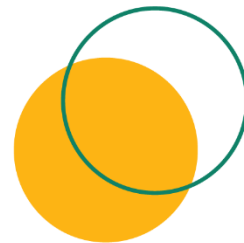




Ecological Enhancement Plan



Paul Vinyard
Dorothy House Hospice Care, Winsley, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 2LE
March 2026

Project Information

Title	Ecological Enhancement Plan
Project No.	32168
Sector	Environment
Report	EC
Client	Paul Vinyard
Revision	A
Status	Final
Date of Issue	20 March 2026

Authors

Author(s)	Jemma Wybrow BSc (Hons), MSc. Graduate Ecologist
Reviewer	David Stanley BSc (Hons), MSc. Senior Ecologist Member of CIEEM
Approver	Dr Ayan Chakravarty BEng (Hons). PGDip, MSc, MSc, MRes, MPhil, PhD. Technical Director

Disclaimer

This report has been prepared in accordance with the specific instructions, scope, and requirements of our client. It is intended solely for the use of the client and for the specific purpose outlined within this document. If submitted as part of a planning application or regulatory review, the relevant authorities may consider it as part of their assessment process; however, its findings and recommendations are based on the assumptions, methodologies, and data available at the time of preparation. No liability or responsibility is accepted for any reliance placed on this report beyond its intended scope, nor for any decisions made by third parties based on its contents.

This report may include data obtained from trusted third-party sources, including consultants and laboratories, which have been supplied in good faith. While every effort has been made to verify the accuracy and reliability of this data, we do not guarantee its completeness or correctness and accept no responsibility for any inaccuracies, omissions, or misinterpretations arising from third-party information.

The findings, assessments, and recommendations in this report are based on the information available at the time of writing. If project details, design plans, or site conditions change, this report will require revisiting and reviewing to ensure its continued relevance and accuracy. No warranties or guarantees, express or implied, are provided regarding the conclusions drawn in this report, and it should not be considered an up-to-date assessment if project conditions evolve.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Overview	1
1.2	Objectives	1
2	Methodology	2
2.1	Desk Study.....	2
2.2	Site Survey.....	2
2.3	Limitations.....	2
3	Desk Study & Site Survey Results	3
3.1	Designated Land.....	3
3.2	Habitats.....	3
3.3	Protected Species.....	3
3.4	Site Description.....	3
3.5	Habitats On-Site	4
4	Biodiversity Enhancement Measures	5
4.1	Overview	5
4.2	Habitat Features	5
4.3	Protected Species Features	5
5	Ecological Monitoring.....	7
Appendix 1: Proposed Plan		9
Appendix 2: Additional Enhancement Measures		11
Appendix 3: Baseline Habitat Plan		12
Appendix 4: Post-Development Habitat Plan		13
Appendix 5: Other Neutral Grassland Condition Criteria		14
Appendix 6: Planning Policy and Legislation		15

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The client, Paul Vinyard, has instructed ACP Consultants Ltd to conduct an Ecological Enhancement Plan (EEP). The report was commissioned to accompany the planning application to the Wiltshire Council for the “double-storey extension to the Nicholson House building located northwest of Dorothy House” (hereafter referred to as ‘the proposed development’) at Dorothy House Hospice Care, Winsley, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 2LE (hereafter referred to as ‘the site’). The proposed development plan is provided in **Appendix 1**.

The site is located at National Grid Reference ST 79761 60828 and has an area of approximately 0.097ha. The site is situated in the semi-rural area of Winsley village, with residential properties, greenspaces, and woodland in the immediate vicinity.

The purpose of an EEP is to identify ecological features of interest and, therefore, to produce a biodiversity management and enhancement plan. It is considered that the environmental and ecological priorities for development are to reduce the negative impacts on the environment, maximise sustainable development, encourage biodiversity and to ensure the protection of wildlife and protected species.

This assessment has been carried out in accordance with good practice guidelines, including the National Planning Policy Framework (2025) (**Appendix 6**).

1.2 Objectives

- To identify ecological features of value present on the site.
- To outline any ecological mitigation measures.
- To produce a management and biodiversity enhancement plan relevant to the site.

2 Methodology

To achieve the objectives set out in the scope of the report, a desk study was completed, followed by a site visit carried out by Ayan Chakravartty and Brydie Stacey on the 4th September 2025. This site visit assessed the site for the purposes of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment.

This information was then used to determine which ecological features of interest are present on-site (based on their protected status and/or potential to provide biodiversity enhancement opportunities) in order to minimise any negative impacts the development may have on local flora/fauna. Recommendations for enhancement have also been made in order to attract biodiversity.

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study is undertaken by reviewing the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC; Defra, 2026). Statutory designated sites local to the site (usually 2km radius) and European designated sites within influencing distance of the site (usually 10km radius) are noted. Landscape value is assessed by recording the presence of notable and priority habitats and viewing satellite imagery (Google Earth, OS Maps) of the site for connectivity to the local landscape. Where relevant, historical satellite imagery has also been referred to. Granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) and other notable species records within influencing distance of the site are obtained and considered, either from MAGIC or, where relevant, the Local Environmental Record Centre (LERC). If data has been obtained from the LERC, this data has been analysed and summarised in the report owing to confidentiality and the raw data not being suitable for release into the public domain.

2.2 Site Survey

An extended phase 1 habitat survey and Biodiversity Net Gain assessment was undertaken, which followed the current best practice (CIEEM, 2017). All habitat parcels recorded were described, classified, and mapped on site. Baseline habitats were classified in accordance with the *UK Habitat Classification User Manual* (UKHab V2, 2023). The condition of baseline habitats was assessed with the relevant condition assessment sheets found in *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment and Sheets and Methodology* (DEFRA, 2025).

During the survey, habitats were assessed for suitability to support protected species, and field observations indicating protected species presence were recorded and mapped. The on-site habitat conditions are considered in the context of the wider landscape and the desk study research, as well as the species ecology, and are evaluated for their likelihood to provide commuting, foraging, sheltering, roosting, nesting, and basking habitat for protected species.

2.3 Limitations

There were no specific limitations to the survey

3 Desk Study & Site Survey Results

3.1 Designated Land

There are twelve sites of Bradford & Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) within 10km of the proposed development; The closest is ~200m southwest from the site. Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii* have been recorded at these sites and are the primary reason for notification.

There are three sites of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 2km of the proposed development; ~200m southwest (Winsley Mines), ~1850m south (Iford Manor), and ~2000m northwest (Midford Valley Woods).

Based on the data obtained from the desktop analysis, the proposed development does not seem to be negatively affecting any SSSIs or any other statutory land designations.

3.2 Habitats

Priority habitats identified within 2km of the site included deciduous woodland (closest parcel ~150m southeast) and ancient woodland (closest parcel ~950m southwest).

Additionally, non- priority waterbodies located within 500m of the site include a pond ~80m southeast, the Kennet and Avon Canal ~400m southwest, and the River Avon ~480m southwest of the site.

3.3 Protected Species

Seventeen Granted European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) for bats are present within 2km, with the closest ~300m north of the site. Therefore, creating habitat opportunities for bats on-site would be appropriate.

In addition to this, a biological data search was obtained from the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) on the 10th of September 2025. This presented more evidence of bat records, but also included hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus*, reptiles, amphibians including great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, Schedule 1 protected bird species, otters *Lutra lutra*, badgers *Meles meles*, water shrews *Neomys fodiens*, brown hare *Lepus europaeus*, beavers *Castor fiber*, and water voles *Arvicola amphibius*.

3.4 Site Description

The site is in two separate areas. Area B (Figure 1) is where the proposed development to Nicholson House will occur. In this area was a vegetated garden, which comprised grassland, extending from the western elevation of the building to the eastern elevation, and introduced shrubs, providing low botanical interest. Two trees were present in front of the eastern elevation of the building, which were observed to be in 'good' condition. The vegetated garden on the western elevation will be removed to enable the proposed development. However, the vegetated garden and trees on the eastern elevation will be retained. Area A (Figure 1), located west of Nicholson House, comprised modified grassland in 'good' condition. These areas provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancement measures.

The following report will focus on ecological features and subsequent biodiversity enhancement opportunities within the red-line site boundary displayed in Figure 1 only (with the blue-line boundary representing the wider site).

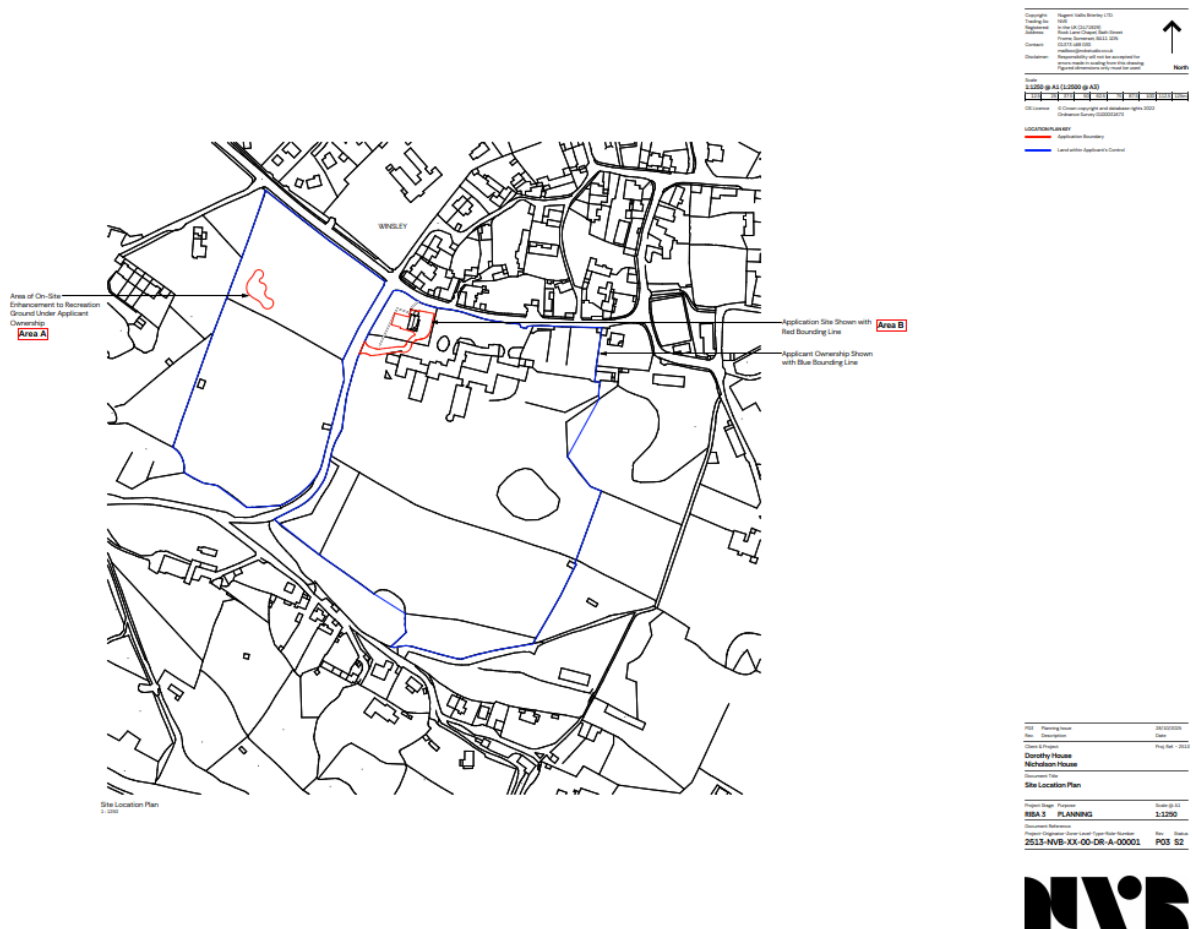


Figure 1. Site plan

3.5 Habitats On-Site

UKHab (2023) habitat types/classifications that are present within the red-line boundary displayed in Figure 1 comprised building (u1b5), other developed land (u1b6), vegetated Garden (828), trees (200), and modified grassland (g4) (Appendix 3).

4 Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

4.1 Overview

The following section sets out the biodiversity enhancement measures in relation to any ecological features of interest present on-site post-development. Post-development opportunities that are indicated within proposed plans include the enhancement of modified grassland and the planting of 6no. small-sized trees. It is worth noting that current proposals do not outline all enhancement measures, and these should be incorporated within the proposed plans.

Locations of habitat enhancement measures on-site can be found in **Appendix 2**.

4.2 Habitat Features

Tree Planting

Tree planting is indicated in the provided landscape plans (**Appendix 1**). The planting of 6no. native trees are proposed and will enhance the biodiversity value of the site, providing additional habitat for protected species such as bats and nesting birds. Such planting will follow the schedule of works provided in Section 4. Tree species may include, but are not limited to, oak *Quercus robur*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, field maple *Acer campestre*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, and wild cherry *Prunus avium*.

Grassland

Landscape plans also indicate 300 square metres of modified grassland to be enhanced to create other neutral grassland habitat (g3c). Wildflower or species-rich grass mixes will be selected in place of standard amenity grass to maximise ecological value, providing nectar for pollinators and improving structural diversity. Such habitat is also proposed to be managed in a manner that meets the criteria for 'good' condition (criteria shown in **Appendix 5**).

4.3 Protected Species Features

Bat boxes

Bat EPSPs were identified within 2km of the site. Therefore, installation of bat boxes would provide roosting opportunities for local bat populations. Two bat boxes will be installed a minimum of 3m above ground level facing a south or south-westerly direction with unobstructed access routes, and away from artificial lighting and windows. Recommended locations are shown in **Appendix 2**. Boxes constructed of woodcrete/ woodstone will be used as they require minimal maintenance and have an approximate lifespan of 25 years. Below is an example of a suitable bat box (Figure 2), which supports multiple species.



Figure 2. VK WS 02 Bat facade box (image credit: <https://vivarapro.com/product/vk-ws-02-bat-facade-box/>)

Bird Boxes

Four bird boxes will be installed on the retained building to provide habitat and nesting opportunities for bird species in the local area. The nesting boxes will be positioned to face north, above the attached garage (**Appendix 1**), and northeast to avoid prevailing winds, rain, and strong direct sunlight. Below are examples of a suitable nesting box to be placed in trees, which would house a variety of bird species, and a suitable swift nesting box. Recommended locations are shown in **Appendix 2**.



Figure 3. NK SE 08 Nest box oval (image credit: <https://vivarapro.com/product/nk-se-08-nest-box-oval-brown/>)



NK GZ 10 Swift facade nesting box (image credit: <https://vivarapro.com/product/nk-gz-10-swift-facade-nesting-box/>)

5 Ecological Monitoring

Any ecological monitoring of the site must be undertaken by and is the responsibility of the site owner. A full schedule for landscape maintenance could be followed. A summary of a recommended work schedule can be found below, along with recommended prescriptions for each management action capable of being rolled forward over a 20-25 year period:

Table 1: Work Schedule

Management or Monitoring Prescription	Management Objectives or Aim	Specific Prescription	Timing	Other Considerations
Trees	To promote healthy growth, natural shape and safe retention. To maintain and enhance the ecological value of the site (and provide habitat for roosting bats and birds).	Site inspection should include consideration for the need of the following: Deadwood removal, any split or damaged branch removal, treatment for any major defects that may compromise structural integrity (cavities, fungus etc.) and additional pruning/felling.	Inspection should be carried out in first year, year 3 and then every 5 years.	If any tree works are identified, works will be carried out outside of the nesting bird season or must be checked for nesting birds by an ecologist. Checks for bat roosts by an ecologist must be undertaken. Works will be carried out by an arboriculturist.
Replacement of dead/failed plants with plant defects	To ensure the recommended Landscape Plan is delivered, and good quality habitat is provided.	Any dead or defective plants should be replaced. Replacements to be sourced from local plant nurseries and should be native.	Inspection to be carried out annually and replacement as required.	Cause of plant failure to be established (if possible) in order to inform the need for further considerations in regard to replacement plants.
Grass Cutting of neutral grassland	To cut grassland once annually and prevent grass from becoming excessively long.	To cut grass once annually in order to provide a heterogeneous habitat structure. At least 20% of grass <7cm and 20% of grass >7cm should be retained, with 20% cut to the ground level. Following the cut, the cut grass should be turned and dried over 3-5 days before removal. No chemical fertilisers are to be applied.	Late summer/early autumn	This will achieve a diverse sward which varies in length and allows invertebrates to breed. The timing also limits any potential harm that may befall protected species at ground level. Cutting also helps to prevent the spread of scrub and bracken.
Bat boxes	To promote the use of the site by bats	Bat boxes will be positioned no lower than 3m above ground level on south/south-west elevations of the building.	Bat boxes can be installed at any time of year, if installed before the bats return in the spring, they are more likely to	Woodcrete/ woodstone bat boxes are designed to require no management or maintenance and should not be physically disturbed by a non-licensed

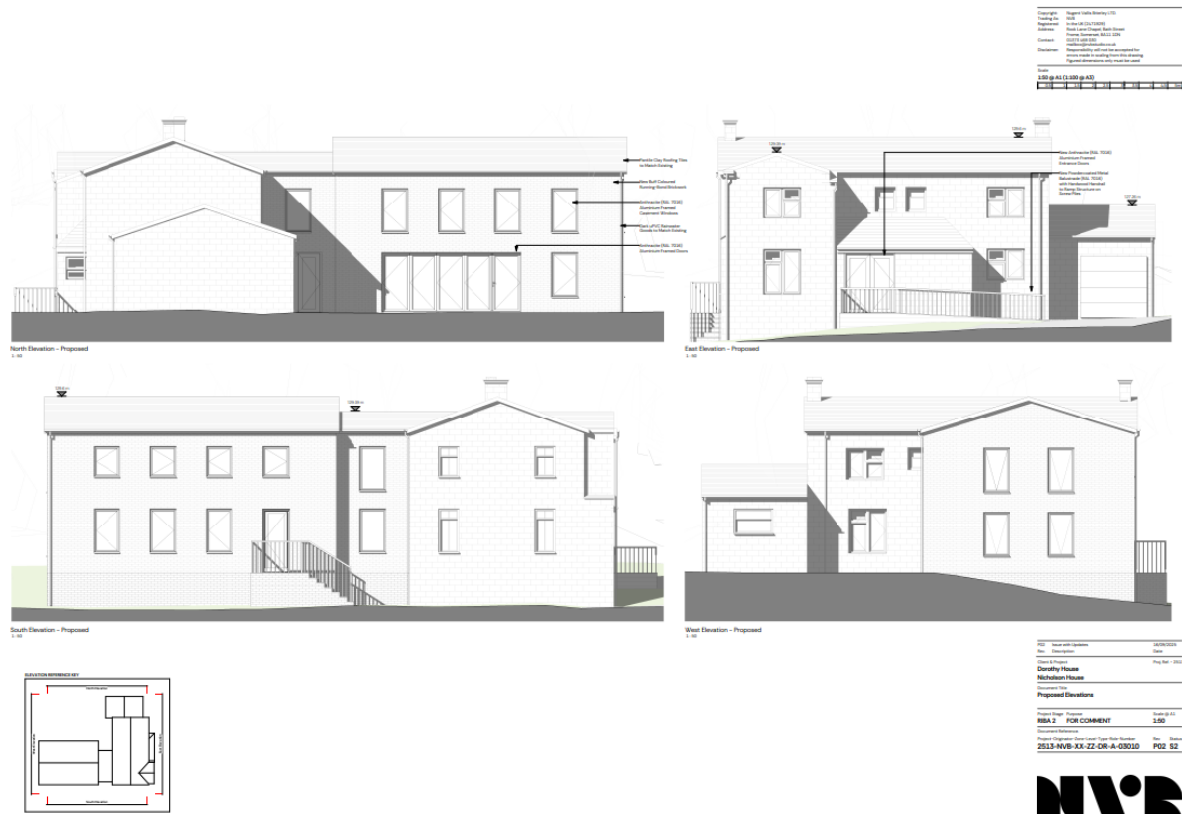
Management or Monitoring Prescription	Management Objectives or Aim	Specific Prescription	Timing	Other Considerations
			be used in early summer.	ecologist. If the boxes have been damaged, removed, or have fallen, they must be replaced.
Bird boxes	To promote the use of the site by birds	Bird boxes will be positioned approximately 2-4m above ground level on the retained building.	To be installed anytime of the year, and positioned away from direct sunlight, sheltered from prevailing wind and rain.	Woodcrete/ woodstone bird boxes are designed to require minimal maintenance. However, they can be cleaned annually either immediately after the young birds have fledged or during the winter months after a few days of frost.
Bracken/bramble control	To prevent/limit encroachment of species on-site.	Cutting or flailing of bracken/bramble will occur on an annual basis.	To occur on an annual basis, with two cuts in year one.	Any areas of vegetation being removed in the nesting bird season must be checked for nesting birds by an ecologist prior to removal.

Remedial works, such as replacing damaged boxes should also take place when required. Any ecological works on trees or vegetation must take place outside of the bird nesting season (Feb-Aug), unless surveyed by an experienced professional prior to any work.

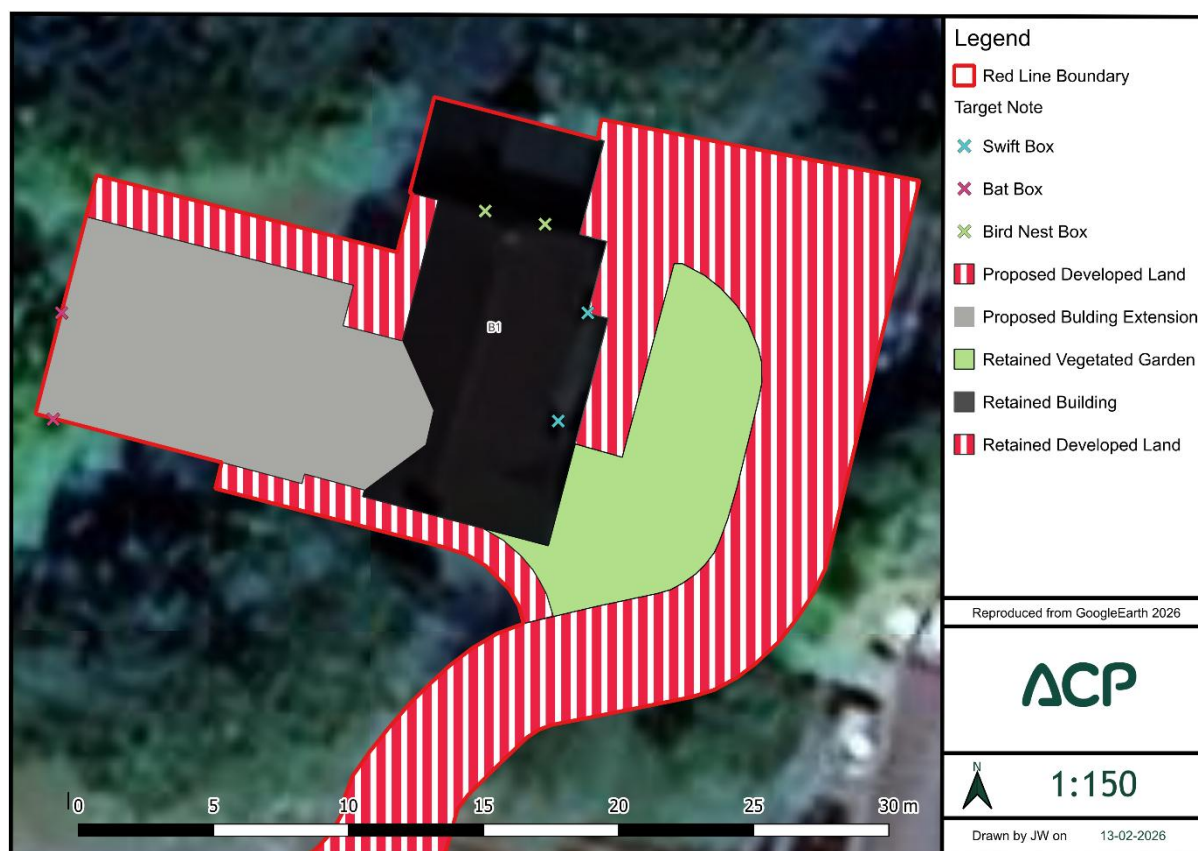
All biodiversity enhancement measurements that have been recommended in this report will require the client's commitment to maintenance and ongoing ecological monitoring, cleaning, and annual inspections.



Ecological Enhancement Plan
Dorothy House Hospice Care, Winsley, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 2LE



Appendix 2: Additional Enhancement Measures



Appendix 3: Baseline Habitat Plan



Appendix 4: Post-Development Habitat Plan



Appendix 5: Other Neutral Grassland Condition Criteria

Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description).¹ Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Must pass to achieve 'good' condition.	
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.		
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens².		
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.		
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition³ and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA⁵) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.		
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types			
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Must pass to achieve 'good' condition.	
Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		Must pass.	
Number of criteria passed		5 or 6 to achieve 'good' condition.	
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓	
Acid grassland types (Result out of 5 criteria)			
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)		
Non-acid grassland types (Result out of 6 criteria)			
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)		
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)		

Appendix 6: Planning Policy and Legislation

This section summarises the relevant national and local legislative and policy background, statutory and non-statutory guidelines relevant to the potential commercial development.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2025)

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

The principal national planning policy guidance with respect to the potential development is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The most recent update of the NPPF was published in December 2024 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This guidance sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. Three dimensions to sustainable development have been identified in the NPPF: economic, social, and environmental.

The NPPF Section 187 states that:

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

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- 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;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- 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;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."*

Section 188 states that:

"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally 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."

Section 189 states that:

"Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, 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 the Broads⁶³. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while

development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

Section 190 states that:

“When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development⁶⁴ other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.”*

Section 192 states that:

“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 steppingstones 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.”*

Section 193 states that:

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”*

Section 194 states that:

“The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or

projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site."

Environment Act 2021

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

Effective 2024, the statutory mandate for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as established by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, requires all developments subject to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to provide a minimum +10% gain in biodiversity value. This requirement is a mandatory condition of planning permission, applicable to all new developments except those expressly excluded under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Pursuant to the statutory framework established by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, every grant of planning permission is subject to a biodiversity gain condition under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This condition mandates that the biodiversity gain objective be satisfied via a minimum +10% net increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development baseline. This requirement serves as a condition precedent; accordingly, a Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted to and discharged by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in writing prior to the commencement of development. Any material operations initiated in the absence of such approval shall constitute a breach of planning control under Section 171A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Statutory provision requires that significant on-site biodiversity enhancements be maintained for a duration of no less than 30 years following the development's conclusion. This requirement is satisfied through the imposition of a planning condition, a planning obligation, or a conservation covenant. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, LPAs are empowered to utilise section 106 (s106) agreements to facilitate the delivery of on-site enhancements, the transfer of registered off-site biodiversity gains, or the use of statutory credits, while ensuring compliance through rigorous monitoring and reporting frameworks.

Species and Habitats Legislation

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1012/contents>

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidates all various amendments made to The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994, in respect of England and Wales. The 1994 Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive 1992 (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) into national law.

Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive list (respectively) habitats and species for which member states are required to establish and monitor SACs. The EC Birds Directive provides a similar network of sites (SPAs) for all rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex I and all regularly occurring migratory species, with particular focus on wetlands of international importance.

Together with SACs, SPAs form a network of pan-European protected areas known as 'NATURA 2000' sites.

The Habitats Regulations also make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade on the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, cut, uproot, destroy or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 4.

This legislation was amended in January 2021: The main changes to the 2017 Regulations are:

- “the creation of a national site network within the UK territory comprising the protected sites already designated under the Nature Directives, and any further sites designated under these Regulations
- the establishment of management objectives for the national site network (the ‘network objectives’)
- a duty for appropriate authorities to manage and where necessary adapt the national site network as a whole to achieve the network objectives
- an amended process for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- arrangements for reporting on the implementation of the Regulations, given that the UK no longer provides reports to the European Commission
- arrangements replacing the European Commission’s functions with regard to the imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) test where a plan or project affects a priority habitat or species
- arrangements for amending the schedules to the Regulations and the annexes to the Nature *Directives that apply to the UK.*”

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69?view=extent>

The WCA is the primary UK mechanism for statutory site designation (Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSIs]) and the protection of individual species listed under Schedule 1,2,5 and 8 of the Act, each subject to varying levels of protection.

Bats are fully protected under Schedule 5 and as such in England and Wales it is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Damage or destroy a bat roost
- Deliberately or recklessly disturb a bat
- Deliberately or intentionally obstruct access to a roost
- Possess, transport or sell a bat or parts of bats (dead or alive)

The consequences are outlined as 6 months in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW 2000)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

This legislation strengthens the provision of the 1981 WCA (as amended), both in respect of statutory sites such as SSSIs and protected species. It also places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities and other public bodies to further conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their functions, thus providing a statutory basis to the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process, which began in 1994. Section 74 of the Act lists the habitat types and species of principal importance in England. The UK

Biodiversity action Plan has now been superseded by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' (July 2012), however, many of the species and habitats in the UK and local BAPs have not been updated and are still considered relevant to date.

A Bill to amend the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to extend the right of public access to the countryside, including to woodlands, the Green Belt, waters and more grasslands; and for connected purposes is currently in second reading in the House of Commons (November 2022).

Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC 2006)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

The act places a duty of public authorities regarding the conservation of English wildlife and biodiversity. Section 41 sets out a list of species "of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity". Such species include but are not restricted to:

- Barbastelle
- Bechstein's
- Noctule
- Brown long eared
- Greater horseshoe
- Lesser horseshoe

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act (1996)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/3/enacted>

Because of the Wild Mammals Act, UK mammal species are protected from any unnecessary cruel acts. Such acts include any actions which may cause unnecessary suffering to the animal. As such, all UK bat species are protected under this law.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents>

Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, it is illegal to intentionally harm, injure, kill, and treat badgers with cruelty. The law also protects their setts from damage, destruction, or obstruction, and from having dogs sent into them. The Act consolidates previous laws, making it an offence to dig for badgers, sell, possess or control them without a licence, and badger baiting.