
Land North of 554 Canal Bridge, Semington

Preliminary Ecology Appraisal

February 2026

Client: AB Architectural
Design Ltd
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Non-Technical Summary

Site Location	Land North of 554 Canal Bridge, Semington, BA14 6JT (central grid reference: ST 89966 61159).
Scope of Works and Survey Methods	Preliminary Ecology Appraisal comprising a Habitat Survey and Suitability Assessment for Protected Species, supplemented with a desk study. Survey undertaken on 26th February 2026. The Habitat Survey was undertaken with reference to UKHab Classification (2023) and CIEEM (2018) and the Suitability Assessment for Protected Species included reference to BCT (2023).
Lead Personnel	Kate Hayward MCIEEM.
Site Description and Suitability Assessment	The site lies in a rural location to the north of the village of Semington. To the north and west are arable and pasture fields, to the south is a residential property and to the east is Canal Bridge road, beyond which is a section of the Old Canal. There are no nearby statutory designations and no relevant SSSI Impact Risk Zones affecting the site. The site lies in an Amber Risk Zone for great crested newt, There is a section of the Old Canal to the East. The nearest recorded pond is 920m away. The site occupies a small field unit, approximately 0.15 hectares in size. The dominant habitat is neutral grassland with an area of sparsely vegetated bare ground and ruderal vegetation in the centre of the site. Hedgerows form the north, east and west boundaries and a timber fence forms the south boundary. With consideration to protected/notable species: • A mature ash tree within the east boundary hedgerow has a rot hole and a split trunk, assessed as offering suitability to multiple roosting bats. The hedgerow boundaries offer moderate-quality foraging and commuting habitat to bats. • The hedgerow boundaries offer suitable nesting bird habitat. • The grassland, hedgerows and a brash/log pile offer refuge for common and widespread species of small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.
The Proposal	The site is the subject of a planning application for the construction of a self-build, single-storey, eco-dwelling. This will result in the partial loss of neutral grassland on site. The hedgerows and associated features will be retained in their entirety. An attenuation pond is proposed.
Recommendations	Recommendations for habitat protection, precautionary measures to be taken during construction, sensitive lighting and biodiversity enhancements have been provided.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In February 2026, Seasons Ecology was instructed by AB Architectural Design Ltd, on behalf of the landowner, to undertake a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal of Land North of 554 Canal Bridge, Semington, BA14 6JT (central grid reference: ST 89966 61159). The site is the subject of a planning application for the construction of a self-build, single-storey, eco-dwelling.
- 1.1.2 The Preliminary Ecology Appraisal consisted of a Habitat Survey and Suitability Assessment for Protected Species. The survey was supplemented with a desk study.

1.2 Scope and Objectives of Survey

- 1.2.1 The survey was undertaken to identify and record the habitats on site and to assess the potential of the site to support protected/notable species. The purpose of the survey is to make known any ecological constraints or considerations that may be relevant to the proposal and to inform biodiversity enhancements.
- 1.2.2 This report is based on the findings of a survey undertaken on 26th February 2026.
- 1.2.3 The report is supported by the following:
- Annex 1: Summary of Legislation and Planning Policy.
 - Annex 2: Habitat Plan.
 - Annex 3: Site Photographs.

1.3 Personnel

- 1.3.1 The survey was led by Director, Kate Hayward, who has produced this report. Kate is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) and has over 25 years' experience as a professional consultant advising on development projects and protected species and habitats, including acting as the named ecologist on European Protected Species licences.
- 1.3.2 The survey was assisted by Patrick Ryan and Hayley Evenett, Assistant Ecologists.

2. Legislation and Planning Policy

- 2.1.1 This report has been compiled with reference to relevant legislation and national planning policies, which protect wildlife. Annex 1 provides a brief summary of this legislation and policy.



3. Desk Study

3.1 Methods

3.1.1 A web-based desk study was undertaken in February 2026 prior to the survey to provide local information that may be relevant to the proposal. The following online resources were consulted:

- The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website¹, to obtain information on:
 - Statutory designations within 2km of the site and within 4km for designations with bats as a primary feature.
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones and Bat Consultation Zones relevant to the site.
 - Habitats on or adjacent to the site listed on the Priority Habitats Inventory.
 - European Protected Species licences issued within 2km.
 - Other species information that may be relevant to the proposal.
- Google Maps², to view aerial photographs, maps and mapnik data, to assess the ecological context of the site.

3.2 Results

Statutory Designations

3.2.1 There are no statutory designations within 2km of the site. The nearest statutory designation is Seend Cleeve Quarry SSSI, located approximately 3.2km to the east. This is a geological designation.

3.2.2 There are no statutory designations with bats as a primary feature within 4km of the site.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones and Bat Consultation Zones

3.2.3 The site lies within the Impact Risk Zones for nearby SSSIs. These Impact Risk Zones require consultation with Natural England on aviation proposals. Therefore, consultation will not be required.

3.2.4 The site does not lie within a Bat Consultation Zone.

Priority Habitats Inventory

3.2.5 There are three Priority Habitats located within 500m of the site. These are two Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodlands, which lie approximately 380m to the north-east and 270m to the south-west, and a Priority Habitat Traditional Orchard, which lies approximately 290m to the south-west.

¹ <http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

² <http://acme.com/planimeter/>



European Protected Species Licences

- 3.2.6 There are four European Protected Species licences that have been issued within 2km of the site. Three are for bats and one is for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*:
- A licence for serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, for a location approximately 530m to the south.
 - A licence for brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, for a location approximately 1.3km to the north.
 - A licence for brown long-eared, common pipistrelle and serotine, for a location approximately 1.8km to the north-east.
 - A licence for great crested newt, for a location approximately 920m to the north-east.

Other Relevant Species Information

- 3.2.7 There is one great crested newt licence return which has been submitted within 2km of the site, for a location approximately 1.5km to the north-east.
- 3.2.8 There are six great crested newt pond surveys (2017-2019) that have been conducted within 2km of the site. Of the six locations surveyed, presence was recorded at two locations, one approximately 1.3km to the north-east and one approximately 1.8km to the south-east.
- 3.2.9 The site lies in an Amber Risk Zone for great crested newt. Amber zones contain main population centres for great crested newt and comprise important pathways of connected habitats for this species.

Ecological Context

- 3.2.10 The site lies in a rural location to the north of the village of Semington. To the north and west are arable and pasture fields, to the south is a residential property and to the east is Canal Bridge road, beyond which is a section of the Old Canal. The wider area contains further arable and pasture fields bordered by mature hedgerows with occasional trees, scattered low-density houses and agricultural buildings. An industrial estate lying on the south-west edge of Melksham is located approximately 500m to the north.
- 3.2.11 The Kennet and Avon Canal flows approximately 100m to the south of the site at its nearest point. Semington Brook flows approximately 280m to the south of the site at its nearest point.
- 3.2.12 There are two ponds evident within 500m of the site, located approximately 160m to the north-west and 250m to the north.



4. Survey

4.1 Method

Habitat Survey

- 4.1.1 A systematic walkover of the site was undertaken on 26th February 2026. Notes were taken on the habitats present, and their suitability to support protected and notable species. Any incidental evidence of protected and notable species was noted. The survey was carried out with reference to UKHab Classification (2023)³, CIEEM 2018⁴ and BS 42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development* (BSI 2013).

Daytime Bat Walkover and Roost Assessment

- 4.1.2 A Daytime Bat Walkover of the site was carried out to observe, assess and record any habitats suitable for bats to roost, commute and forage both on site and in the surrounding area.
- 4.1.3 Trees on site were subject to a Ground Level Tree Assessment to identify Potential Roosting Features (PRF) on the exterior of trees. The trees are then assessed as follows:
- PRF – I: PRF(s) only suitable for individual bats or a very small number of bats either due to their size or a lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
 - PRF – M: PRF(s) suitable for multiple bats and could be used by a maternity colony.
- 4.1.4 The site is assessed as either having no habitat features, or *Negligible, Low, Moderate or High* suitability to foraging and commuting bats.
- 4.1.5 The walkover and roost assessments were undertaken with reference to BCT, 2023⁵.

Constraints to Survey

- 4.1.6 The survey is not able to record flora or fauna that may appear on the site at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of the survey.

³ The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab) (2023). Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J.

⁴ CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

⁵ BCT (2023): Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.



4.2 Site Description

- 4.2.1 The site occupies a small field unit, approximately 0.15 hectares in size. The dominant habitat is neutral grassland with an area of sparsely vegetated bare ground and ruderal vegetation in the centre of the site. Hedgerows form the north, east and west boundaries and a timber fence forms the south boundary.
- 4.2.2 Habitats are described below and mapped on the habitat plan at Annex 2 with Target Notes highlighting features of interest. Site photographs are provided at Annex 3.

4.3 Habitat Descriptions

Neutral Grassland

- 4.3.1 Neutral grassland is the dominant habitat on site. The grassland was manged to a short sward at the time of survey. The dominant grasses include Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and fescue *Festuca* species. The grassland contains frequent soft-rush *Juncus effusus* and occasional pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, and a low cover of herbs, including creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, vetch *Vicia* species, ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, lesser celandine *Ficaria verna*, lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*, bristly oxtongue *Helminthotheca echinoides*, docks *Rumex* species, thistles *Cirsium* species and wild teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*.

Sparsely Vegetated Bare Ground

- 4.3.2 Sparsely vegetated bare ground is present in the centre of the site, supporting sparse neutral grassland species and additional hedge woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, speedwell *Veronica* species, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, hairy bittercress *Cardamine hirsuta*, red deadnettle *Lamium purpureum*, field forget-me-not *Myosotis arvensis*, common comfrey *Symphytum officinale*, hemlock *Conium maculatum*, willowherb *Epilobium* species, geranium *Geranium* species, yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and shepherd's-purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*.
- 4.3.3 A brash/log pile is located on the sparsely vegetated bare ground (Target Note 1, Annex 2).

Hedgerows

- 4.3.4 Hedgerows form three of the site's boundaries:
- The east boundary hedgerow, adjacent to Canal Bridge road, is approximately 55m in length and 3-4m in width. Woody hedgerow species comprise hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, English elm *Ulmus procera* and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, with one tree, a mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, the ash having a split trunk and rot hole, assessed as PRF-M suitability to roosting bats (suitable for multiple bats and could be used by a maternity colony, Target Note 2, Annex 2). The hedgerow contains occasional bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and ivy *Hedera helix*.
There is a wet ditch associated with the hedgerow. A post-and-wire fence runs the length of the hedgerow.
 - The north boundary hedgerow is approximately 30m in length and 1.5m in width. Woody hedgerow species comprise blackthorn, with bramble and ivy.
There is a ditch associated with the hedgerow (appearing recently created), A post-and-wire fence runs the length of the hedgerow.



- The west boundary hedgerow is approximately 60m in length and 2m in width. Woody hedgerow species comprise hawthorn, blackthorn, English elm (including one dead tree) and willow species.

There is a ditch associated with the hedgerow. A post-and-wire fence runs the length of the hedgerow.

5. Evaluation

- 5.1.1 The site is a small grassland field unit, supporting a low diversity of habitats, including neutral grassland and hedgerows with an associated low number of trees and ditches. The grassland is characteristic of rush-pasture with prominent stands of soft-rush. The hedgerows are Priority Habitat hedgerows, and the east boundary hedgerow is species-rich. There are **no** rare habitats on site.
- 5.1.2 The hedgerows and associated features afford the site with elements of naturalness, permanence and fragility, which is otherwise absent. They connect to the wider hedgerow network.
- 5.1.3 The site has some value beyond the immediate Zone of Influence owing to the hedgerow boundaries. The site is assessed as ecological valuable at a Local Level, contributing a small part to the wider network of habitats.
- 5.1.4 There are **no** statutory designations or Priority Habitats within the wider area, identified as being at risk, owing to their distance from the site and the small scale of the proposal.

5.2 Protected and Notable Species

- 5.2.1 The potential for protected and notable species is considered below:

- Flora - No notable plant species or communities were recorded on site. The site has limited potential to support notable plant species owing to its function and management.

No invasive, non-native species were evident on site at the time of the survey.

- Bats - There is one tree on site, located within the east boundary hedgerow, which offers PRF-M suitability to roosting bats, suitable for multiple bats and could be used by a maternity colony (Target Note 2). There is no other potential bat roosting habitat on site.

The boundary hedgerows offer moderate-quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in combination with the wider hedgerow network. Referring to the desk study, brown long-eared, common pipistrelle and serotine, are recorded locally. These species may use the hedgerow boundaries as part of wider foraging and commuting habitats.

- Birds - The hedgerow boundaries offer suitable nesting bird habitat.
- Badger - No evidence of badger activity or badger setts were identified on site. The grassland offers a small area of foraging habitat, and the hedgerow boundaries offer a commuting route.
- Other Mammals - The site provides a small area of refuge and foraging habitats for common and widespread species of small mammals, including hedgehog *Erinaceus*



europaeus, including the grassland with stands of soft-rush, the hedgerow boundaries and the brash/log pile (Target Note 1).

The hedgerows offer suitable habitat to dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* with foodplants present. However, the site is relatively isolated for this species, being surrounded by large arable field units, a road immediately to the east, the Kennet and Avon Canal approximately 100m to the south, and it is distant from nearby woodlands, with barriers in between. Therefore, it is considered that there is negligible potential for dormouse to utilise the hedgerow boundaries.

- Reptiles and Amphibians - The site offers a small area of refuge habitat for common and widespread species of reptiles and amphibians, such as common toad *Bufo bufo* and slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, including the grassland with stands of soft-rush, the hedgerow boundaries with ditches, and the brash/log pile (Target Note 1).
With consideration to the potential for great crested newt to utilise the site, there are two ponds evident within 250m of the site, and a section of the Old Canal, and four records for this species between 920m and 1.8km from the site. The site also lies in an Amber Risk Zone for this species. Therefore, there is moderate potential for great crested newt to utilise the site.
- Invertebrates – The site is suitable to support a low diversity and abundance of invertebrates.



6. Recommendations

6.1.1 The site is the subject of a planning application for the construction of a self-build, single-storey, eco-dwelling. This will result in the partial loss of neutral grassland on site. The hedgerows and associated features will be retained in their entirety. An attenuation pond is proposed.

6.1.2 With consideration to the proposal, the following is recommended:

6.2 Great Crested Newt

6.2.1 A presence/absence survey for great crested newt is recommended of the on-site ditches. Subject to access/landowner consent, the survey should be extended, if possible, to the pond identified 160m to the north-west and the section of Old Canal approximately 30m to the east. The survey must be conducted between mid-April and June.

6.3 Habitat Protection

6.3.1 Appropriate tree protection fencing should be erected along the boundary hedgerows and around the root protection zone of the mature ash located within the east boundary hedgerow (Target Note 2).

6.4 Precautionary Protection Measures

- 6.4.1 The following protection measures should be implemented prior to and during construction:
- The grassland should be maintained as a short sward up to the commencement of construction.
 - Protection fencing should be installed prior to any works, including bringing materials and machinery onto the site.
 - Site office/welfare facilities should be located away from the hedgerow boundaries.
 - Hand searches should be undertaken by an Ecological Clerk of Works during soil stripping and removal of the brash/log pile (Target Note 1), with any animals found relocated to the west boundary hedgerow away from the works.
 - During construction, any trenches left open overnight should include a means of escape for animals. A plank angled from the bottom to the top of the trench, will allow animals (including badger and hedgehog) to escape.
 - Noisy machinery should cease one hour before sunset to minimise any disturbance to wildlife.
 - In the event of a protected species being discovered at any stage during the works, then works should stop and advice sought from an Ecologist.

6.5 Lighting

6.5.1 Owing to the rural location of the site, external lighting should be limited to one/two low-level downlighters, operated by motion sensors and timers to minimise times of illumination.



6.6 Biodiversity Enhancements

6.6.1 The proposal is for a self-build residential dwelling. It is therefore exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain. However, there are opportunities to incorporate biodiversity features. The following should be provided:

- One bat box should be built-in to the south elevation of the new dwelling, at a height of at least 3m off the ground.
- One swift box should be built-in to the north elevation of the new dwelling, located under the roofline.
- Bee bricks (or drill holes in stonework) should be incorporated into built structures, such as the new office, car port and any new garden walls.
- A refuge/hibernaculum should be created along the west boundary hedgerow, near to the new attenuation pond. This should be a partially buried pile of logs and rubble, back-filled with spoil.
- A beneficial planting scheme should be devised with species selected for their benefit to wildlife. Non-native, invasive species should be avoided owing to the site's rural location and the potential for their spread into the wild.
- The attenuation pond should have natural, gently-shelving banks to allow easy access for amphibians.



7. Annexes

Annex 1: Legislation and Planning Policy

A summary of relevant legislation and national policy is provided below. For each individual case, it is advised to consult the relevant documents in full and obtain legal advice, where appropriate.

There are several UK legislation tools, which are listed below. European legislation has not been included as it is incorporated in UK legislation by domestic provisions.

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit)

In 1992, the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)⁶ came into force. This provides for the creation of a network of protected wildlife sites across the European Union, known as 'Natura 2000'. This network consists of designated sites, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC)⁷. These sites form part of a series of measures aimed at conserving important and threatened habitats and species.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 commonly known as 'the Habitat Regulations' transpose the Habitats Directive into national law and set out the provisions for the protection and management of species and habitats of European importance, including Natura 2000 sites. The Regulations have been amended in England in relation to candidate SACs and SPAs. These are sites submitted by the Government for consideration as part of the Natura 2000 network, and are also now defined as European Sites. All European Sites are of national importance and have been notified as SSSIs.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as Amended in Quinquennial Review and by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000⁸

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981⁹ provides the foundation for much of the statutory wildlife protection in the UK. Part I deals with the protection of plants, birds and other animals and Part II deals with the designation of SSSIs.

The following broad areas are covered by the Act:

Nature Conservation - Protecting those sites which are National Nature Reserves (NNR) and SSSIs.

Wildlife - Listing endangered or rare species in need of protection and creating offences for killing, disturbing or injuring such species. The disturbance of any nesting bird during the breeding season is also noted as an offence.

The Act also makes it an offence to cause to grow in the wild certain plant species or to release certain fauna into the wild. The Act is enforced by local authorities.

⁶ European Commission (1992). Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. European Commission, Brussels.

⁷ European Commission (1979). Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds, European Commission, Brussels.

⁸ Secretary of State, 2000. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

⁹ Secretary of State, 1981. Wildlife and Countryside Act. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.



Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides a new statutory right of access to the countryside and improves upon the rights of way system, providing stronger protection for both wildlife and countryside.

Part III of the Act - Nature Conservation and Wildlife Protection: A number of measures to promote and enhance wildlife conservation are detailed, including improving protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and increasing penalties for deliberate damage to SSSIs. The Act affords statutory protection to Ramsar Sites which are wetlands designated under the International Convention on Wetlands.

National Planning Policy Framework, 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and revised in July 2021. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system and how these are expected to be addressed. The NPPF is a material consideration for the purposes of planning decision-making.

The NPPF places a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The NPPF has an environmental objective to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The presence of a legally protected species is a material consideration for a local authority dealing with planning applications for any development that would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and geological conservation¹⁰, prepared in support of the former PPS9, is still relevant and provides more guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation.

Biodiversity Action Plans

In 1994, the Government produced the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)¹¹, a national strategy for the conservation of biodiversity. Regional and District/Borough BAPs apply the UK BAP at a local level. The 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' succeeded the UK BAP in July 2012¹². The UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats remain, however, important and valuable reference sources. Notably, they have been used to help draw up statutory lists of priorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, there are 56 habitats of principal importance and 943 species of principal importance.

¹⁰ ODPM Circular 06/2005 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Importance within the Planning System.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7692/147570.pdf

¹¹ Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1994. Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan. London.

¹² JNCC and Defra (on behalf of the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group). 2012. UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. July 2012. Available from: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189>



Species/species group	Legal protection and policy
Flora	A number of plant species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit). It is an offence to deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy these wild plants. It is also an offence for any purpose to possess, sell or exchange such a plant. In addition, a number of plant species are species of principal importance in England (formerly referred to as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species), LBAP priority species and/or notable species that are a material consideration in planning.
Bats	Bat species in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill bats; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which bats use for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Seven of the 18 species of bats occurring in the UK are species of principal importance in England and many are also included in LBAPs.
Badgers	Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1979. Under this legislation it is illegal to kill, injure or take badgers or to interfere with a badger sett in any way.
Otters	Otters in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill an otter; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb otter; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which an otter uses for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Otter is a species of principal importance in England.
Water voles	Water voles in England and Wales are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a water vole; • Intentionally disturb water vole in their breeding or resting places; and • Deliberately damage, destroy or obstruct of a breeding site or resting place. Water vole is a species of principal importance in England.



Dormice	Dormice in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a dormouse; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb dormice; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a dormouse uses for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Dormouse is a species of principal importance in England.
Other mammals	Several other species of mammals, whilst not afforded specific legal protection, are of note and consideration to such species is necessary in respect to planning in accordance with national and often local policy. Such species are typically identified as species of principal importance in England and/or LBAPs. Species of principal importance in England include brown hare and hedgehog.
Birds	All wild birds in England and Wales are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Kill, injure or take any wild bird; • Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and, • Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird. Bird species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act are afforded further protection and it is illegal to disturb such species while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird. A number of bird species are also included as species of principal importance in England and LBAPs.
Reptiles	Smooth snakes and sand lizards in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Deliberately capture, injure or kill a smooth snake or sand lizard; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb a smooth snake or sand lizard; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a smooth snake or sand lizard use for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Widespread species of reptile (slow worm, common lizard, grass snake and adder) are protected against killing, injury and sale. Reptile species are also species of principal importance in England and often LBAP species.
Amphibians	Great crested newts and natterjack toads in England and Wales are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

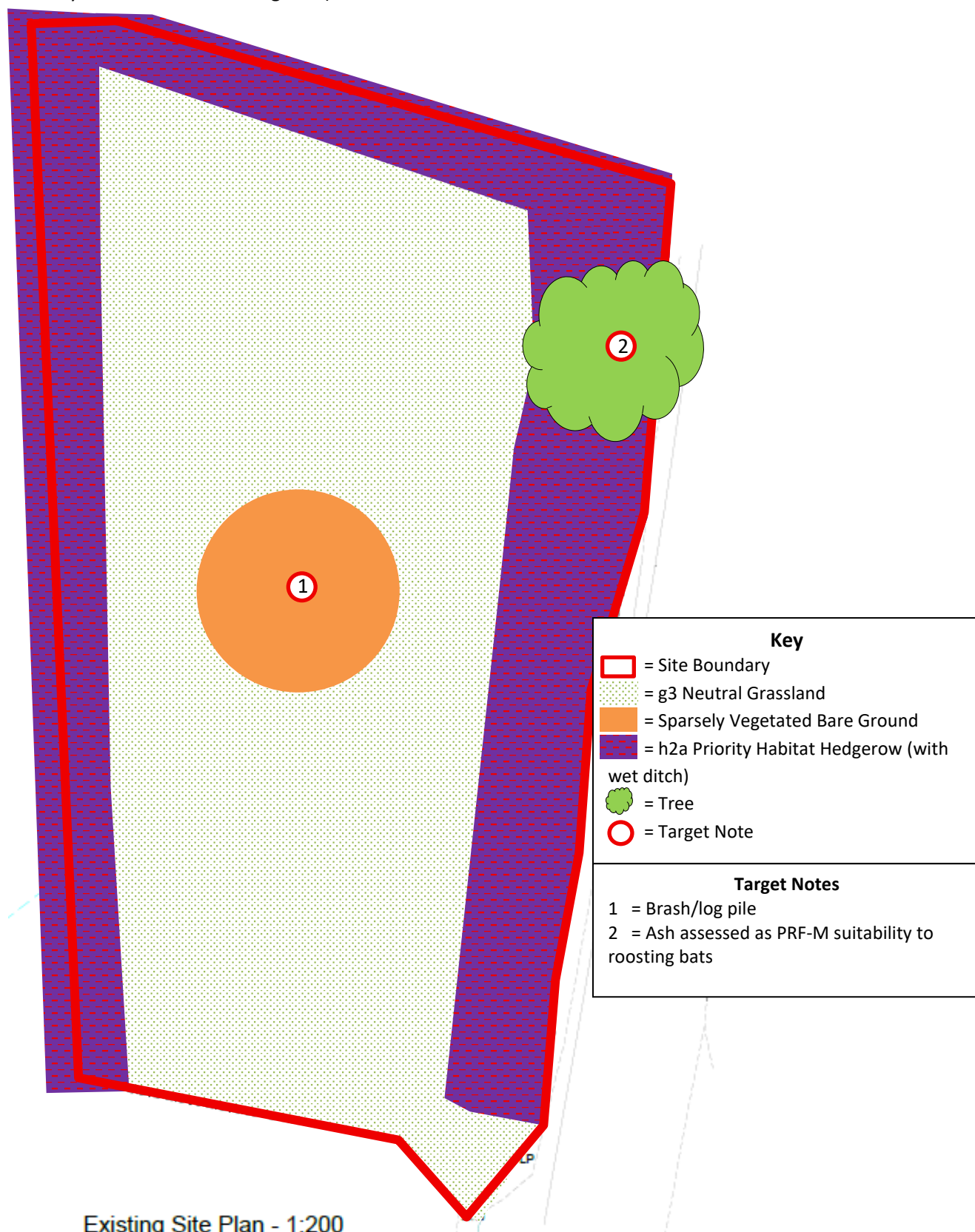


	• Deliberately capture, injure or kill a great crested newt or natterjack toad; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt or natterjack toad; • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a great crested newt or natterjack toad use for shelter or protection; and • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. Great crested newt, pool frog, natterjack toad and common toad are species of principal importance in England. These and other amphibian species are also often included in LBAPs.
Invertebrates	45 species of invertebrate are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Intentional kill, injure or take such species; • Deliberately damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place used by such species; and, • Disturb such species when occupying such a structure or place. A further 24 species are only afforded partial protection (typically only against sale). Stag beetle for instance is only protected against sale. Eight species and their habitats are also afforded further protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended) (EU Exit). 398 species of invertebrate are included as species of principal importance in England and such species are often also included within LBAPs.



Annex 2: Habitat Map (February 2026)

(Plan provided by AB Architectural Design Ltd)



Annex 3: Site Photographs (February 2026)

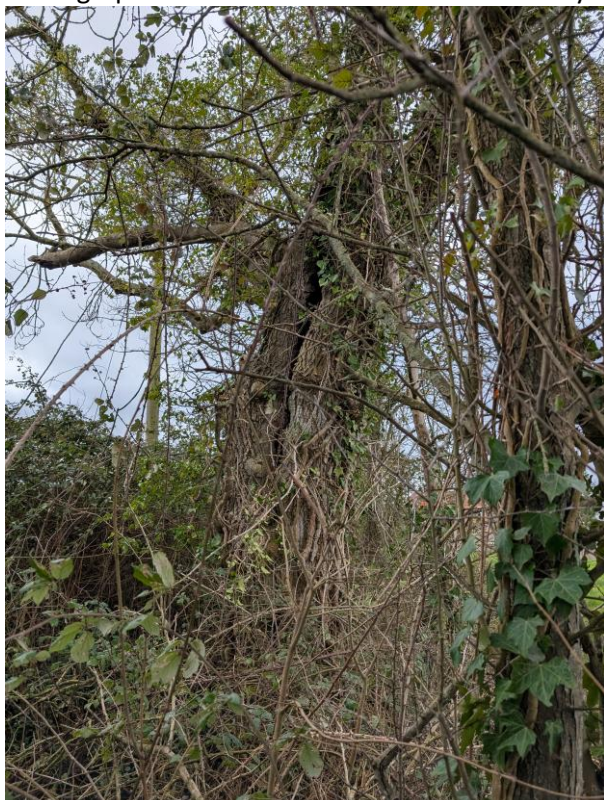
Photograph 1: The site looking south, showing the sparsely vegetated bare ground, the neutral grassland with prominent stands of soft-rush, the east boundary hedgerow and fenced south boundary.



Photograph 2: Brash/log pile in the centre of the site (Target Note 1).



Photograph 3: Ash tree within the east boundary hedgerow, assessed as PRF-M (Target Note 2).



Photograph 4: West boundary hedgerow and associated wet ditch.



Photograph 5: North boundary hedgerow and associated wet ditch.

