

Greena Ecological Consultancy

**PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL
ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Contents

BRIEF	4
SUMMARY	5
1. INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.1 BACKGROUND	7
1.2 LEGISLATION	7
1.2.1 National Planning Policy	7
1.2.2 Bats	9
1.2.3 Birds	10
1.2.4 Badgers (<i>Meles meles</i>)	11
1.2.5 Reptiles.....	11
1.2.6 Hazel dormice (<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>)	12
1.2.7 Great Crested Newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>)	12
1.2.8 Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>).....	13
2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	13
3. SITE DESCRIPTION	14
3.1 SURROUNDING AREA	14
3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE	14
4. METHODS	16
4.1 HABITATS	16
4.2 BATS	16
4.3 BIRDS	17
4.4 OTHER PROTECTED SPECIES	17
5. REPORT LIMITATIONS	17
6. RESULTS	17
6.1 DESIGNATED SITES.....	17
6.2 HABITATS	18
6.3 BATS	26
6.4 BIRDS	27
6.5 OTHER PROTECTED SPECIES	27
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	27
7.1 DESIGNATED SITES & HABITATS	27
7.2 BATS	28
7.3 BIRDS	28
7.4 OTHER PROTECTED SPECIES	28
8. MITIGATION & ENHANCEMENT	28
8.1 HABITATS	28
8.1.1 Grassland	28
8.2 BATS	29
8.3 BIRDS	29
8.4 OTHER PROTECTED SPECIES	29
9. REFERENCES.....	30

Brief

An ecological assessment survey was requested to support a planning application for two areas. The western area consists of buildings and hardcore with a small area of modified grassland. The eastern area affected by planning application consists of grassland, buildings and hardcore. Access and all bordering features are to be retained and not affected by proposed plans.

This ecological survey and report are intended to ascertain sufficient information to evaluate the situation adequately in preparation of the above-mentioned works. The information gathered will be necessary to comply with European Regulations, which relate to planning regulations and with The Wildlife and Countryside Directives and Habitat Regulations.

Consultation with the Local Planning Authority, in this case Wiltshire Council, is required for the planning application.

Summary

- Greena Ecological Consultancy was instructed by planning consultant, Context Planning Ltd, and the owner of the site to perform a daytime field survey, desktop survey and following preliminary ecological appraisal report.
- The survey site is comprised of two areas; the western area consists mainly of hardstanding and buildings. There are a small area of hardstanding and a small area of modified grassland. The eastern site area affected site mainly of modified grassland. The area further consists of a polytunnel, a netted tunnel and buildings part of a plant nursery which has been established for the last 10 years. The tunnels and buildings are to be retained. The owner has planted native trees in the area of grassland and allowed for wilder areas to be created.
- The site was surveyed on the 19th of December 2025 by inspection only.
- During the daytime survey on the 19th of December 2025 no evidence of bats or suitable roosting features were identified on site. Bordering trees in the hedgerow along the site boundaries and trees located on site were subject to a ground walk over survey. To ensure bat habitat is not affected existing boundary features are not to be illuminated by more than 0.5 lux. A lighting scheme is to be created and approved prior to work commencing. At least one bat box is to be installed on proposed dwelling.

The habitat on and surrounding the site was deemed to provide high potential for foraging and commuting bats as the bordering hedgerows with limited artificial lighting provide flight routes and foraging opportunities. Habitats near affected site includes priority woodland and grassland habitats provide suitable roosting and foraging opportunities.

- During the survey on the 19th of December 2025 no obvious bird nests were identified on site. However, scrub and trees present on site were deemed to provide high suitability for nesting birds. Enhancement measures on site include installing at one bird box on retained trees.
- A walkover survey of the site and areas within 30m of the site was performed to identify any signs (sett, animal path, latrine, hair etc) of *badger (Meles meles)* presence. No badger setts or animal paths were identified. The hedgerows bordering affected site was, however, deemed as suitable for badgers and individual *badger (Meles meles)* may move through the site.
- Other protected species included in the survey were plants species, invertebrates, reptile species, amphibian species, hedgehogs and *hazel dormice (Muscardinus avellanarius)*.

If any vegetation clearance is to take place this is to be conducted in two stages, the first stage is to leave vegetation at 30cm height, wait at least 48 hours prior to conducting the second stage of clearance which is to be as close to the ground as possible.

- As a precaution the site should be kept tidy throughout construction to ensure no animals take refuge in building material and equipment. Furthermore, any excavation

deeper than 1m and any pipework with a diameter larger than 120mm should be covered overnight to ensure no animals fall in and get trapped.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Greena Ecological Consultancy was instructed by planning consultant, Context Planning Ltd, and the owner of the site to undertake a survey to support a planning application to install a parking area and for retrospective planning for two compost loos as well as change of use from agricultural field to garden in another area.

The affected site currently consists of modified grassland, individual trees, buildings and developed sealed surface. The daytime survey was carried out on the 19th of December 2025.

Greena have carried out extensive fieldwork for bats in the area where at least 15 bat species have been recorded.

The extended surrounding off site habitat consists of agricultural cropland and grassland, woodland, and areas of residential buildings. Extended areas of woodland and grassland offer suitable roosting, nesting, commuting and foraging opportunities for a range of animals including bats, birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, invertebrates and other biodiverse subgroups.

1.2 Legislation

1.2.1 National Planning Policy

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment:

- Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - 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);
 - 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;
 - Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
 - 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
 - Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 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.

- 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 the Broads⁵⁹. The scale and extent of development within all 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.
- When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development 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:
 - 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;
 - The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
 - Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.
- Within areas defined as Heritage Coast, planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate unless it is compatible with its special character.

Habitats and biodiversity:

- To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
 - 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 biodiversity⁶¹; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
 - 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.
- When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
 - 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;
 - 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;
 - 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 reasons⁶³ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
 - 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.
- The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:
 - Potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
 - Listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
 - 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.
- 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.

1.2.2 Bats

All UK bat species and their roosts are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through inclusion in Schedule 5, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Regulations designate bats as European Protected Species (EPS).

Taken together, the Acts and Regulations protecting bats make it an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure, capture or take bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats. This particularly relates to disturbance that is likely to:
 - Impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young;
 - Impair their ability to hibernate or (for migratory species) migrate; and/or
 - Affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- Damage or destroy bat roosts;
- Possess or transport a bat or part of a bat, unless acquired legally; and
- Sell, offer for sale or exchange bats or parts of bats.

A roost is any structure or place used for shelter or protection. Bats need to have access to a number of roosts because they use different roosts depending on season, breeding status and prevailing weather conditions. For this reason roosts are protected whether or not bats are present at the time.

As bats are designated EPS, development and building works that are likely to result in the disturbance of bats, damage to or destruction of their roosts, or require bats to be caught or translocated, usually require an EPS licence to be obtained from Natural England before any

works begin. Obtaining a licence involves completing an Application Pack, including a Method Statement that details mitigation appropriate to maintaining the 'favourable conservation status' of the local bat population. Three conditions must be met before a licence can be granted:

- There is no satisfactory alternative;
- The development will not be detrimental to the maintenance of local bat populations at a 'favourable conservation status' in their natural range; and
- The development must be for 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature'.

An EPS licence is required for all development activities if there is a reasonable likelihood that an offence against Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) or Environmental Damage Regulation 2009 (as amended) will be committed.

The following offences could potentially be committed by carrying out the proposed development if any bat species are present during the conversion works:

- Capturing or killing – a wild animal of a European Protected Species (EPS) could be deliberately captured, injured or killed (Reg 41(1)(a));
- Disturbing EPS – a wild animal of an EPS could be deliberately disturbed including in particular a disturbance which is likely to impair its / their ability to survive or hibernate (Reg 41 (1)(b));
- Disturbing EPS whilst occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection – includes intentional and reckless disturbance (s9 (4)(b) WCA); and
- Damage of an EPS breeding site or resting place – (Reg 41 (1)(d)) – strict liability.

The above stated offences can be avoided where works are to take place when bats are not present and bat roost will be maintained unchanged. If roost is going to be available to bats at the time they usually occupy the structure, a continued ecological functionality of the site will be preserved. Suitable mitigation measures must be put in place prior, during and post works to ensure that continued ecological functionality will be maintained.

In case the above listed offences cannot be guaranteed to be avoided throughout the proposed development, an EPS licence to derogate must be sought.

The full EPS licence generally applies if the proposed development is to cause greater than low ecological impact. A simpler and faster way of carrying out development with low ecological impact had been implemented by Natural England under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL). It involves BMCL Registered Consultants who can supervise the proposed low impact development under their personal class licence, the need for preparation and processing of an EPS licence is vastly reduced. The development is carried out under a site registration prepared for the works and under the supervision of the licensed ecologist. BMCL only covers low impact development affecting low numbers of "common" bats and providing the site in question does not serve as a maternity or hibernation roost.

1.2.3 Birds

In the UK, with the exception of 13 'pest species' of birds, which may be killed by authorised persons only, wild birds have general protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1984). It is an offence to: kill, injure or take a wild bird; take, damage or destroy nests (in use or being built); and take or destroy eggs. Under Schedule I of the Act, some species (including the barn owl *Tyto alba*) are protected by special penalties at all times.

Birds receive additional protection under the European Communities Council Directives on the Conservation of Wild Birds. This directive relates to the conservation of all species of birds naturally occurring in the wild in European territory of the Member States, as well as their nests and habitats.

If any of the above resulted from a person being reckless, even if they had no intention of committing the offence, their action would still be considered an offence.

1.2.4 Badgers (*Meles meles*)

Badgers (Meles meles) are protected in Britain by the Protection of Badger Act 1992 as well as the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. The purpose of the Badger Act is to protect the animals from deliberate cruelty and from the incidental effects of lawful activities which could cause harm.

Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so
- Interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it
- Obstruct access to, or any entrance of a badger sett
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett

If any of the above resulted from a person being reckless, even if they had no intention of committing the offence, their action would still be considered an offence.

The following activities will generally require a licence from Natural England:

- Works undertaken using heavy machinery (generally tracked vehicles) within 30m of an active sett entrance
- Using lighter machinery (generally wheeled vehicles), particularly for any digging operation within 20m of an active sett entrance
- Light work such as hand digging or scrub clearance within 10m.

No offence will be committed if no parts of the sett will be damaged during works and if badgers are not occupying the sett at the time of works.

1.2.5 Reptiles

All reptile species native to the UK are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All native reptile species are protected in respect to their deliberate killing and injury only. Protection is not extended to their habitat. There are 6 native species of reptile which occupy the UK and all of them are UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species. *Sand lizard (Lacerta agilis)* and *Smooth snake (Coronella girondica)* are the rarest with restricted distribution (possible to occur in Somerset although more commonly found in south England) and protection under both, the UK and European legislation.

Common lizard (Zootoca vivipara) and *Slow-worm (Anguis fragilis)* are widespread and still common throughout much of England, in a wide variety of habitat types. *Grass snake (Natrix natrix)* is still fairly common throughout most of southern England and parts of lowland Wales but is rarer further north. *Adder (Vipera berus)* has become much less common in recent years but is still frequent in some areas of Britain (Gasc et al. 2004, Beebee & Griffiths 2000, Arnold 1995). Our view from the many site surveys we carry out is that *Slow-worm (Anguis fragilis)* are still common in many areas but *Grass snake (Natrix natrix)* and *Common lizard (Zootoca vivipara)* less so. *Adders (Vipera berus)* are becoming decidedly rare. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides protection for the *Slow-worm (Anguis fragilis)*, *Common lizard (Zootoca vivipara)*, *Grass snake (Natrix natrix)* and *Adders (Vipera berus)* from deliberate killing and injury. Sale and related commercial activities are also proscribed.

Edgar, Foster & Baker (2010) note declines in all the common reptile species in Britain in recent years, in some places severe. Factors may include:

- Habitat and micro-habitat degradation;
- Changes in land use such as agriculture and development;
- Fragmentation of habitats and population isolation;
- Ecological succession;

- Predation by domestic cats (and pheasants) and disturbance by dogs;
- Fire (especially moors and heaths);
- Inappropriate conservation/habitat management;
- Overgrazing;
- Invasive exotic plant species;
- Damage to habitats by excessive visitor pressure/off-road vehicles;

Deliberate killing by people, especially Adder, Grass snake and Slow worm.

1.2.6 Hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

The *hazel dormouse* (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) is legally protected under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended) and protected under the Conservation of Habitats and species Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Collectively and in summary:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture dormice
- Intentionally, deliberately or recklessly disturb dormice in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of dormice to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young or the local distribution of or abundance of the species;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to places used by Dormice for shelter or protection (whether occupied or not) or intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse whilst it is occupying such a place;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a dormouse;
- Possess or transport a dormouse (or any part thereof) unless under licence; and sell or exchange dormice.

Development proposals affecting the dormouse require a European Protected Species licence from Natural England.

The dormouse is a 'Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity' (sometimes referred to as a "Priority Species"), listed under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Section 40 (S40) of the Act places a 'Biodiversity Duty' on all public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their normal functions. This includes giving consideration to the restoration and enhancement of species and habitats.

1.2.7 Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

The *Great Crested Newt* (*Triturus cristatus*) is protected under European and British legislation. Under European legislation it is protected under EC Directive (92/43/EEC) 'The Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora', being listed under Annexes IIA and IVA. This is implemented in Britain under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) and is further protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

This prohibits the intentional killing of newts, the deliberate taking or destruction of eggs, damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place, intentional/reckless damage to or obstruction of a place used for shelter or protection, possession of a great crested newt and any form of trade of great crested newts.

Under British legislation, the great crested newt is given full protection under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This Act transposes into UK law the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (commonly referred to as the 'Bern Convention').

This prohibits the intentional killing, injuring or taking, possession or disturbance of great crested newts whilst occupying a place used for shelter or protection and the destruction of these places. Protection is given to all stages of life (e.g. adults, sub-adults, larvae, and eggs).

In combination the above legislation prohibits the following:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a great crested newt;

- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose;
- Deliberately capture or kill a great crested newt;
- Deliberately disturb a great crested newt;
- Deliberately take or destroy eggs of a great crested newt;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a great crested newt

Great crested newt (Triturus cristatus) has also been identified in the UK Biodiversity Steering Group

Report, Volume 2: Action Plan (UK BAP, 1995), as a priority species requiring conservation action and consequently, an Action Plan has been developed for the conservation of this species. The following are cited within the UK Action Plan as causing loss and decline:

- Loss of suitable breeding ponds caused by water table reduction, in-filling for development, farming, waste disposal, neglect or fish stocking and the degradation, loss and fragmentation of terrestrial habitats.
- Pollution and toxic effects of agrochemicals.

1.2.8 Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

Hedgehogs (Erinaceus europaeus) are listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs. The species is also listed under Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), which prohibits cruel treatment of *hedgehog (Erinaceus europaeus)* and the species is listed as a species of 'principal importance' under the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006, which confer a duty of responsibility to ensure minimal impact on the species for local planning authorities when making decisions. *Hedgehogs (Erinaceus europaeus)* are in serious decline, a major factor is deemed to be loss and damage of suitable habitat, depriving the species of both food and shelter from predation. In urban areas, the use of impermeable fencing, loss of greenery in gardens and increasing development is thought to be negatively impacting hedgehog populations too. Another threat is roads, with many thousands of hedgehogs killed by cars each year.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the survey and supporting desk study is to satisfy the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), identify ecological features within or near the site that could potentially pose a constraint to the proposed development and opportunities for incorporating biodiversity enhancements into the development proposals.

Wiltshire Council is the Local Planning Authority for the affected site. The local planning authority needs consultation prior to planning consent.

The following ecological features were relevant to the survey carried out by Greena Ecological Consultancy:

- Proximity of statutory and non-statutory designed wildlife sites;
- Proximity of Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, or local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and networks of these habitats;
- Legally protected wildlife species; and
- All other species of wildlife potentially affected by the proposed development.

This report has been produced with reference to current guidelines for preliminary ecological appraisal (CIEEM, 2017).

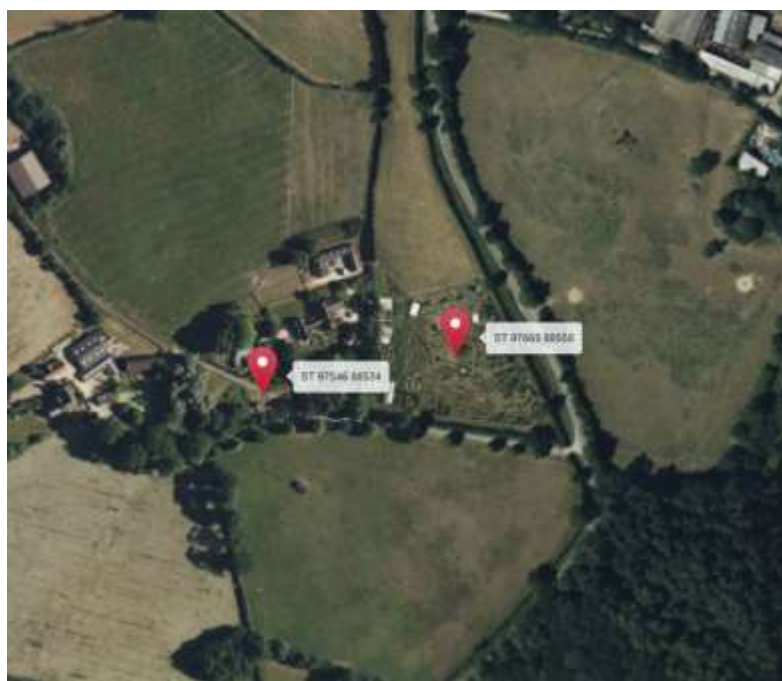
3. Site description

3.1 Surrounding Area

The affected site consists of two redline areas, the eastern area is located at OS grid reference ST 97665 88558 (centre of the area), and the western area is located at OS grid reference ST 97546 88534, see Figure 1. The affected site lies within Wiltshire County.

To the north of affected site is grassland grazed by horses. To the east of affected site is a native hedgerow followed by a public road. To the south of affected site is a native hedgerow followed by grassland and to the west of affected site are residential buildings. The two affected site areas are located within a larger area in the same ownership. The areas are located in a rural setting with limited artificial lighting.

Figure 1: Site Location



3.2 Description of the site

The eastern site area affected site mainly of modified grassland. The area further consist of a polytunnel, a netted tunnel and buildings part of a plant nursery which has been established for the last 10 years. The tunnels and buildings are to be retained. The owner has planted native trees in the area of grassland and allowed for wilder areas to be created.

The western area consist mainly of hardstanding and buildings. There is a small area of hardstanding and a small area of modified grassland. The site is located within a larger setting within the same ownership and was previously run as a tree for hire. The owner has through native tree planting and landscaping, allowing for wilder areas to be created, enhanced the site area for wildlife. Site location is presented in figure 2 and proposed plans are presented in figure 3.

Figure 2: Site location

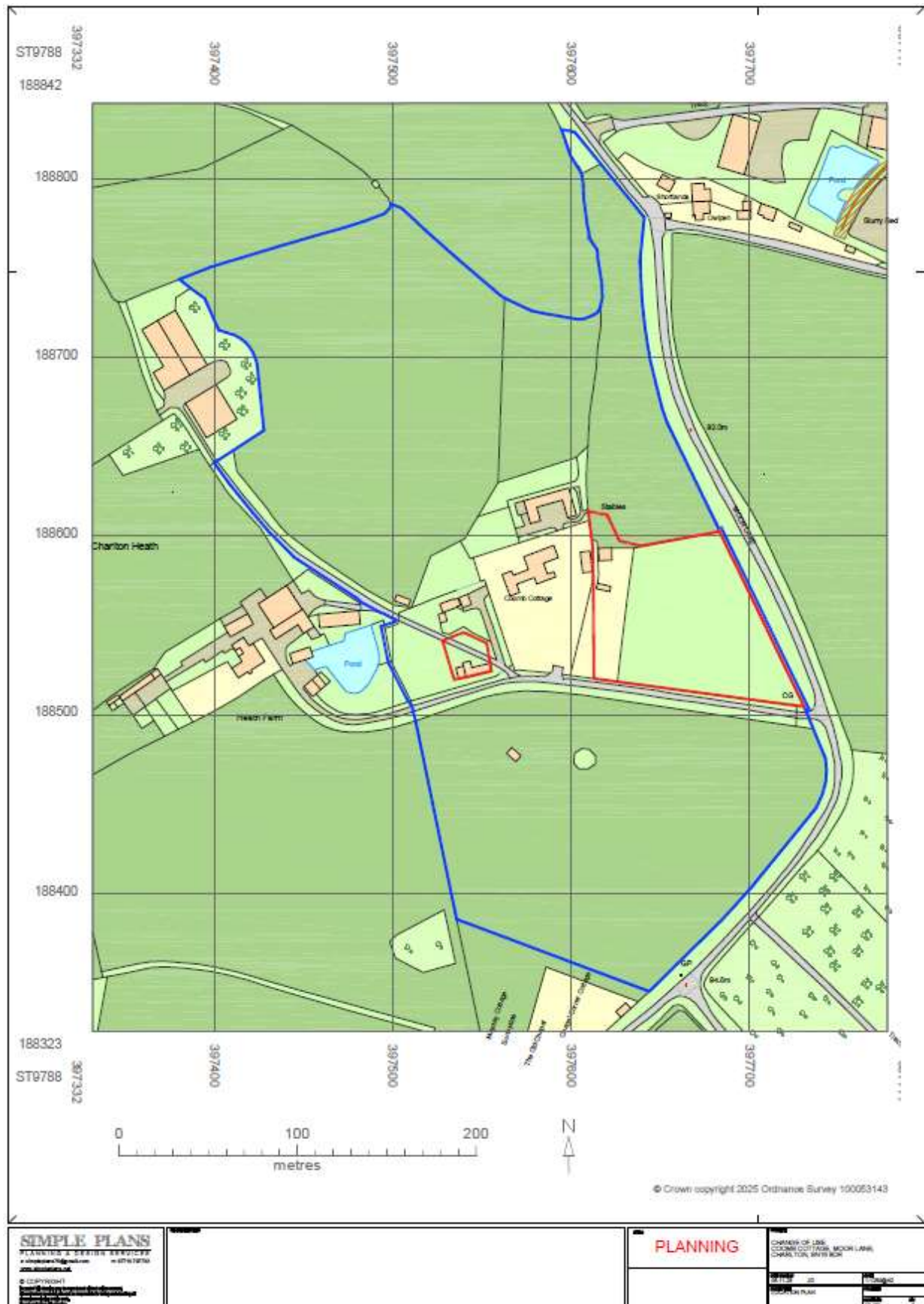


Figure 3: Proposed plans



4. Methods

Surveyor Geoff Billington MCIEEM, Greena Ecological Consultancy, holder of Natural England class 3 & 4 bat survey licences, undertook a daytime inspection of the site on the 19th of December 2025.

Searches were made for the following:

- Past records in this actual site;
- Nearest designated site and habitats; and
- Nearest licences for protected species that has been issued.

No overall desktop search has been carried out for bat records because 15 bat species have already been recorded by Greena and others in the local area including the more common four annex II species, so this assemblage are taken to be the species occurring in the area.

Instruments at hand if needed throughout the field survey were a high-end torch (Glarylight – GL-P70-DK-A), ladder, binoculars and suitable field guides.

4.1 Habitats

A walkover assessment of the site was conducted to assess habitats, UK Habitat Classification System Version 2.0 (2023) was used.

4.2 Bats

The site was surveyed using the following methodology:

- a) Signs of residency by bat species. This consisted of a slow methodical search for roosting bats and their signs. Droppings can be used to identify species and scratch marks and staining at roosts and exit holes shows the presence of bats. Similarly, the presence of spider webs at a potential roost entry can often indicate an absence of bats; and
- b) An assessment of the potential of a tree/building to provide a roost either in the summer (maternity) or winter (hibernation).

In accordance with Collins (2023) the habitats on-site were assessed for suitability, including roosting, foraging and commuting for bats. Links to known roosts and areas designated to bats were also assessed.

4.3 Birds

The site was inspected during the day time visit on the 19th of December 2025 for bird species, and to locate signs of use such as nests and/or droppings. Habitats were assessed for suitability to support nesting birds.

4.4 Other Protected Species

The site was inspected and assessed for the signs of presence and potential for other European and UK protected species on the 19th of December 2025.

Visual inspection was utilised as a method of search for other protected species.

5. Report Limitations

An ecological survey is limited by factors that affect the presence of plants and animal, this includes time of the year, migration and behaviour. Furthermore, species and features can be missed during the inspection due to the human factor and even though the ecological survey present species present on site, this is not a definite list of all species on-site and evidential absence of other species is not taken as conclusive proof that the species is not present or will be present on the affected site. The timing of the botanical survey was not performed during the optimal survey period.

The result of the desk- and field surveys are deemed to provide significant proof of habitats and species affected by proposed plans. Over time habitats and species supported within habitats can change through natural processes and human interference. Therefore, is this report valid for two years, in line with current guidelines, and thereafter the site will need re-surveying and the report updated accordingly to new findings.

6. Results

Greena Ecological Consultancy conducted a daytime survey on the 19th of December 2025, prior and following the field survey a desktop study was performed and completed.

6.1 Designated sites

There is one locally designated site and multiple nationally designated sites within 5km of the site, presented in figure 4. The nearest designated site is Cloatley Manor Farm Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 2.2km north of affected site. Cloatley Manor Farm Meadows comprises three adjacent fields supporting floristically rich, unimproved and lowland neutral grassland, along with an area of largely semi-improved grassland, all managed as hay meadows.

There are no internationally designated sites within 5km of affected site.

Figure 4: Designated sites

The western area is where proposed parking areas are located, this area consist of hardstanding, buildings and a small area of modified grassland. Two *willows* (*Salix spp.*) and one *wild cherry* (*Prunus avium*) are located in the area, all three trees are less than 7.5cm Diameter at Breast Heigh (DBH). In between the trees is an old vegetation bed. The trees and the old vegetation bed will be lost in proposed plans.

The eastern area mainly consists of an extended area of modified grassland. The grassland has had native tree planted by existing owner 7 years ago, the trees are spread out and the owner has allowed for wilder areas to be created within existing grassland. The western part of this area is used as a plant nursery for the last 10 years and is not affected by proposed plans. This area consists of one polytunnel, one netted tunnel and buildings. In the grassland a small compost loo has been installed and subject to retrospective planning. Behind one building is an area of *hazel* (*Corylus avellana*) and two mature *ash* (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees, both 25cm DBH. The *hazel* (*Corylus avellana*) scrub is not thick or large enough to be classified as hazel scrub as per UK Habitat Classification (2023).

All habitats were assessed and identified in accordance with UK Habitat Classification (2023) and Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain condition sheets. Baseline habitats are presented in figure 6.

Figure 6: Habitats on site



Photographs 1-3: Western area – Building & hardcore surface





Photograph 4: Western area – Modified grassland



Photographs 5-6: Western area – Willow (*Salix spp.*) 2x & Wild cherry (*Prunus avium*)



Photographs 7-11: Eastern area- Modified Grassland





Photographs 12-13: Eastern area- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) & Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*)



Photograph 13: Eastern area- Polytunnel



Photographs 14-17: Eastern area- Buildings



Photograph 18: Eastern area- Compost loo



6.3 Bats

The results of desk top study for bats are based on local information obtained by Greena Ecological Consultancy and others between 1999 & 2020 of 15 bat species, see table 2.

Table 2: Bat species recorded in the local area

Bat species recorded in the area	Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser horseshoe Bat)
	Rhinolophus ferrumequinum (Greater horseshoe Bat)
	Plecotus auritus (Brown long-eared Bat)
	Plecotus austriacus (Grey long-eared Bat)
	Pipistrellus pipistrellus (Common pipistrelle Bat)
	Pipistrellus pygmaeus (Soprano pipistrelle Bat)
	Pipistrellus nathusii (Nathusius pipistrelle Bat)
	Myotis daubentonii (Daubenton's Bat)
	Myotis bechsteinii (Bechstein's Bat)
	Myotis mystacinus (Whiskered Bat)
	Myotis brandtii (Brandt's Bat)
	Myotis nattererii (Natterer's Bat)
	Eptesicus serotinus (Serotine Bat)
	Barbastella barbastellus (Barbastelle Bat)
	Nyctalus noctule (Noctule Bat)

There are no European Protected Species (EPS) bat mitigation licence located within 2km radius and issued in the last 10 years of the site according to Magic Maps.

During the daytime survey on the 19th of December 2025 no obvious signs (droppings, urine stain etc) or suitable roosting features were identified within affected site. Trees present on site and along the boundary of the site were subject to a ground walk over survey using binoculars.

The habitat on and surrounding the site was deemed to provide high potential for foraging and commuting bats due to suitable bordering features, hedgerows and trees, are subject to minimal artificial lighting providing flight routes and foraging opportunities. Habitats near

affected site includes priority woodland and grassland habitats and older buildings providing suitable roosting and foraging opportunities.

6.4 Birds

The site lies within an area for *grey partridge* (*Perdix perdix*) and there is a Countryside Stewardship (CS) area for *lapwing* (*Vanellus vanellus*) located approximately 1.5km north of affected site.

During the daytime survey on the 19th of December 2025 no obvious bird nests were identified on site. The scrub and trees are deemed as highly suitable for nesting birds, as well as providing foraging opportunities for birds.

6.5 Other protected species

There are no EPS mitigation licences for other protected species within 2km radius of affected site issued in the last 10 years according to Magic Maps. Affected site lies within a Countryside Stewardship (CS) for *brown hairstreak* (*Thecla betulae*). There are two ponds with confirmed presence of *great crested newt* (*Triturus cristatus*) within 2km of affected site. The nearest one is located approximately 500m east of affected site and the other pond is located approximately 1.7km southeast of affected site.

A walkover was performed to identify potential *badger* (*Meles meles*) setts on the affected site and within 30m of the affected site. During the walkover survey no badger setts or animal paths were identified. Other protected species deemed as potentially affected by proposed plans are *european hedgehog* (*Erinaceus europaeus*) which can move through the site to more suitable habitats.

The grassland on the eastern area is deemed to provide low suitability for reptile species to move through the site, there are no habitats suitable for hibernating reptiles within the eastern area. The western area has an old vegetable bed deemed to provide some suitability for *slow worms* (*Anguis fragilis*) to hibernate.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Designated sites & Habitats

Affected site lies does not lie within an Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or near any designated site or priority habitat. Proposed project is deemed to not affect any designated sites or priority habitat.

The habitats on site range from very low distinctiveness to medium distinctiveness. The single trees are of medium distinctiveness.

Proposed plans mainly affect areas of hardcore in the western area were proposed parking is. The eastern area is mainly to be retained and planning application for this area is retrospective planning for two compost loos (Photograph 18). Grassland affected by the compost loo is modified grassland of low distinctiveness. The owner of the site has through planting of native trees, spread out in the eastern areas grassland, and allowing wilder areas within the grassland greatly contributed towards enhancement for wildlife. Any further enhancement includes establishing further species diverse grassland through spreading native seeds from a local seed bank.

7.2 Bats

During the daytime survey on the 19th of December 2025 no obvious signs of bats were identified and no obvious roosting features were identified on site. The habitats on site were deemed to offer high potential for foraging and commuting bats due to hedgerows and trees providing both flight routes and foraging opportunities. Nearby buildings are also likely to provide suitable roosting features.

7.3 Birds

During the daytime survey 19th of December 2025 no obvious signs of nesting birds were found on site. The scrub and trees present on site were deemed as highly suitable for nesting bird. Any vegetation clearance and potential management of trees or scrub on site and to boundary hedgerow is to be conducted outside of the nesting bird season (March – September inclusive).

Nesting birds are protected under Wildlife and Countryside Act (1984) and have additional protection under the European Communities Council Directives on the Conservation of Wild Birds legislation, birds habitat are however not protected unless under designated protected sites.

7.4 Other protected species

The site had no evidence of other protected species during the daytime survey on the 19th of December 2025.

Any vegetation clearance of existing grassland is to be conducted in two stages, the first stage is to leave vegetation at 30cm, wait at least 48 hours prior to the second stage of clearing vegetation. The second cut should be as close to the ground as possible without scouring. Progressive vegetation clearance carried out over several days will encourage any reptiles present to move out of the development area into boundary vegetation. Once the vegetation has been cut to ground level it must be kept short until works on site are complete. If the vegetation is allowed to re-grow or if the grass sward is allowed to grow tall reptiles or amphibians may be encouraged to move onto the development site and a progressive vegetation clearance is to be performed again.

No other protected species are deemed to be affected by proposed plans.

Throughout construction a precautionary approach is to be applied, this includes keeping the site tidy with any material stacked on pallets to avoid creating refugia which could be used by protected species. Any excavation deeper than 1m and any pipework with a diameter larger than 120mm should be covered overnight to ensure no animals fall in and get trapped. Furthermore, any animals found should be allowed to disperse naturally.

8. Mitigation & Enhancement

8.1 Habitats

8.1.1 Grassland

If areas of grassland are to be over sown with a local wildflower mix further fauna and flora species diversity will be created. On this site it is advised to broadcast seeds, native chosen grasses are to be broadcasted across the soil and mixed with a light covering of soil or mulch to ensure good seed-to-soil contact. A wildflower native mix is to be sowed, it is advised to use a mix from a local nursery in Wiltshire.

Created grassland is to have a varied grass sward, as present, which create a diverse grassland with microclimates. The diverse mix of native grasses and wildflowers can aid to enhance the soil quality and increase drought and flood resilience. Microclimates will allow for rarer plant species to grow and create suitable habitats for a wider range of invertebrates.

8.2 Bats

Enhancement measure post development includes installing bat box/boxes on retained mature trees or retained. A bat box is to be installed at least 4m above ground, sheltered from strong winds and partly exposed to the sun daily. A bat box should be facing away from any artificial light sources. Bat boxes suitable for the site are Schwegler 1FF and Schwegler 1FTH. Furthermore, the scheme is to not increase illumination of trees and scrub present on site as well as bordering hedgerows. Any exterior light scheme proposed must be approved prior to use.

8.3 Birds

Post development enhancement includes installing bird box/boxes on retained mature trees. Bird boxes suggested are Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace, Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes, Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes or Woodstone Nest Box. Any vegetation clearance and potential management of trees or scrub on site and to boundary hedgerow is to be conducted outside of the nesting bird season (March – September inclusive).

8.4 Other protected species

If a wildflower mix is established on grassland this will create microhabitats for invertebrates and through further plant biodiversity enhance soil health.

To ensure animals can move through the site holes for wildlife are to be implemented in any fences installed (at least 13cm x 13cm). Furthermore, native scrub and trees will further create foraging, sheltering and nesting opportunities for a range of species.

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