

Site Name: Bowmans Paddock, Winterborne Bassett, Swindon, SN4 9QA

Report Reference: WWE25191 PEA – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Amended April 2026)

Date: 20/04/2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Bowmans Paddock, Winterborne Bassett, Swindon, SN4 9QA (Grid reference: SU 10421 74818) is subject to a full planning application for the creation of a new access route into the field. Therefore, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken by Caroline Gregory (Consultant Ecologist) of Wildwood Ecology on 28/10/2025, following the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017) guidelines and using UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 codes (UK Hab, 2023).
- 1.2. The site (Figure 1) was situated to the west of the small village Winterbourne Bassett. There were residential dwellings to the west of the site with agricultural fields to the north, east and south of the site.



Figure 1. Site Location

2. Survey methods

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1. A field survey was undertaken on 28/10/2025.
- 2.2. All habitats present within the site and wider area with the suitability to support rare, protected, or otherwise notable species of flora or fauna were noted, as well as incidental observations of species.

Habitat Condition Assessment

- 2.3. A field survey was undertaken on 28/10/2025. All habitats present within the site was recorded and fauna were noted, as well as incidental observations of species.

Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

- 2.4. A field survey was undertaken on 28/10/2025. This was a ground level inspection of each tree onsite using binoculars and torches, the purpose of which was to search for bats/evidence of bats and assess the likelihood of bats being present and the need for further survey and/or mitigation.
- 2.5. A systematic search was made of the trees, to confirm if any suitable roosting features were present. Such features include cracks, woodpecker holes, crevices, cavities, or torn bark that provide protection from the elements. Such features are known to be used by roosting bats.
- 2.6. Where roosting bats were found, the conservation significance of the bat roosts was assessed according to the Bat Survey Guidelines (p.30, Table 3.1); however, these are minimum valuations (in the absence of further survey). The minimum roost status is determined as either high, medium, or low according to the following criteria:
 - conservation status of the species (common, rare, or rarest);
 - type of roost (feeding perch, individual, small numbers, hibernation, or maternity); and
 - if the site meets the guidelines for SSSIs, which only applies to high conservation status roosts.

3. Results

Desk study

- 3.1. The data informing this report was collected from field survey and desk study. Desk study data was collected from the following sources on 30/10/2025
 - Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre; and
 - Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC).

Designated sites

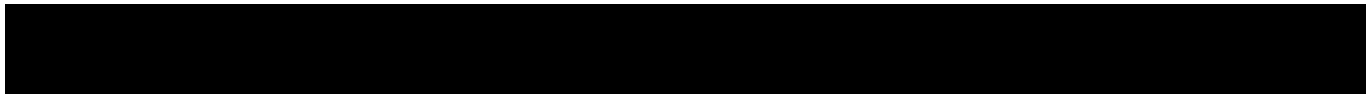
- 3.2. Results from desk study data showed that there were four designated sites (Special Area of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), RAMSARs) within 20km. There were no national designated sites (Special Site of Scientific Importance (SSSIs), National Nature Reserve (NNRs), Local Nature Reserve (LNRs)) within 2km of the site. There was one non-statutory designated Local Wildlife Sites LWS within 1km of the site.
 - 3.3. The statutory designated sites are outlined below:
 - Pewsey Downs (SAC) located 10km south of the site;
 - River Avon (SAC) located 15km south of the site;
 - Salisbury Plain (SPA, SAC) located 19km south of the site; and
 - North Meadow and Clattinger Farm (SAC) located 19km north of the site.
 - 3.4. The non-statutory designated sites are outlined below:
 - Richardson Wood (LWS) located 1km south of the site.
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Priority and notable habitats

- 3.5. There is a priority habitat (Bowman’s wood – Deciduous woodland) located adjacent to the site close to the southern boundary of Bowman’s paddock. This habitat was recorded within the National Forest Inventory 2020 and was shown to extend within the blue line boundary of the site (see appendix 4). However, photographic evidence provided by the applicant and historical aerial imagery demonstrate that that the habitat located within the blue line boundary was not contiguous with the nearby priority woodland and was comprised of mature scrub and a small number of scattered fruit trees (see appendix 5). The site is also known to have been historically used as a pig pen. The onsite habitat was considered unlikely to be priority deciduous woodland habitat, despite the information provided by the desk study. Nevertheless, due to the habitat being cleared, for the sake of this application and the BNG assessment, the habitats within Bowmans paddock are assumed to comprise w1g other broadleaved woodland,(aerial imagery and photographic suggests that the habitat has developed through recent succession, with a species composition lacking species diversity, primarily comprised of hawthorn, blackthorn and non-native fruit trees) and bramble scrub (aerial imagery suggests that the majority of the site scrubbed over in the past 2-3 years).
- 3.6. Site clearance undertaken prior to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was therefore not considered to have impacted on the priority woodland habitat, although as offsite habitats were impacted during site clearance, the loss of these habitats has been addressed within the BNG assessment of the site.

Priority and protected species

- 3.7. Results from desk study data showed that there are two granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences for bats within 5km of the site. The closest was located 1.70km east of the site and was granted in 2015 for the damage to a resting site for brown long-eared and common pipistrelle. The second licence was located 5km south of the site and granted in 2017 for the destruction of a resting site for common pipistrelle. From the Local Records Centre (LRC) data, 3 species of bat was recorded in the local area, including serotine, pipistrelle species and long-eared species.
- 3.8. There were no granted licence for great crested newt within 2km of the site. From the Local Records Centre (LRC) data, 3 records of great crested newt were returned, with two records located 1.70km north of the site.
- 3.9. There were no records of hazel dormouse located within 5km of the site from MAGIC data. No records were returned from the LRC within the local area.
- 3.10. Priority and protected species records were returned from the Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre for species located within 2km of the site include the following:
- Two records of water vole were returned, 600m north of the site and 960m south of the site;



- One record of harvest mouse was returned, located 1.65km south of the site;
- 32 records of corn bunting were returned, with the closets record 1.50km south of the site;
- Four records of white stork were returned, with the closets record 960m south-west of the site;
- 13 records of barn owl were returned, with the closest located 1.90km south of the site;

Field survey

Table 1 - Field survey timings and conditions

Date	Weather conditions			
	Temp [°C]	Cloud cover [Oktas]	Wind speed [Beaufort scale]	Rain
28/10/2025	9	3	3	Nil

Field survey limitations

- 3.11. Onsite habitat comprises 7.5m of hedgerow proposed for removal to allow for the creation of a new access point into Bowmans paddock. Habitats within the blue line boundary had been cleared at the time of the PEA survey and therefore the impacts on this offsite habitat have been addressed within the BNG assessment for the site.
- 3.12. Although the extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey falls outside the recommended seasonal period for botanical surveys (April to September, inclusive), the evaluation and habitat descriptions (and hence the impacts and their significance), are considered to be accurate.
- 3.13. No other limitations were encountered, or assumptions made during either the desk study or the field survey and it is considered that with the access gained and recording undertaken an accurate assessment of the site's ecological importance has been made.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Habitats

- 3.14. Table 2 sets out descriptions of the habitats present within the site and wider blueline boundary using UK habitat Classification Version 2.0 codes, along with a list of species present.

Table 2: Habitats and linear features present within the site.

Habitat	Habitat description	Species present	Ecological Importance
Red line boundary			
h2a - Native hedgerow H3a	Onsite hedgerow - Approximately 7.5m of dense, unmanaged hedgerow with few gaps.	Elder tree, brambles, hawthorn, blackthorn trees, ash trees, horse chestnut. Understory- ivy.	County
Blue-line boundary			
u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface Secondary code: 64 Previous habitats: W1g – other broadleaved woodland H3d – bramble scrub	The majority of the habitat within the blueline boundary consisted of recently disturbed ground. The field had recently been cultivated with areas of mature scrub cleared. The ground was bare with some straw present. There were some rubbish piles in the centre of the field. Aerial imagery shows the site to have been historically comprised of mature scrub and scattered fruit trees	Bare ground.	Site/County
u1b - Developed land; sealed surface Existing Structures	To the north eastern corner of the blueline boundary was an old water structure, that was sealed off. There was a single existing structure to the south west corner. Constructed of	N/A	Site

Habitat	Habitat description	Species present	Ecological Importance
	corrugated metal, that was in disrepair. There was an existing wooden shed located to the northwest of the field, close to the entrance. This was in good condition.		
h2a - Native hedgerow H1	Southern boundary hedgerow within the blueline boundary- gappy, sparse, loose, open at parts, cut and fallen trees throughout and unmanaged. Backs on to a ditch and a small woodland.	Ground ivy, field rose, wild cherry, field maple, common lilac, beech trees, cedar, holly tree. Understorey- nettles, ivy and tongue fern.	County
h2a - Native hedgerow H2	Western boundary hedgerow within the blueline boundary- adjacent to residential buildings, gappy at parts, unmanaged, with a few trees within.	Ivy, elder tree, ash trees, common lilac, fragrant viburnum tree, field maple. Understorey- nettles, ivy and cleavers.	County
h2a - Native hedgerow H3	Onsite hedgerow (northern boundary hedgerow)- fewer gaps than the southern and western boundary, dense and more unmanaged.	Elder tree, brambles, hawthorn, blackthorn trees, ash trees, horse chestnut. Understorey- ivy.	County
h2a - Native hedgerow H4	Eastern boundary hedgerow- more dense and fewer gaps than the other hedgerows, more mature trees within.	Hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, ash tree, elder tree, horse chestnut Understorey- ivy and nettles.	County

3.15. The suitability of the hedgerow and habitats within the blue line boundary for protected species relevant to the site habitats, the connectivity of the site and observed incidental evidence can be found in Table 3.

Table 3 - Protected species potentially present onsite

Species or group	Habitat suitability	Site connectivity	Notable onsite features	Presence confirmed?
Amphibians, including great crested newt	Poor	Good	The boundary hedgerow with scrub provided suitable habitat. There were two ponds located within 250m of the site.	The majority of habitat currently present on site was semi-suitable for the species. The boundary features provided more suitable habitat. The site had good connectivity to other habitat including the woodland to the south.

Bats: foraging and commuting	Good	Good	Hedgerow and integrated trees form good linear commuting features	Onsite habitat was suitable and the site had good connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Fish	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fungi	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hazel dormouse	Poor	Good	Mostly open bare ground, although hedgerows in parts could provide some habitat these were gappy and spares in areas.	Onsite habitat was unsuitable but there was some connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Hedgehog	Good	Good	Hedgerows on site and neighbouring residential gardens.	Onsite habitat was suitable and the site had some connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Invertebrates	Poor	Poor	Lack of vegetation of the wider site, mostly bare ground, so site is likely to support common and widespread species.	Onsite habitat was unsuitable but there was some connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Nesting birds	Good	Good	Parts of the hedgerows which are denser and some trees onsite could be used by nesting birds.	Onsite habitat was suitable and the site had good connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Otter	Poor	Poor	Ditch, within the blueline boundary, on the southern boarder was dry at the time of the survey, however this could be used if it fills up. River runs to the east of the site.	Onsite habitat was unsuitable but there was some connectivity to the surrounding landscape
Reptiles	Poor	Poor	Areas of bare ground near the hedgerows could be used by basking reptiles.	The majority of habitat currently present on site was semi-suitable for the species. The boundary features provided more suitable habitat. The site had good connectivity to other habitat including the woodland to the south.
Water vole	Poor	Good	Ditch, within the blueline boundary, on the southern boarder of the site was dry at the time of the survey but could be wet during other parts of the year.	Onsite habitat was unsuitable but there was some connectivity to the surrounding landscape

Invasive species

3.16.No species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 were present onsite.

Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

3.17.A GLTA of trees was undertaken during the site survey.

3.18.All trees (species: hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, sycamore and elder) within the redline boundary were surveyed during GLTA to assess if they had any bat roost suitability. A section of the hedgerow with trees is to be lost to facilitate access.

4. Impacts

4.1. Due the proposed works, it is likely that in the absence of mitigation there will be adverse effects on the following habitats and species.

- Habitats – Any habitats to be lost due to the development.
- Amphibians (including great crested newt) – Due to proximity of nearby water bodies (two within 250m of the site) and the presence of semi-suitable terrestrial habitat within the blueline boundary, it is likely that amphibians would use the site for commuting and foraging. Therefore, the loss of suitable terrestrial habitat onsite may have a negative impact. The site also lies within an amber risk zone for GCN on Natural England's impact risk map.

- Foraging and commuting bats - The suitability for linear features located onsite to be used as potential flight-paths and/or foraging habitat is moderate. The removal of a section of the hedgerow for a new entrance way may have a negative impact on any bats using the linear feature for commuting or foraging.
- Nesting birds – Due to boundary woody vegetation habitats being highly suitable for nesting birds, destruction of active bird nests would trigger legislation.
- Reptiles – Despite features of bare ground within the blueline boundary and wider connectivity to grassland, the adjacent site is small and open so would be unlikely to support a significant population of reptiles but may be used opportunistically. The rubbish/debris within the blueline boundary has potential hibernation suitability.
- Water vole – from the biological records, water vole was found approximately 600m north of the site. The ditch to the south of the blueline boundary could be used by water vole.
- Hedgehog – Due to suitable onsite habitats, killing/ injury of hedgehog during the construction phase would trigger legislation.

4.2. The habitats within the blueline boundary were recently cleared of vegetation, from analysis of ariel imagery and the lack of re-growth on site. Vegetation within the wider ownership boundary prior to site clearance comprised mature scrub and scattered fruit trees. Although part of the habitats within the blue line boundary were included as priority deciduous woodland within the Nation Forest Inventory, historical aerial imagery and evidence provided by the applicant show that the habitats within the blue line boundary comprised mature scrub and a small number of fruit trees. The clearance of the blue boundary habitat is therefore not considered to have impacted on the nearby priority deciduous woodland. The cleared habitats were likely suitable to support foraging bats, nesting birds, reptiles, common amphibians

5. Recommendations

Habitats and biodiversity enhancements

- 5.1. Local authorities have a duty to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions. Where possible, the existing onsite habitat of ecological importance should be retained or mitigated for to ensure that habitats and species that rely on them are not adversely affected by the works.
- 5.2. The hedgerow onsite is to be removed and replaced with a new access gateway, therefore no habitats are retained onsite. Onsite and offsite habitat loss will be compensated via new habitat and hedgerow creation/enhancement on land within the applicants ownership, located approximately 2km south of the site.
- 5.3. The development does qualify for an exemption from statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The total impact on site linear features falls above the threshold of less than 5m of on-site linear habitats. The total length of hedgerow to be removed is 7.5m.

Priority and protected species

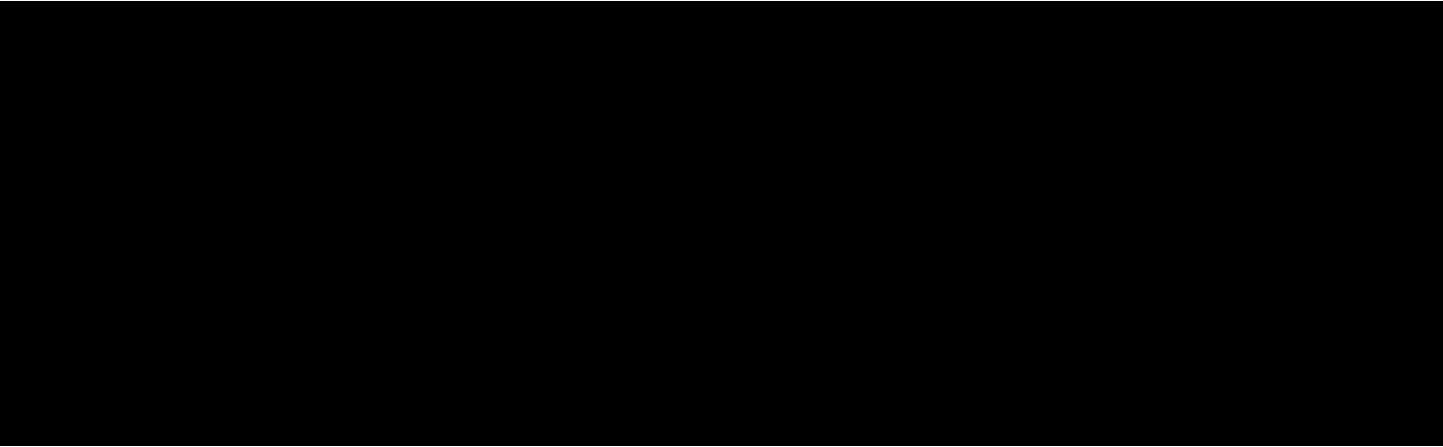
- 5.4. It is recommended that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar Precautionary Working Methods (PWMS) document should be produced, to set out the methods and mitigation measures to be in place during the proposed works. The CEMP will specify how the nearby priority woodland will be protected during the construction phase of the development. The CEMP/ PWMS should be issued to the principal contractor during works onsite.
- 5.5. The development should adhere to best practice guidelines and standard construction protocols, to ensure the retained habitats and species present are protected. No trenches or excavations should be left open without a means of escape (ramps should be left at a 30-degree angle to allow escape). All materials, fuel, and chemicals should be kept safely away from animal access. If any protected species are encountered during the works, works must stop, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for advice. Night-time work should be avoided to prevent adverse effects on nocturnal fauna. Work should start a minimum 30 minutes after sunrise and be completed a minimum 30 minutes before sunset.
- 5.6. The following recommendations are made for general protection of wildlife, and in relation to specific species or habitats.

Amphibians (including great crested newt)

- 5.7. Two offsite waterbody were present 130m and 220m west of the site (see appendix 3). It is recommended that a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment is carried out, followed by eDNA testing in order to confirm presence or absence of great crested newt. If presence of great crested newt is confirmed, core to intermediate terrestrial habitat would be affected by the site habitat loss due to the proposals. Therefore, a full European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) or a Natural England district licence will be required.
- 5.8. A rapid risk assessment was undertaken to establish the risk of habitat loss due to the development to GCN. The development was assessed to be Green: offence Highly Unlikely when taking into account the new entrance.

Table 4: GCN rapid risk assessment

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.005
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.005
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	



Foraging and commuting bats

The proposed development will not be subject to additional lighting. If there is to be new lighting at the site, the increased disturbance and potential fragmentation as a result of light spill is likely to be moderate and may have a negative effect on the favourable conservation status of the local bat populations. The proposed development should consider measures to avoid or mitigate the use of additional lighting that would disturb nocturnal wildlife that may use the surrounding habitats for commuting and foraging activities, as well as potentially causing habitat fragmentation. Consideration should be given to the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note 8 (Bats and Artificial Lighting) during the design of the development, including:

- LED luminaires should be used where possible;
- Warm white light sources (2700K or lower) should be adopted, to reduce the blue light component;
- Light sources should feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm;
- Only luminaires with negligible or zero Upward Light Ratio should be considered; and
- Where appropriate, external security lighting should be set on motion sensors and set to as short as possible a timer (1 or 2 minutes).

5.11. Additionally, installation of bat roosting boxes on the retained trees recommended as an enhancement to the roosting opportunities for bats onsite. The precise number, location, and design of bat boxes should be determined with input from a suitably qualified ecologist. A preliminary recommendation would be to install at least:

- 2x Schwegler 1FF, 2FN, or a similar design (such as the Beaumaris Woodstone Bat Box) installed on retained trees, at least 3m from the ground and following the manufacturer's instructions.

Nesting birds

5.12. Site clearance works will commence outside of the bird nesting season or, if work has to be carried out during the nesting season (generally from 1st March until 31st August, although birds are known to nest outside of these dates in suitable conditions), a nesting bird check will be required and must be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist. Active nests should be protected by a suitable buffer, as instructed by the ecologist, until the young have fledged, as confirmed by the ecologist. Where a Schedule 1 species (as defined in the Wildlife and Countryside Act) is confirmed to be present, compensation for impacts, e.g., loss of nesting sites, should be devised and implemented.

5.13. Additionally, installation of bird nesting boxes on the retained trees are recommended as an enhancement to the nesting opportunities for garden birds onsite. The precise number, location, and design of bat boxes should be determined with input from a suitably qualified ecologist. A preliminary recommendation would be to install at least:

- 2x Schwegler 1B nest boxes, or a similar design, installed on retained trees, following the manufacturer's instructions.
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Reptiles

- 5.1. A Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) will be required to support the works. The PWMS should include details on appropriate avoidance methods to be undertaken during clearance works to prevent impacts on reptiles.
- 5.2. It is recommended that a reptile mitigation strategy is created detailing the appropriate avoidance methods to be undertaken during vegetation and refuge feature clearance works to prevent impacts on reptiles. Any features suitable for use as refuge should be carefully dismantled by hand, with Ecological Clerk of Works supervision in case of the potential presence of reptiles. Any works to vegetation/ potential reptile refuges should be undertaken in the spring or autumn periods when reptiles are active, to avoid potential disturbance or killing/ injury of reptiles. Vegetation clearance should be completed prior to the winter period to avoid any killing/injury of reptiles, and the site should then be maintained at a non-vegetated state to discourage reptiles returning.

Water vole

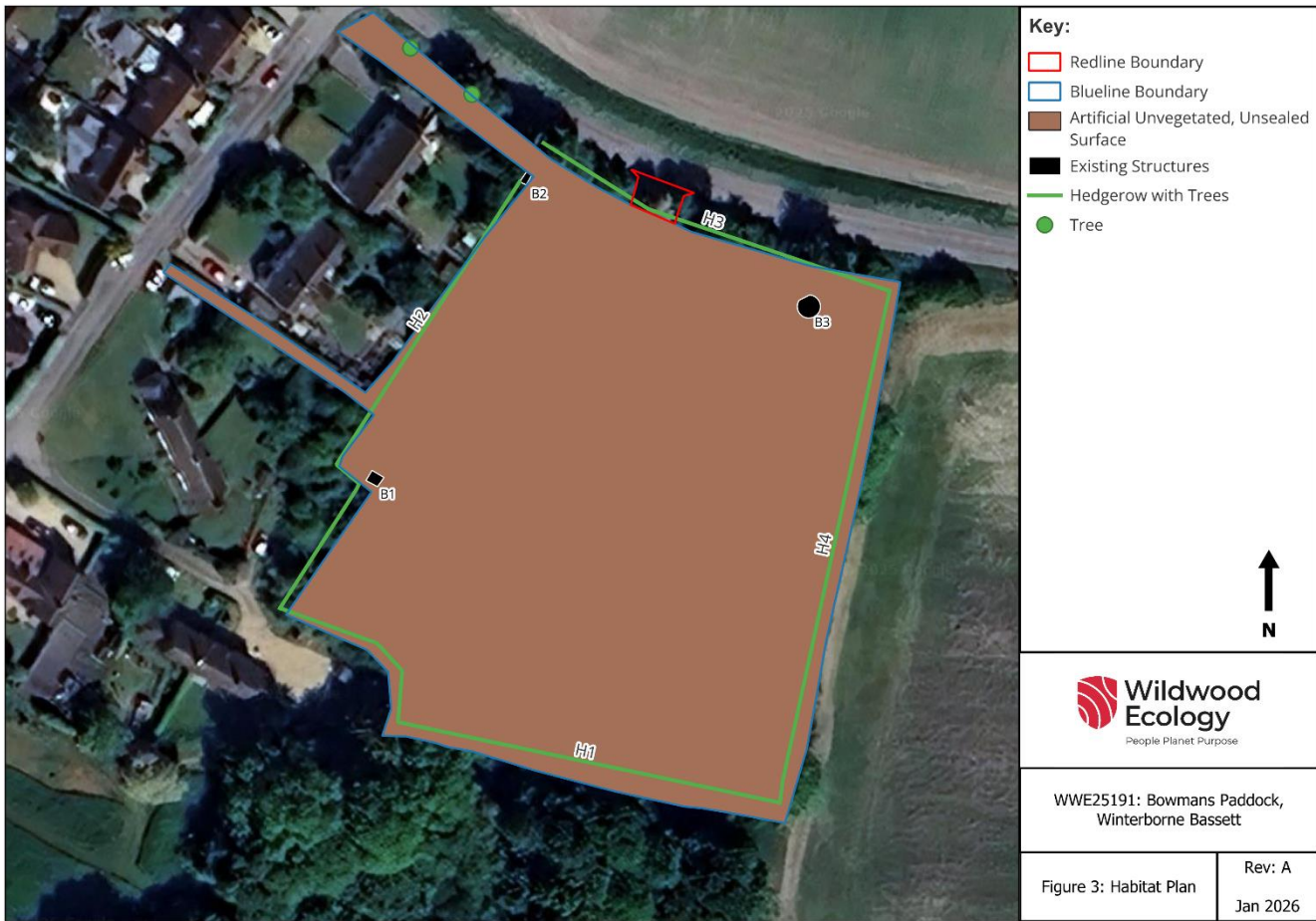
- 5.3. If the ditch adjacent to the offsite habitat is to be affected by the proposed development then a water vole walkover survey around the blueline boundary will be required. The survey will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist and will look for evidence of water vole presence onsite or along waterbodies close to the site.

Hedgehog

- 5.4. The site contained suitable habitat for hedgehog shelter, within the hedgerow. Some of the scrub within the blueline boundary may have been used by foraging and commuting hedgehog. The wider site was open, providing good connectivity to the surrounding habitats, including the residential developments to the south that were likely to provide additional suitable habitat for the species in the gardens.
 - 5.5. The development should consider hedgehog by ensuring continued open connectivity to the surrounding habitats and habitat creation onsite for the species (brash piles in discrete locations). Fences (if installed) should have hedgehog passes. To avoid legislation triggering, the hedgerow should be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist before clearance works are carried out. The ecologist should deliver a toolbox talk to the contractors prior to the works.
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Appendix 1

Habitat plan

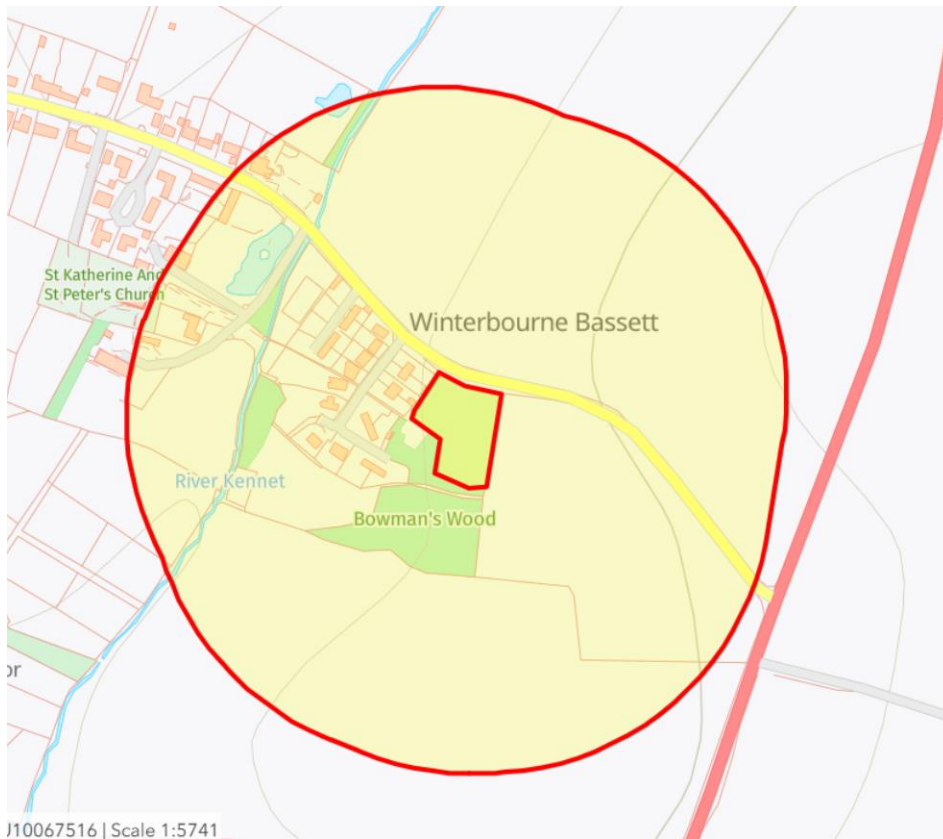


Appendix 2

Proposed development plan



Appendix 3 – Ponds within 500m of the site



Appendix 4 - Priority Habitat Woodland (as shown within the National Forest Inventory)



Appendix 5 – Evidence against the presence of priority deciduous woodland within the blue-line boundary



Figure 2 - 2021 aerial image of the site



Figure 3 - 2019 aerial image of the site



Figure 4 - 2006 aerial image of the site



Figure 5 - 2003 aerial image of the site



Figure 6 - deciduous woodland can be seen in the background beyond cleared land



Figure 7 - cleared mature scrub and fruit trees during clearance



Figure 8 - cleared scrub and trees



Figure 9 - cleared scrub can be seen in the left-hand corner of image

Appendix 6 - Survey images

Onsite habitat



Figure 10 - Hedgerow H3a



Figure 11 - Hedgerow H3 (including H3a)

Offsite (blue line boundary) habitat



Figure 12 - Recently cleared field



Figure 13 - Rubbish within field



Figure 14 - southern section of field, cleared



Figure 15 - Current entrance to field with two trees



Figure 16 - Building B1



Figure 17 - Internal of building B1



Figure 18 - Building B2



Figure 19 - Structure B3



Figure 20 - Hedgerow H1

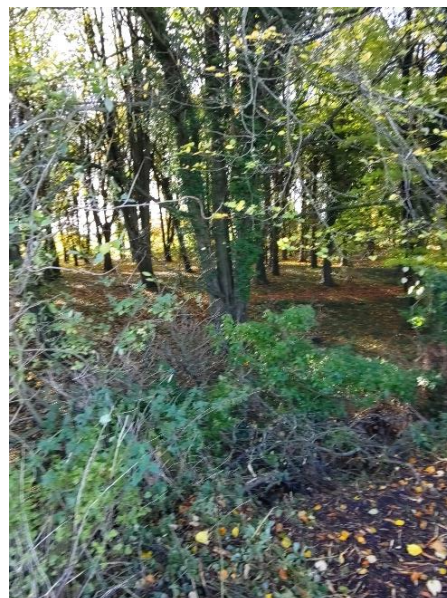


Figure 21 - Woodland south of offsite habitat



Figure 22 - Hedgerow H2



Figure 23 - Hedgerow H4



Figure 24 - Trees with PRF-I



Figure 25 - Rubbish piles and Hedgerow H2