

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL AND
BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT

CHICKEN SHED, NETTON, WILTSHIRE

By

stark ecology^{ltd}

MARCH 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Stark Ecology Ltd was asked by Templeton Walker to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of land surrounding former chicken sheds at Netton. The barns have been converted to a dwelling (Prior approval Part 3 Class Q: Agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses - Prior Approval Granted Application Reference Number: PL/2024/10916) and an application is now submitted to provide an amenity garden for the new property.

The site is c.<0.1Ha in total area and is located at OS Grid Reference SU132368, to the northeast of Netton. It is well connected to mixed farmland with excellent hedgerow and woodland connectivity.

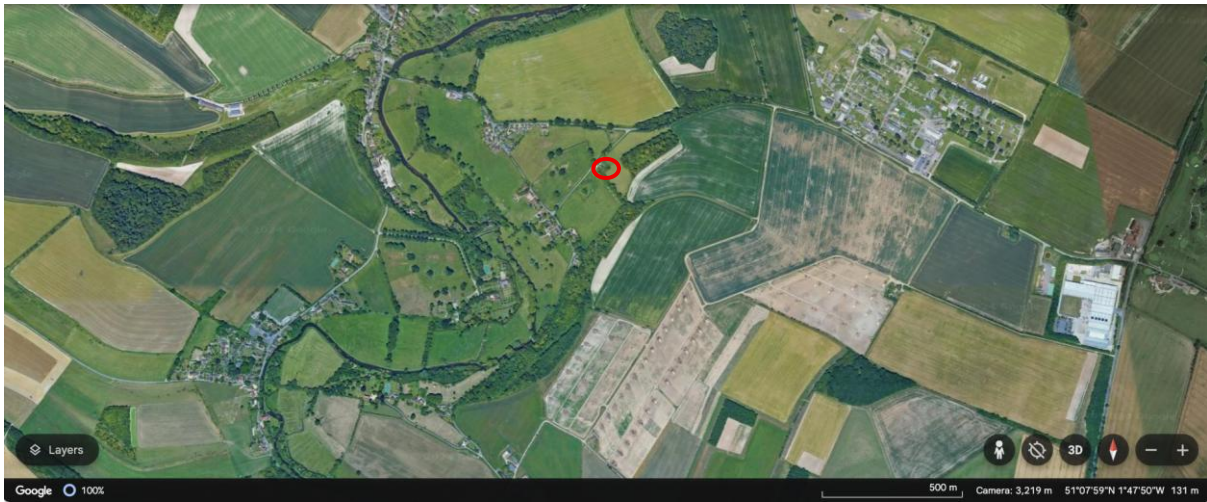


Fig 1: The chicken sheds at Netton are well connected to mixed farmland with good hedgerow and woodland networks in the surroundings.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was carried out by Georgie Starkie BSc (Hons) MSc MRSB (Natural England Class 2 Bat Licence Number 2015-13123-CLS-CLS) on 24th February 2026, when the weather was cloudy but dry with a light wind. The temperature was approximately 10°C.

METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was reviewed for records of designated sites within 2km of the survey area and for records of licences granted by Natural England for work affecting European Protected Species within 2km.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site was surveyed according to the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), in which the habitats present on site are classified (according to The UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0) and any signs of protected or notable species were also recorded:

Bats: The former chicken sheds have been demolished or converted under the Class Q consent already granted and there are no trees within the site boundaries. As a result, there were no features to assess for roosting potential. The habitats on site were assessed for their potential to provide commuting and foraging opportunities for bats.

Badgers: Evidence of badgers was sought, in particular badger setts which can be recognised by their characteristic size and shape, with large spoil heaps outside entrances. Other signs such as latrines (small pits in which badgers deposit their faeces), pathways through vegetation, hairs adhering to vegetation or sett entrances and snuffle holes indicating foraging were also noted.

Great crested newts: The habitats on and surrounding the site were assessed for their suitability to support great crested newts.

Reptiles: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support reptile species.

Nesting birds: The habitats on site were assessed for their suitability to support nesting birds.

Limitations

Surveys provide a brief snapshot of the site at the time the work was carried out and while every step is taken to ensure that the results of the survey are accurate, features of ecological value can change and therefore this report is only valid for 12 months.

RESULTS

Desk Study

Habitats

There are no Special Protection Areas (SPA) within 2km of the chicken sheds but the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) runs to the west of the site, approximately 500m away at its nearest point. The SAC incorporates the River Avon System Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the Lower Woodford Water Meadows SSSI, c.1.7km to the southwest, is also part of the SAC and is one of the last two actively managed water-meadow systems in Wiltshire (and possibly in Britain).

Species

Four licences have been granted by Natural England for work affecting bat roosts within 2km of the chicken sheds at Netton:

- In 2013, at a site which is c.350m to the west, a licence was granted for work resulting in the destruction of a resting place used by brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus* bats.
- In 2010, at a site which is c.1.2km to the northeast, a licence was granted for work resulting in the destruction of a breeding and resting place used by soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* bats.
- In 2015, at a site which is c.1.6km to the northeast, a licence was granted for work resulting in damage to a breeding site and the destruction of a resting place used by brown long-eared, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, natterer's *Myotis nattereri*, serotine and soprano pipistrelle bats.
- In 2025, at a site which is c.100m to the northeast, a licence was granted for work resulting in the destruction of a maternity and hibernation roost used by soprano pipistrelle bats.

Habitats

The habitats present within the site, as shown in the Baseline Habitat Map in Appendix 1, are:

- Developed land; sealed surface
- Bare ground.

Developed Land; Sealed Surface

The site encompasses the footprint of two former chicken sheds. As approved by consent reference PL/2024/10916, conversion of one is already underway and the other has been demolished with only the footprint remaining.



Fig 2: Within the site are two former chicken sheds, one which is being converted and the other has been demolished.

This photo taken facing northwest on 24th February 2026.

Bare Ground

The vegetation which surrounded the former chicken sheds has been removed under the consent granted for the conversion of one shed to a dwelling and the demolition of the other (PL/2024/10916). These areas of the site are now bare ground which supports almost no vegetation and is in Poor condition (see Condition Assessment Sheet in Appendix 2).



Fig 3: Bare ground surrounds the former chicken sheds.

This photo taken facing southeast on 24th February 2026.

Bats

Commuting and Foraging

The site itself provides little suitable habitat for bats to use when commuting and foraging through the landscape but it is well connected to high quality habitat in the surroundings. As such, the site provides suitable habitat for bats to use when commuting and foraging.

Badgers

No sett entrances were found within the site boundaries and no other evidence of badgers (latrines, snuffles holes or badger hairs caught on vegetation or fences) was noted. The site supports suitable habitat for badgers to use when commuting and foraging through the landscape and is well connected to other areas of habitat which are suitable for this purpose.

Great Crested Newt

The site provides little suitable habitat for great crested newt *Triturus vulgaris* to use during the terrestrial phase of their lifecycle as it no longer supports any vegetation or opportunities for shelter. A review of OS maps did not identify any ponds within 500m. As such, the site is not considered suitable to support great crested newts.

Reptiles

In its current condition the site does not support any habitat which is suitable for reptile species.

Nesting Birds

In its current condition the site supports no habitat which could be used by nesting birds.

Other Species

Hedgehog

The habitat within the site boundary provides few opportunities for shelter or foraging by hedgehogs but they could commute through the site while moving through the surrounding landscape.

LEGISLATION

Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are a Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) and should, as such, be conserved through the planning process. Hedgehogs would also fall under the provisions of the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996, which prevents certain cruel acts against wild mammals.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Habitats

The on-site habitats are not intrinsically ecologically valuable and in their current condition provide few opportunities for protected species.

The proposals for the site include the removal of the concrete pad which formed the base of the chicken shed which has already been demolished and its replacement with Vegetated Garden habitat. Some of the Bare Ground habitat surrounding the chicken shed which is in the process of being converted to a dwelling will become Developed Land; Sealed Surface (providing pathways and a patio) but all remaining areas of Bare Ground will also become Vegetated Garden.

The Biodiversity Net Gain Metric submitted as a separate document in support of this application confirms that there will be an increase of 0.02 Habitat Units (20.63%) as a result of these proposals.

Bats

Commuting and Foraging

The site is well connected to habitat which is of value to bats when commuting and foraging and is connected to other areas of high quality habitat for this purpose in the surroundings.

External lighting in the garden of the new dwelling will be kept to a minimum and will not be allowed to shine onto nearby linear habitat corridors (eg. hedgerows). Where external lighting is required for the purposes of safety or security, this will comply with ILP Guidance Note 8 and will be installed to the following specification:

- LED luminaires with a warm white (<2700 kelvin) spectrum
- Peak wavelength higher than 550nm
- External lighting will use motion sensors and be set to a short timer (c.1 minute)
- Luminaires with an upward light ration of 0% will be used.

Badgers and Hedgehogs

No badger setts or other evidence of badgers such as snuffle holes, latrines or pathways was found but badgers could commute through the site on occasion. The

site also provides suitable habitat for hedgehogs when moving through the surrounding landscape.

The following steps should be taken to avoid accidental harm to animals during development works:

- Any trenches that have to be left open overnight must be adapted so that any animal that falls into it is able to escape, either by leaving a gradient at one end, or placing a structure (such as a plank of wood) in the trench to allow animals to climb out;
- Drainage or other pipework should be sealed at both ends overnight; and
- Anything that may present a fire or other hazard (eg. stored chemicals) should be kept securely locked and made inaccessible to wild animals moving around the site at night.

REFERENCES

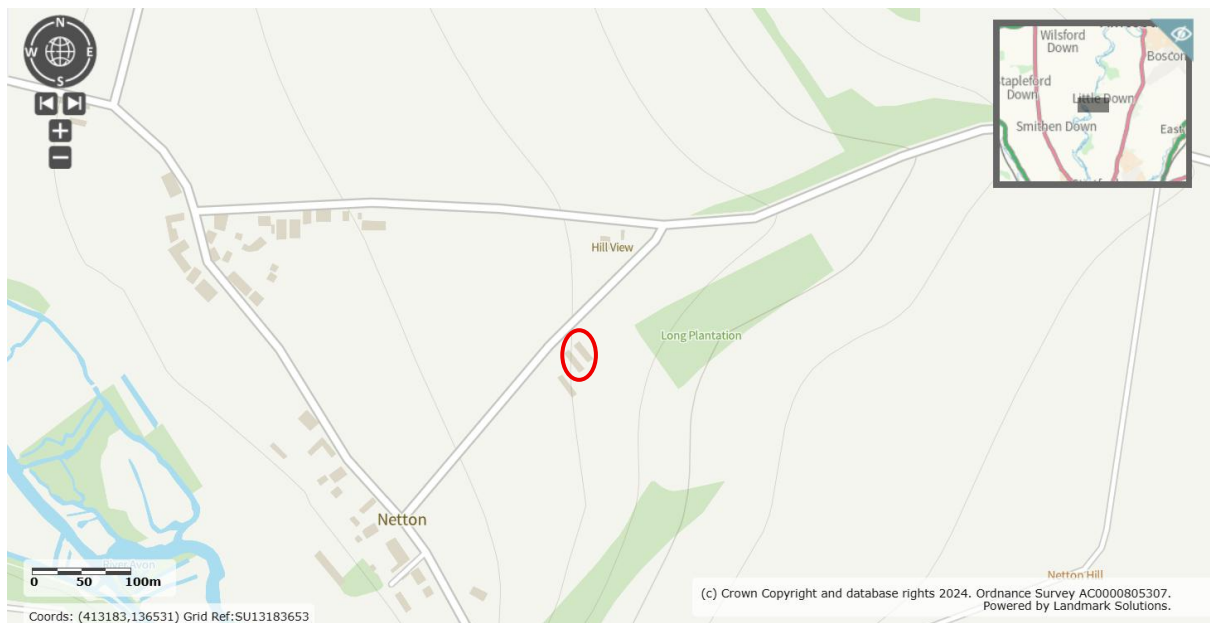
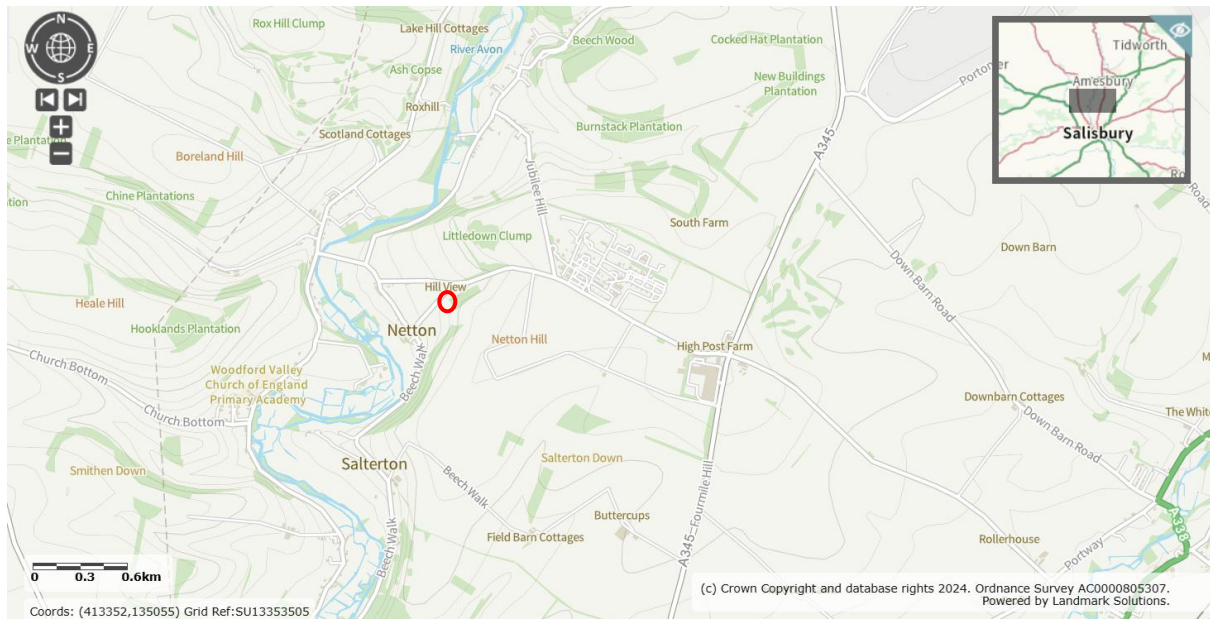
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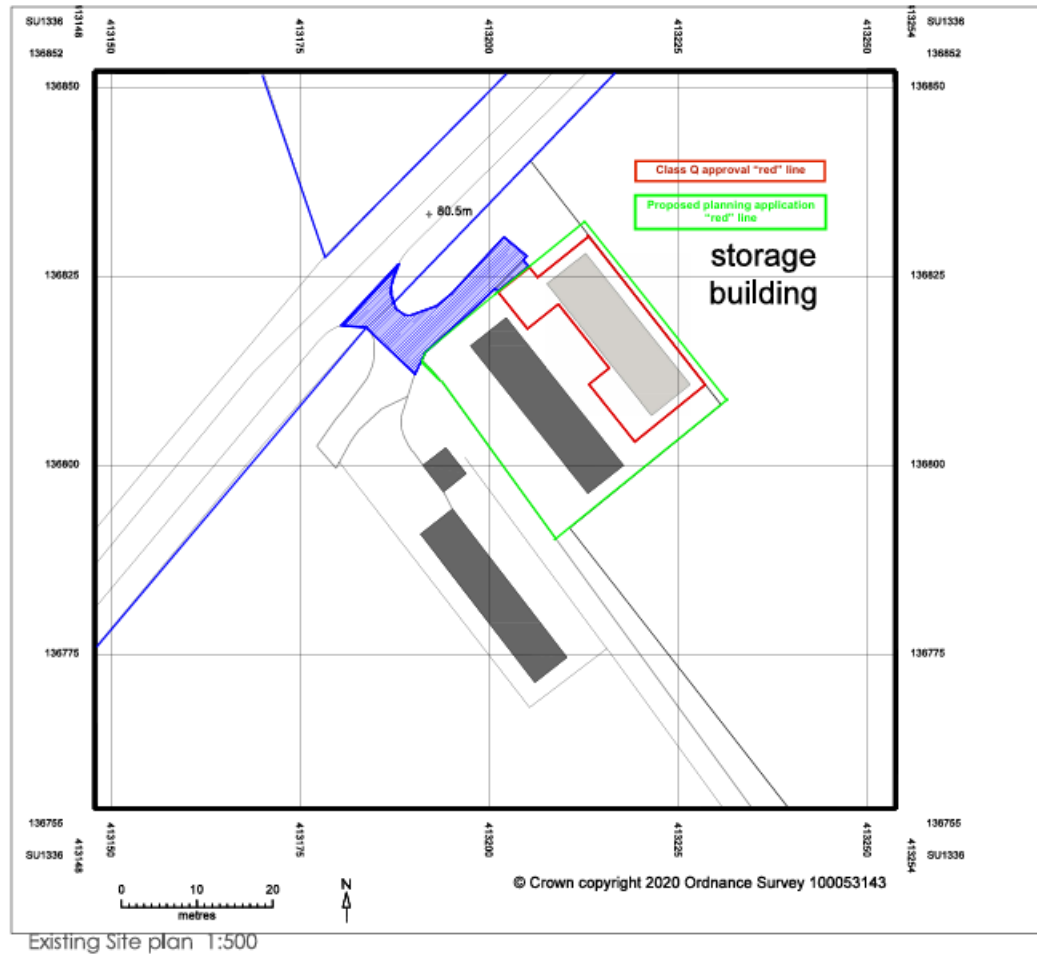
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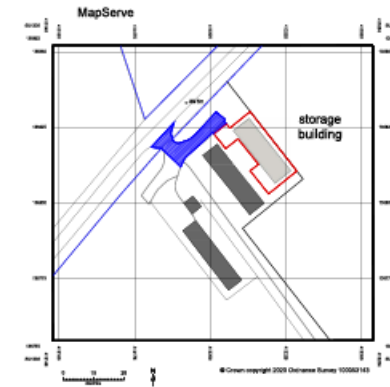
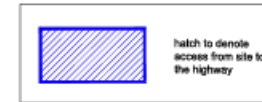
APPENDIX 1: SITE MAPS



Class Q, Netton



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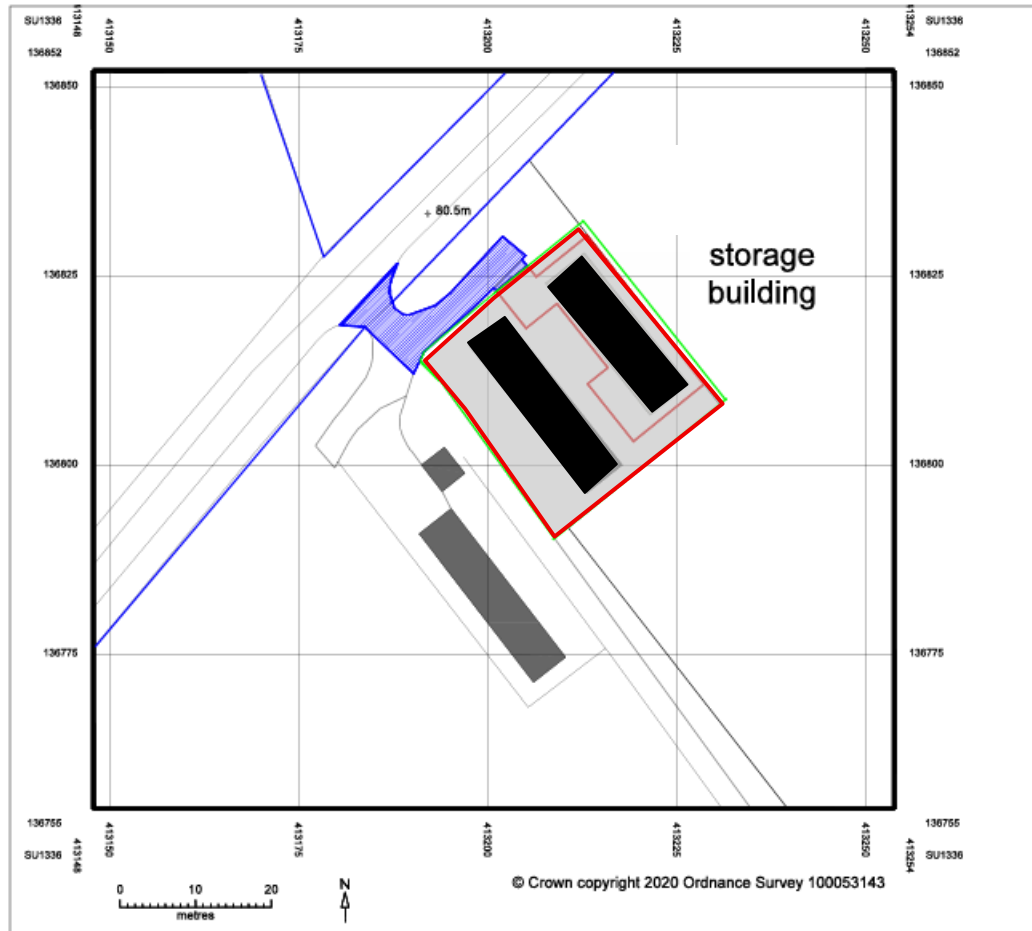
Site location plan 1:1250

Site area:
- 272sqm/0.0272 hectares



Client Mr. Smith		Planning	
Project Class Q, Storage Building, Netton, Upper Woodford		Drawing No. 0181-02-001	Revision
Title Existing Site		Scale 1:500 & 1:1250 Max	Drawn August 2024
 birch architects Lambourne, Grove Lane, Redlynch, Salisbury, Wilt, SP5 2NR T: +44 (0)1725 510407 E: info@bircharchitects.co.uk			

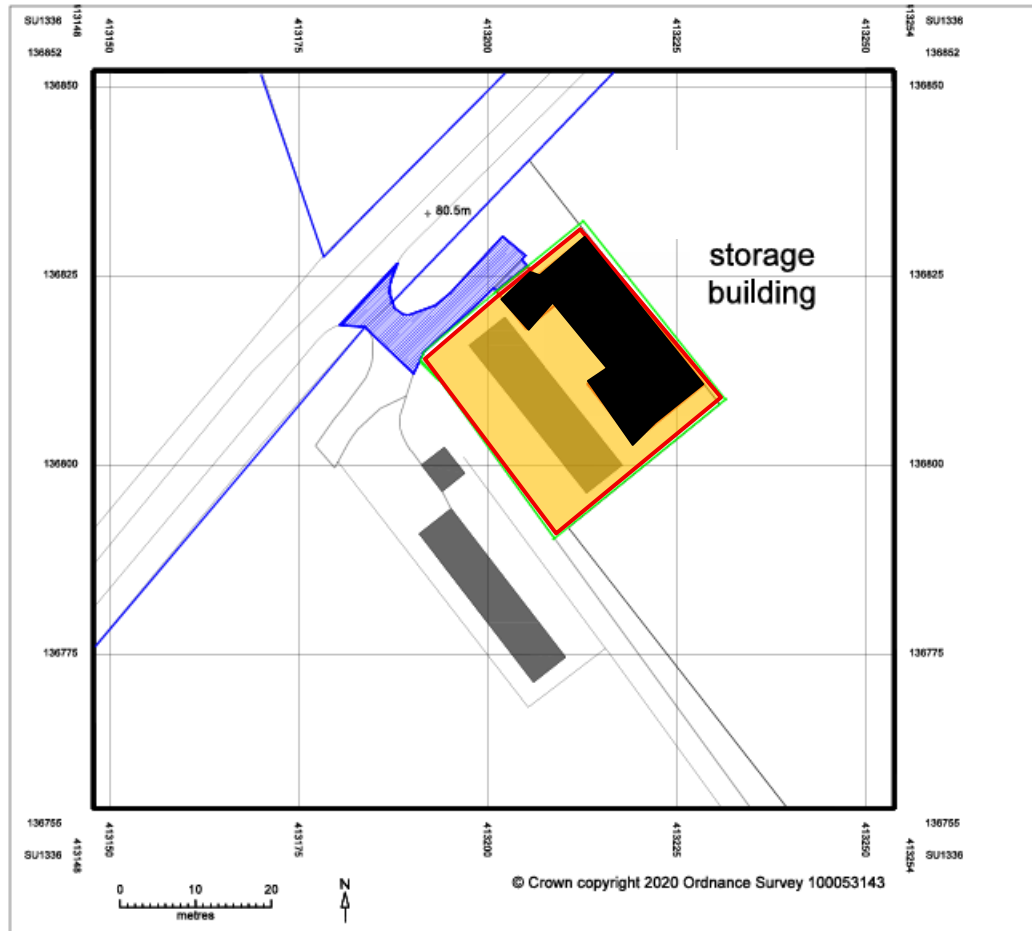
Baseline Habitat Map



Key

- Site boundary
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Bare ground (Poor condition)

Proposed Habitat Map



Key

- Site boundary
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Vegetated garden

Existing Site plan 1:500

APPENDIX 2: CONDITION ASSESSMENT SHEET

Condition Sheet: URBAN Habitat Type			
Habitat Types Sparsely vegetated land - Ruderal/Ephemeral Sparsely vegetated land - Tall forbs Urban - Allotments Urban - Biodiverse green roof Urban - Bioswale Urban - Cemeteries and churchyards Urban - Facade-bound green wall Urban - Ground based green wall Urban - Intensive green roof Urban - Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land Urban - Rain garden Urban - Sustainable drainage system (SuDS) Urban - Vacant or derelict land Urban - Bare ground			
Habitat Description 			
See the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide for green roofs and UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) for other habitats:			UKHab - UK Habitat Classification
On-site or off-site, site name and location	Chicken Shed, Netton, Wiltshire	Survey date and Surveyor name	24/02/2026 Georgie Starkie BSc (Hons) MSc MRSB
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	
Grid reference	SU132368	Habitat parcel reference	
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
Core Criteria - must be assessed for all urban habitat types:			
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	No	
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	No	
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ¹) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) ² cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area ³ . Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	N/a	No vegetation and so this does not apply.
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land only:			
D	The parcel shows spatial variation and forms a mosaic of bare substrate PLUS: - At least four early successional communities (a) to (i); Communities: (a) annuals; (b) mosses/liverworts; (c) lichens; (d) ruderals; (e) inundation species; (f) open grassland; (g) flower-rich grassland; (h) heathland, (i) pools.		
Additional Criteria - must be assessed for Bioswale and SuDS habitat types only:			
E1	Plant species are mostly native. If non-native species are present, they should not be detrimental to the habitat or native wildlife ⁴ .		
E2	The vegetation is comprised of plant species suited to wetland or riparian situations.		
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for Intensive green roofs only:			

F	The roof has a minimum of 50% native and non-native wildflowers. 70% of the roof area is soil and vegetation (including water features).		
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for Biodiverse green roofs only:			
G	The roof has a varied depth of 80 – 150 mm; at least 50% is at 150 mm and is planted and seeded with wildflowers and sedums or is pre-prepared with sedums and wildflowers. Note – to achieve Good condition some additional habitat, such as sand piles, stones, logs etc. are present.		
Essential criteria relevant for habitat type achieved (Yes or No)			
Number of criteria passed			
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x i/v	
Results for habitats requiring assessment of 3 core criteria only (all listed urban habitats except Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land, Bioswale, SuDS and Green roofs):			
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Good (3)		
• Passes 2 of 3 core criteria; OR • Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)		
• Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria.	Poor (1)	Yes	
Results for Green roofs and Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land (requiring assessment of 4 criteria only - core criteria plus additional criterion specified for habitat type):			
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C; AND • Passes additional criterion relevant to specific habitat type (D, F or G).	Good (3)		
• Passes 2 or 3 of 4 criteria; OR • Passes 4 of 4 criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)		
• Passes 0 or 1 of 4 criteria.	Poor (1)		
Results for Bioswale or SuDS (requiring assessment of 5 criteria - core criteria plus additional criteria specified for habitat type):			
• Passes all 3 core criteria; AND • Meets the requirements for Good condition within criterion C; AND • Passes all additional criteria relevant to specific habitat type (Group E)	Good (3)		
• Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria; OR • Passes 5 of 5 criteria but does not meet the requirements for Good condition within criterion C.	Moderate (2)		
• Passes 2 or fewer of 5 criteria.	Poor (1)		
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
Footnotes			