

WESSEX ECOLOGY



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

LAND & BUILDINGS AT DOG TRAP BARNS, BRAYDON HALL FARM, MINETY, WILTSHIRE

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Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Executive Summary**
- 3. Objectives**
- 4. Methodology & Constraints**
- 5. Results**
 - 5.1 Wildlife Sites
 - 5.2 Site Description
 - 5.3 Protected & Notable Species
 - 5.31 Badgers
 - 5.32 Bats
 - 5.34 Nesting Birds
 - 5.35 Reptiles
 - 5.36 Great Crested Newts
 - 5.4 Habitats & Biodiversity Net Gain
- 6. Conclusions & Recommendations**
 - 6.1 Bats
 - 6.2 Nesting Birds
 - 6.3 Habitats & Biodiversity Net Gain
 - 6.31 Summary of Results of Metric

Client: Mr. J Anderson & Mrs. Gael Clutterbuck

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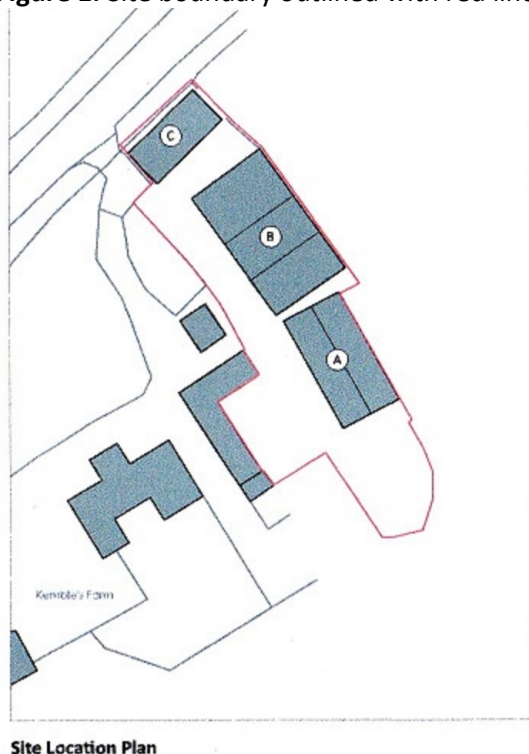
PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

LAND & BUILDINGS AT DOG TRAP BARN BRAYDON HALL FARM, MINETY, WILTSHIRE

1. Introduction

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out at the request of James Hooper of Willis & Co on behalf of their clients Mr. J Anderson & Mrs. Gael Clutterbuck. The site consisted of a concrete yard area containing a group of farm buildings including an open fronted shed (C), open fronted steel framed barn (B) and a concrete block construction cattle shed (A). The clients intend to apply for planning consent for change of use of shed A for to domestic and the demolition of shed B to be replaced by a new building and the demolition of shed C to make way for a wildlife area. The Site is located near the village of Mintey, Wiltshire: OS grid reference SU01808964. Please see site location plan below:

Figure 1. Site boundary outlined with red line



2. Executive Summary

Protected & notable species

- No badger setts or signs were identified during a walk over search of the site (please see Section 4, Methodology & Constraints below). The application is not considered likely to affect badgers. No further survey for badgers was considered necessary.
- A shed on the side of a large open fronted steel framed barn (B) did have some bat droppings within, indicating that a bat had roosted in the building in the past. The other buildings were assessed as having low/negligible roost potential. There were no trees on/near the site with bat roost potential. Bats will likely forage/commute over the site. Recommendations in relation to bats are given in sub-section 6.1 Bats, of Section 6. Conclusions & Recommendations below.
- One swallows nests was identified on a beam within the smaller open fronted shed (C). The other two buildings had some nesting potential but no nests were identified. Please see subsection 6.2 Nesting Birds, of section 6. Conclusions & Recommendations below.
- The majority of the site consisted of concrete hard standings and buildings. The only area of habitat that had some potential to support reptiles was an area of rough grass at the southern end of the site, habitat that would be retained as part of the proposal. No further survey for reptiles was considered necessary.
- There were no ponds or other still water bodies on the site. A search of the OS 1:10,000 map identify one pond within 250m of the Site (this is a pond shown on the map at the southern end of the site but this pond is no longer there). The concrete yard area and buildings did not represent habitat likely to be used by newts. No further survey for newts was considered necessary.

Habitats & Biodiversity Net Gain

- A BNG Small Sites Metric calculation has been carried for the site. Please see subsection 6.3 Habitats & Biodiversity Net Gain, of section 6. Conclusions & Recommendations below for details.

3. Objectives

- Determine the presence or potential presence of protected & notable species.
- Identify any habitats of ecological interest.
- Assess any implications of the findings on the proposed future development and make recommendations further survey and/or for the production of mitigation/ enhancement plans if required.
- Make an assessment of the site and of habitat that will be lost as part of the proposed development to feed into the Biodiversity Metric calculation to give at least 10% BNG post development.

4. Methodology & Constraints

The site was assessed on the 27th February 2025 by an experienced ecologist and was assessed in terms of its suitability to support protected and notable species. This was a walkover appraisal of the site, therefore detailed searches for protected species & nesting birds were not carried out. A walkover search of the buildings for bat signs was carried out and the buildings were assessed as part of this preliminary appraisal in terms of bat roost potential, following The Bat Conservation Trust guidelines. A detail botanical survey was not carried out, although some plant species and general habitats were recorded.

The site was visited again on the 16th of February 2026 to update the assessment for BNG due to a slight change in the red line and the development plan and because of the time that had passed since the initial PEA.

A data search for protected and notable species within 1km of the site was carried out by the Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC). Please see section 5.3 Protected & Notable Species below for relevant records. A search for wildlife sites within 1km of the Site was carried out using the Magic Maps website.

5. Results

5.1 Wildlife Sites & Priority Habitats

Two statutory wildlife sites were identified within 1km of the application site: Distillery Farm Meadows (SSSI) approximately 725m south-west of the site and Emmett Hill Meadows (SSSI) approximately 940m to the north-west. This application is not considered likely to have any impact on these wildlife sites.

Priority Habitats

Two ancient woodland sites were identified within 1km of the site: Waits Wood approximately 400m to the east and Old Copse, approximately 950m to the east. In addition, a number of areas of woodland classified by the Priority Habitat Inventory as 'Deciduous Woodland' were identified within 1km of the site, including three areas within 500m (including Waits Wood ancient woodland mentioned above). This application is not considered likely to have any impact on these woodlands.

5.2 Site Description

The site, which was approximately 0.1494 hectares in area, consisted of a concrete hard standing yard along with three agricultural buildings (please see section 5.32 Bats below for details of the buildings) along with an area of rough grass at the southeast end of the site and a very small area of short grass at the northern boundary. There was a row of semi-mature ash trees at/close to the site's south-west corner boundary. There were no ponds or water courses on the site. There was house and garden to the south-west of the site with pasture /grassland on all sides. Please see Figure 2. & photos 1-4 below:

Figure 2. Baseline Plan of site showing existing buildings, hard standing & habitats



Photo 1. Showing southern end of site looking north-west from south-west end



Photo 2. Showing concrete hard yard to the front/west of the farm buildings



Photo 3. View of the rear of the large barn B and the end of shed C from the south-west and outside of the red line.



Photo 4. Rear of building A open to a small yard area.



5.3 Protected & Notable Species

5.31 Badgers

No badger setts or signs were identified during the walk over appraisal (please see constraints in section 4. above). It is possible that badgers forage on the site. The proposal is not considered likely to affect badgers. The data search found 7 records of badgers within 1km of the site. No further survey for badgers was considered necessary.

5.32 Bats

Three buildings on the site were inspected as part of the walkover appraisal, but were not searched extensively (please see constraints in section 4. Above). Any signs identified were recorded. There were no mature trees on the site.

The Data Search found 1 record of brown long-eared, 1 of Myotis, 2 pipistrelle, 1 common pipistrelle and 1 soprano pipistrelle bats from within 1km of the site.

Building C

This single story, mainly open fronted shed, was constructed of concrete block walls with a gently sloping single pitch roof clad with corrugated steel sheets. There was no roof space or underlay. There was a closed section (with a closed door) on the western end of the building (please see Photo 5. below). There was a gap at roof level between the closed section and open fronted section of the building. The shed was searched and no bat droppings were identified. Mouse droppings and some bird droppings (swallow) were found in the closed section of the shed. No bat signs were identified. This shed was assessed as having a low potential as a bat roost.

Photos 5. Showing open fronted section of building C



Photo 6. Showing inside of section of shed C with doors.



Building B

This was a large steel framed barn constructed of a mixture of concrete block walls and corrugated steel sheets with a double round roof clad with corrugated steel sheets. There was no roof void or underlay. The building was open fronted and so had a lot of natural light within. There was a lean-to shed on the southern side of this building, which was constructed of concrete blocks and had a locked door. This building was dark inside with very little natural light entering via a small gap around the door and a small hole in the roof. No signs of bats were found in the main part of the building. The main barn was assessed as having a negligible potential as a bat

roost location. However, some bat droppings were found within the lean-to shed: There was a small number/accumulation of old droppings on a surface in the left-hand corner of the shed (looking from the front. Please see Photo 11 below). There was a small hole in the roof directly above the location of the droppings that was the likely access point. The small number of droppings suggested that a single bat (or possibly bats) had roosted at this location on an occasional basis outside of the hibernation period. The droppings were very dry meaning that the bat activity was from the previous summer at the most recent, probably longer ago than that. Please see section 6.1 Bats of section 6. Conclusions and Recommendations below.

Photo 7. Interior of steel framed barn B



Photo 8. Interior of steel framed barn / building B



Photo 9. Shed attached to building B



Photo 10. Interior of shed attached to building B



Photo 11. Showing relatively small accumulation of bat droppings in shed



Building A

This building was constructed of concrete block walls with a steel framed apex roof clad with corrugated steel roof sheets with no roof space or underlay. The building was well lit with natural light from the permanently open doorway and large open section at the rear of the building along with a number of clear roof sheets. No signs of bats were identified within this structure and it was assessed as having a negligible bat roost suitability.

Photo 12. Front of building A looking north from southeastern end of site



13. Showing interior roof structure of building A



5.34 Nesting Birds

A swallow nests were identified on a roof beam in open section of shed C (please see photos 14 below). All three buildings offered some potential as bird-nesting habitat although no other nests were identified.

Please see section 6.2 Nesting Birds of section 6. Conclusions and Recommendations below for precautionary advice to protect nesting birds along with mitigation/enhancement advice.

Photo 14. Showing swallow nest on roof timber of open fronted section of shed C



5.35 Reptiles

The majority of the site consisted of buildings surrounded by concrete hard standings: habitat that was unsuitable for reptiles. The area of rough grass and ruderals at the southeast end of the site did have some reptile potential; however, we understand that this area would not be developed under the proposals. The Data Search found 1 record of slow worm and 2 records of grass snake from within 1km of the site. No further survey for reptiles was considered necessary.

There were no ponds or other still water bodies on the site. The vast majority of the site consisted of concrete hard standings which were unsuitable for newts. A search of the OS 1:10,000 map identified 1 pond within 250m; this was immediately south of the site; there was **no** pond at this location.

5.4 Habitats & Biodiversity Net Gain

Figure 3. Post development plan (within red line) showing proposed areas of development; converted building A & demolished buildings B & C with new building on part of footprint of building B along with retained grass areas & new habitat



6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Bats

Legislation

All species of British bat are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the European Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994. As well as giving full protection from intentional and deliberate killing, injuring, disturbing and taking of bats, the cited legislation protects bat breeding and resting places (roosts) from damage, destruction and preventing access to such places. The legislation regarding roosts applies irrespective of whether the bats are present or not. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 added the word “reckless” to existing protection against “intentional and deliberate” actions

Conclusion

Evidence of a bat (or bats) was identified in a locked shed attached to building B. This was a small accumulation of droppings which were not fresh. There was access into the building through a gap in the roof above the area of droppings. This indicated that the building had been used by a bat or bats on a few occasions as a roost outside of the hibernation period. The main part of building B and the other two buildings were assessed as having low/negligible bat roost suitability. A recommendation is given below for further survey of the shed. Electric lighting associated with any new development could potentially have a negative impact on bats so a recommendation to produce a ‘bat friendly’ lighting plan is given below along with enhancement measures to give net gain for bats:

Recommendations

- **An ecologist licensed by Natural England to survey for bats should carry out more detailed survey work of the shed attached to building B involving a possible roost characterization survey/roost and/or presence/absence survey. If it is determined that a bat roost will be affected by the development proposals, i.e. by demolition, modification or disturbance, it is possible that a European Protected Species (bat) licence would be required prior to works commencing, issued by Natural England and subject to a suitable mitigation/compensation strategy.**
- **A lighting plan designed to minimise potential light pollution should be included as part of the design of the possible conversion. The lighting plan should reference latest 'best practice' guidance with regards bats such as that published by the Bat Conservation Trust.**
- **To give a net gain for bats, bat roost locations should be installed on buildings. These bat boxes should be included on the design drawings with input from the bat ecologist in terms of type and siting. This roosting provision will give a net gain for bats.**

6.2 Nesting Birds

Legislation

It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to damage or destroy the nests of breeding birds (with the exception of some pest species) and work should be done outside the months of March to August which is the usual nesting season.

Conclusion

One swallows nest were identified on a beam in the small open fronted shed (shed C) and the other two buildings had some nesting potential although no nests were identified. No other nesting habitat was identified within the red line other than some semi mature ash trees close to or just on the red line at the south-west corner, these trees should not be affected by the proposal. The following precautionary recommendations are given to protect nesting birds from disturbance. Enhancement measures are also recommended to both replace lost nesting locations and give net gain for birds:

Recommendations

- **Ideally, any building work affecting building A, and/or demolition work on building B & C or any work that might disturb trees on the site boundaries should be undertaken outside of the bird-nesting season (which is March-August inclusive *although birds can sometimes nest outside of this period*). It is important to remember that nesting birds can become trapped within a building or exclude from a nest site if existing gaps in walls, roofs and doors are blocked during the nesting season. However, if it is deemed essential to carry out works during the nesting season then the area of works should be checked by the ecologist prior to the work. If it is deemed likely that a nesting birds will be disturbed then the works will be delayed until the fledglings have left the building/nest.**
- **Mitigation & enhancement measures to replace the loss of the swallows nest and give a net gain for birds should be included as part of the development, should it be given consent. We would recommend the installation of a number of swallow nest boxes under the eaves of both the retained and new buildings. This would replace the existing nest with more nesting locations than would be lost. These boxes should be included on the design drawings with input from the ecologist in terms of type and siting.**

6.3 Habitats & Biodiversity Net Gain

Legislation

In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This statutory framework is referred to as 'biodiversity net gain' in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains. Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to

some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met (“the biodiversity gain condition”). *This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.* This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

Conclusions

This proposed development will require the completion of a Statutory Biodiversity Metric giving details of onsite enhancements to achieve at least 10% BNG:

Recommendations

- **A Biodiversity Metric should be completed to calculate potential loss of habitat and the enhancement and/or creation of habitat required to give a higher ecological value than the habitat lost (if any). A Small Sites Metric has been completed: please see summary of results below:**

6.31 Summary of Results of Metric

An area of neutral grass & wild flowers, native trees and hedgerow will be created at the north end of the site; this will be some 183 Sq.m in area, giving a metric calculation of 164.13% biodiversity net gain. There will be an additional net gain for wildlife with bat roost and bird nesting boxes installed on the two buildings (please see sections 6.1 and 6.2 above for details).