offer foraging, commuting and resting opportunities for a variety of terrestrial mammals, including badgers and hedgehogs. There were, however, no signs of mammal activity recorded during the habitat walkover survey. No setts were recorded within 30m of the site, and no latrines were recorded on site.
- 6.26. [REDACTED] and hedgehog may use the site on occasion.

Potential Impacts

- 6.27. If mammals are able to access the site during the proposed works, they may be injured due to the destructive activity, or trapped in any excavations.

Recommendations

- 6.28. General mitigation measures are considered sufficient to protect terrestrial mammals during construction works within the application area. It is considered that the methods outlined under the otter section (above) will be sufficient to protect terrestrial mammals should they be present on site during this phase of development.
- 6.29. As a precautionary measure, a pre-works badger check will be conducted to ensure no new badger sett has been created near the site.
- 6.30. Given the above mitigation strategy, it is considered likely that there will be no residual impacts on terrestrial mammals.

Breeding Birds

Status on Site

- 6.31. The hedgerow and trees on site provide good foraging and nesting opportunities for a variety of bird species. It is likely that the site is frequented by an assemblage of common bird species. The grassland did not provide opportunities for nesting birds.

Potential Impacts

- 6.32. The hedgerows and trees on site are due to be retained as per the proposed plans. However, if these change and vegetation is removed whilst nesting birds are present within the habitats, the works may have the potential to injure or kills individual nesting/breeding birds.

Recommendations

- 6.33. The removal of vegetation should occur outside of the breeding bird season (February - August). If any vegetation removal is required during the breeding bird season, a pre-works check by a suitably qualified ecologist will be conducted no more than 24 hours before the removal, to ensure that no active nests are present. If active nests are recorded a suitable

buffer will be retained around these until all chicks have fledged (to be confirmed by a suitably qualified ecologist).

Enhancements

- 6.34. To increase the nesting opportunities for birds in the local area, one bird box such as an integrated 'Universal' Swift Nest Box will be built into the new building. Integrated bird boxes should be installed at a minimum height of 5m with an unobstructed air space in front of the nest.

Invertebrates

Status on Site

- 6.35. The habitats on site have suitability to support a variety of common invertebrate species.

Potential Impacts

- 6.36. A very small area of modified grassland is to be impacted as a result of the development.

Recommendations

- 6.37. Any new planting should include native tree and shrub species to enhance the ecological value on site, and consider invertebrates.

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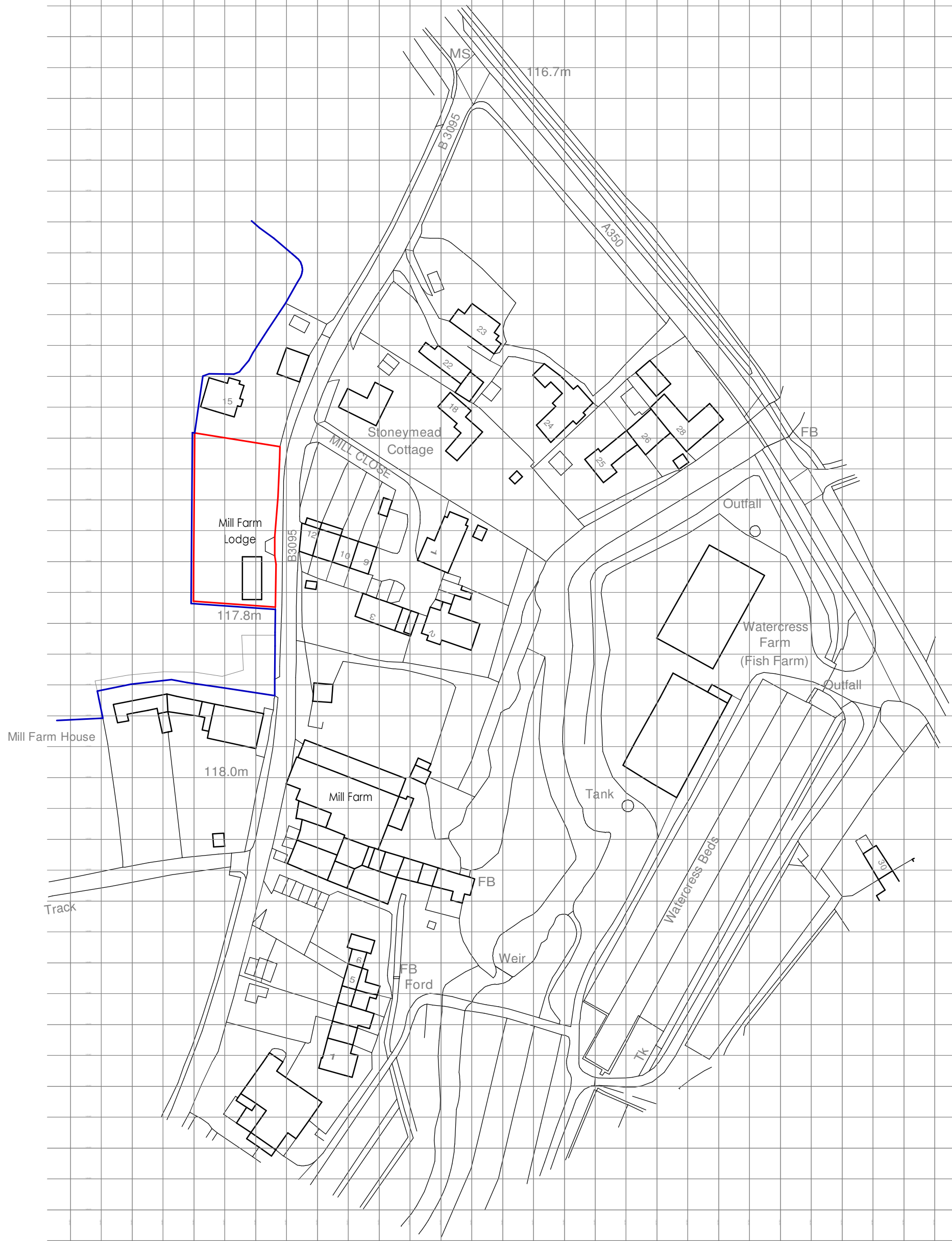
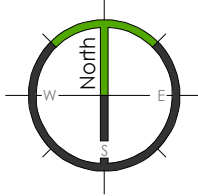
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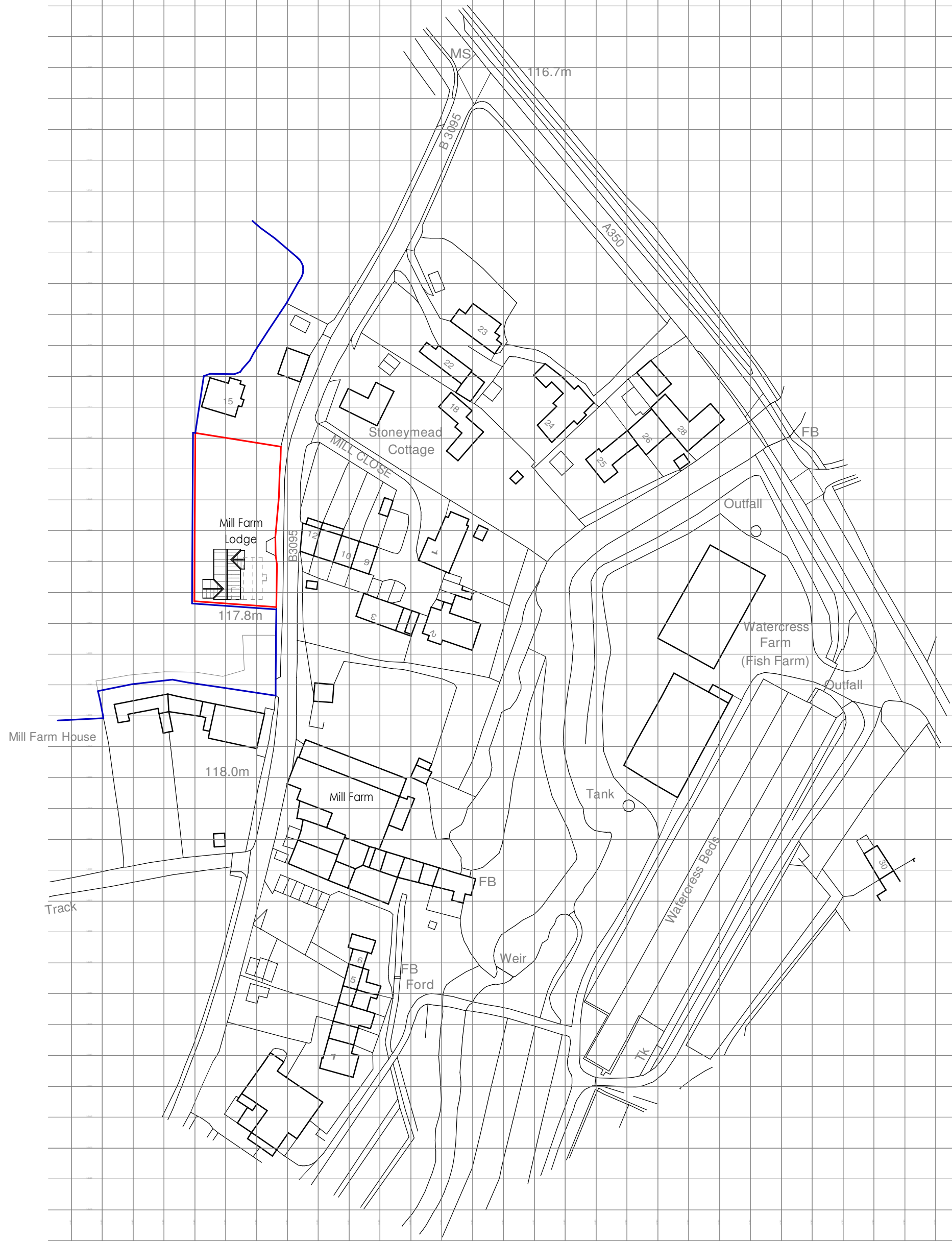
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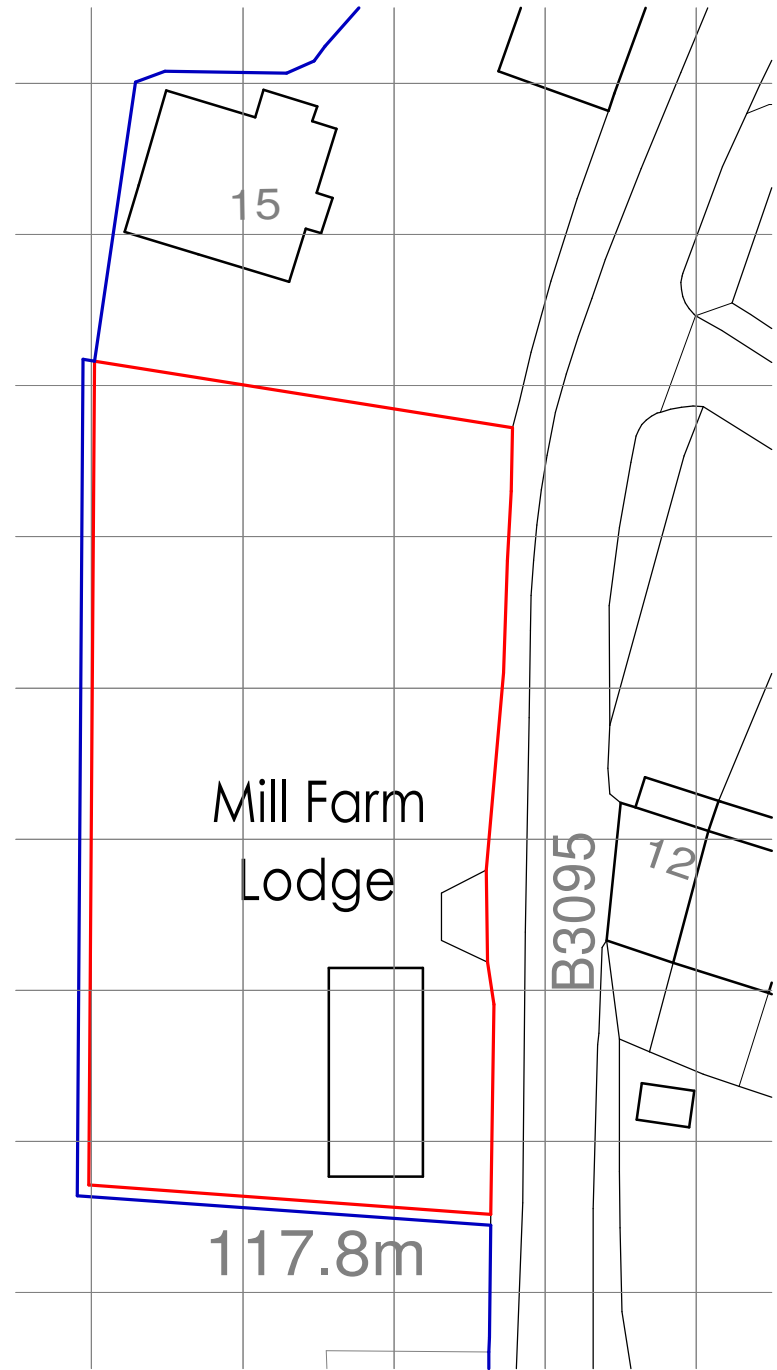
APPENDICES



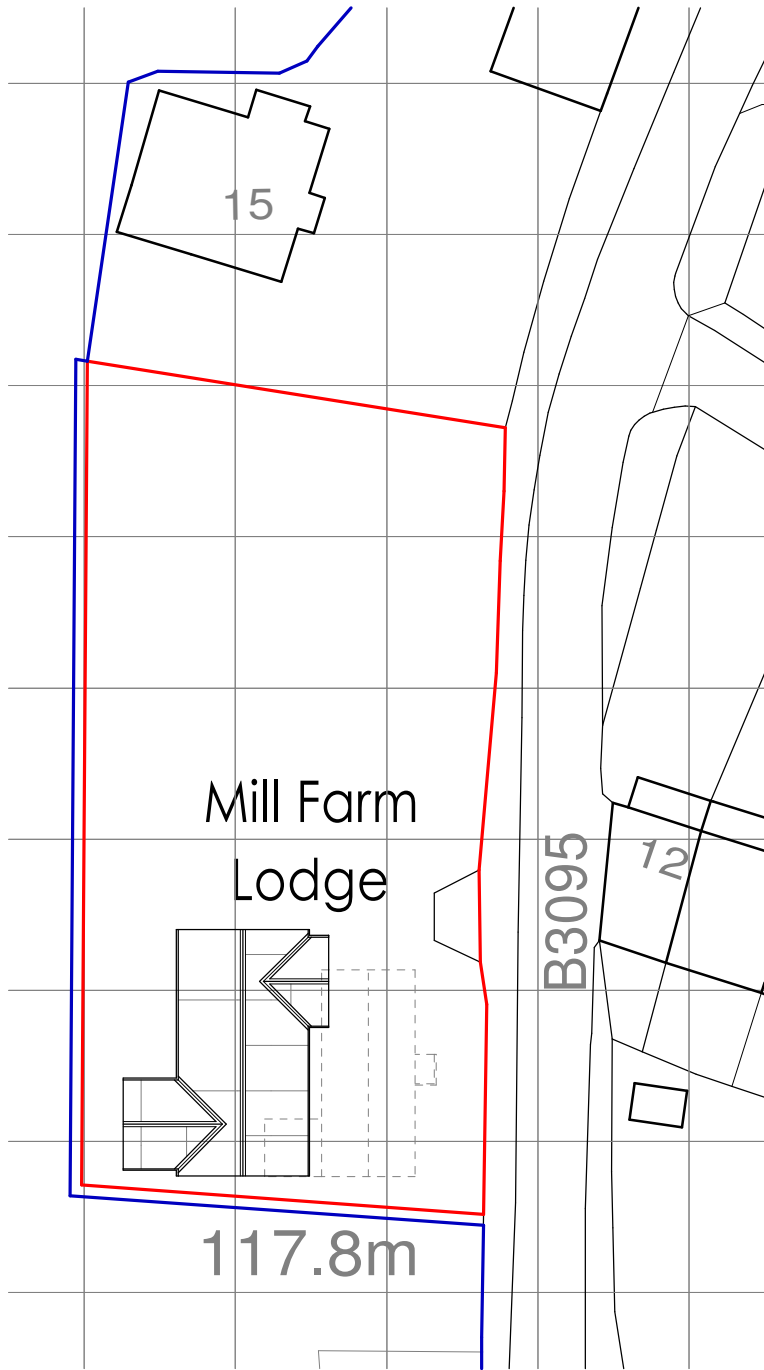
Existing Site Location Plan 1:1250



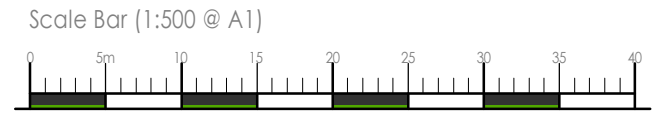
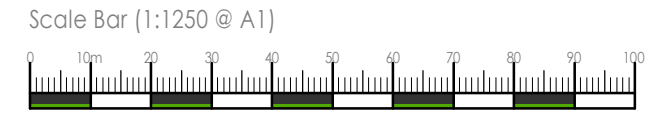
Proposed Site Location Plan 1:1250



Existing Block Plan 1:500



Proposed Block Plan 1:500



SCALE FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY
IT IS THE CONTRACTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK
ALL SITE DIMENSIONS & NOTIFY ANY DISCREPANCIES
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INDEX	REVISIONS	DATE
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Project
Proposed permanent dwelling @
Mill Farm Lodge, Hill Deverill BA12 7EF

Drawing
Existing & Proposed Site Location Plan
Existing & Proposed Block Plan

Scale 1:500 & 1:1250 @ A1
date January 2026

Drg. No. 1146:DP:OG:07



THE IMPACT OF LIGHTING ON BATS

Bats favour a dark environment for both roosting and foraging as they are adapted to low-light conditions. Artificial lighting will disturb bats if the lighting covers roost access points, flight paths or foraging habitats.

The main peak of nocturnal insect abundance occurs at dusk and a delay in emergence results in a lower foraging rate for bats.

Artificial lighting creates a 'vacuum effect' for nocturnal insects. During the night nocturnal insects use the light of the moon* to navigate. However, artificial lighting and even sky glow above cities obscures the natural moonlight as it is closer

and radiates light in multiple directions.

Some species of bats have been recorded foraging around street lights such as *Pipistrellus* species and *Nyctalus* species. However, species that are less tolerant of artificial light are at a disadvantage when foraging as insects are drawn away from these species usual foraging grounds into the zones of artificial light.

Lighting must be considered in context to any development as increased lighting may cause roost abandonment, reduced reproductive success, and reduced foraging. Mitigation to reduce the impacts of lighting for bats is therefore of great importance in bat conservation.

Table 1: Summary of predicted impact of lighting for each species/genus

Impact	High	Medium	Low
Behaviour			
Maternity roost	All species	-	-
Night roost	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> <i>Myotis</i> spp. <i>Plecotus</i> spp.	<i>Pipistrellus</i> spp. <i>Nyctalus</i> spp. <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	-
Emergence	All species	-	-
Foraging	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> <i>Myotis</i> spp. <i>Plecotus</i> spp.	-	<i>Pipistrellus</i> spp. <i>Nyctalus</i> spp. <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>
Commuting	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> <i>Myotis</i> spp. <i>Plecotus</i> spp.	-	<i>Pipistrellus</i> spp. <i>Nyctalus</i> spp. <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>
Swarming	All species	-	-
Hibernation	All species	-	-

*For more information see Warrant, E., and Dacke, M. (2016) Visual Navigation in Nocturnal insects. *Physiology*, 31, 182-196.



Sources of light that can disturb bats include; light spill via windows, sport floodlighting, car headlights, roadside lighting, security lighting, aesthetic lighting of waterways, and aesthetic illumination of buildings. Glare will affect bats over greater distance than the target area directly illuminated.

Avoidance is the most effective method, but if this is not possible the following measures should be considered.

What lighting should I use?

- Low pressure sodium lights or 'warm' LEDs
- Wavelength above 540nm
- Colour temperature below 2700K
- Shielded lights that prevent light spill above a 70 degree angle
- Passive infrared (PIR) motion sensors



What to avoid:

- Lighting roost entrances, flightpaths, and foraging or commuting routes
- Reflective surfaces beneath lighting
- High level lights
- Non-directional lighting

Lighting should be considered at an early stage allowing impacts to be minimised through the design of the site.

Key Points

- Keep lighting intensity to the minimum level required
- Limit the times that lights are on to provide some dark periods (e.g. switching installations off between midnight and 5am)
- Dim lighting according to demand
- As an alternative to lighting pathways use paving materials that reflect moonlight
- Low level lighting allows darkness to be retained within higher vegetation
- Set dark habitat buffers - lighting should always be a minimum of 25m from vegetated margins and 40m from waterbodies
- Incorporate dark corridors within the site
- Compensate for the loss of dark areas by enhancing other dark areas
- Consider building design - install internal lighting away from windows