



OLD MILL BARN, MIDDLE WOODFORD, SALISBURY, WILTS

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL AND PHASE 2 BAT SURVEY

Final Report
MARCH 2026

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Executive Summary

This report has been prepared by Bourne Ecology on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. R. Soar, who are proposing to submit a planning application for demolition of the existing at property at Old Mill Barn and the construction of a new residential dwelling and detached double garage/outbuilding at the Site located at Middle Woodford, Salisbury, Wilts, SP4 6NN. These works will also include the clearance of a small areas of shrubby planting surrounding the existing residential dwelling, the loss of areas of short sward amenity grassland, the removal of several trees and other minor landscaping works.

This report includes ecological information on Old Mill Barn gathered by Bourne Ecology, an assessment of the likely impacts of the proposals, any ecological constraints to works on site and a mitigation strategy providing additional enhancements for biodiversity.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken by Des Purdy of Bourne Ecology on 1st August 2025. This involved a walkover survey of the Site, internal and external inspection of all buildings affected by proposals, as well as a daytime inspection of adjacent habitats which may be potentially impacted by proposals within the development boundary.

During the PEA, no evidence of roosting bats was found in the existing residential dwelling. However, several potential bat access points were noted around the property, including around missing mortar below ridge tiles in various locations, behind gaps in soffits and below raised roof slates. The building was assessed according to current guidelines (Collins, 2023) as providing 'high - unconfirmed' bat roost potential, based on the number of potential bat access features and its location within high quality bat habitat. Shrubby planting surrounding parts of the building and within nearby hedgerows also provides limited bird nesting habitat.

Based on the preliminary site appraisal and current proposals, further ecological survey effort was necessary to determine the potential effects of the proposed development on bats. Additional bat emergence surveys performed according to Bat Conservation Trust best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023) were carried out to confirm the presence/likely absence of roosting bats prior to demolition of the property. Survey results have informed a suitable mitigation strategy and will ensure the continued favourable conservation status of protected bat species at the site.

As a requirement of the Preliminary Roost Assessment of Old Mill Barn, three Phase 2 Bat Emergence Surveys using two surveyors during each survey were subsequently carried out during the bat active season between 6th August 2025 and 29th September 2025, to determine the numbers and species of bat(s) using Old Mill Barn. A maximum count of 5 Soprano Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) were observed and filmed emerging from three different roosting locations at the property. Two Soprano Pipistrelles emerged from below missing mortar on the southern hipped tile verge, one emerged from below a nearby western facing ridge tile and two emerged from a small gap in the western soffits at eaves height during the survey of 6th August 2025. No other bat roosting sites were identified elsewhere around the property during the suite of three surveys. Low numbers of Soprano Pipistrelles, as well as occasional passes from individual Common Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), a *Myotis* sp, Noctules (*Nyctalus noctula*) and Serotines (*Eptesicus serotinus*) were observed or recorded commuting or foraging within the garden at the property during the Phase 2 surveys.

It is probable that the regularly maintained wider site, largely comprising of short sward amenity grassland and ornamental shrubby and herbaceous planting, presents some opportunity for nesting birds, both within shrubby vegetation and scattered mature trees. These same trees and shrubs may also provide foraging areas and commuting corridors for local bat species. The majority of the area within the Site boundary lacks the required structure and has limited potential to support common

and widespread reptile species and protected amphibians, such a great crested newt. With the exception of those areas immediately surrounding the existing dwelling and the area to be occupied by the new garage, proposals will retain current on-site planting following development.

A mitigation strategy has been designed that takes into account the full assessment of the Site and will ensure that the potential impacts on protected ecological receptors are appropriately mitigated for. These recommendations are made to include enhancements for biodiversity, in line with local and national planning policy. The mitigation strategy includes the careful timing, phasing and supervision of works. Proposed mitigation and enhancements include new bat roosting features, bird nesting features and enhancements to the Site for invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals. These will promote the favourable conservation status of protected species, both at the Site and within the local area. Construction operations must also ensure there are no potential impacts on the River Avon which flows nearby, opposite the property. A European Protected Species Licence with respect to bats will be required to legally carry out the proposals, as these will result in the destruction and permanent loss of three confirmed roosts used by up to 5 Soprano Pipistrelles.

The impacts of proposals are considered to be low and are limited to the current building location and nearby areas of amenity garden.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Bourne Ecology was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. R. Soar to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the residential dwelling and surrounding amenity garden at Old Mill Barn (see **Appendix 2 & 3** for Site location and boundary map). A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is essentially an initial stage survey that aims to identify habitats and features within and adjacent to the site boundary and assess the sites' potential to support protected species and habitats of value.

Brief

- 1.2 To conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and subsequent Phase 2 bat emergence surveys arising as a requirement of the PEA, to advise the Client of the ecological implications of their proposals and any further survey work necessary. Survey outcomes will inform a mitigation strategy, ensuring there are no negative impacts on nearby habitats or the favourable conservation status of protected species currently using the Site.
- 1.3 The details within this report will remain valid for a period of 12 months from the date of issue; beyond that date it is advised that a review of ecological conditions is undertaken.

Development Proposals

- 1.4 The planning application proposes demolition of the existing dwelling on site and the construction of a new residential dwelling and detached double garage. This will require modifications to extend the existing building footprint to the northern, southern and western aspects of Old Mill Barn. This will result in the loss of part of a small, paved area and a limited amount of shrubby planting and short sward amenity grassland of low ecological value to the rear of the existing dwelling. The new garage building to the south will be located within an existing area of regularly maintained short sward amenity grassland of limited ecological value. Proposals will require the removal of two mature silver birch trees (*Betula pendula*), several apple trees (*Malus* sp.) and minor landscaping alterations to the south of the residential dwelling (see **Appendix 4**).

Site Context

- 1.5 Old Mill Barn lies within the village of Middle Woodford, Salisbury, Wilts, at Ordnance Survey grid reference SU 11971 35981 (see **Appendix 2 & 3**). The Site lies approximately 6.3km northwest of the centre of Salisbury. The Site is situated within an immediate area that is rural in character, within an area of low-density residential housing.
- 1.6 The Site's closest Statutory Protected Wildlife Sites are The River Avon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which are located 14m east of the boundary of the Site.

Relevant Legislation and Policy Implications

Relevant Legislation

- 1.7 The key legislative provisions of relevance to this report with respect to the development proposals and their potential effects on ecological features are listed below, with further detail provided in **Appendix 1**.

- The Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Badgers Act 1992

Biodiversity Action Plans

- 1.8 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was the Government's response to the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity (The Rio Convention), with the aim of halting the loss of biodiversity in the UK. The new UK post-2010 Biodiversity Framework replaces the previous UK Biodiversity Action Plan and is the government's response to the new strategic plan on the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Although the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework supersedes the UK BAP, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats still remain an important reference source for identifying habitats and species of principal importance within England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Within England, Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 list species and habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

Planning Implications

- 1.8 The Government has set out its policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the planning system within the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) which states that plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests'. The key principles of the NPPF describe the importance of avoiding, mitigating and compensating for adverse effects.
- 1.9 The Site is situated within the Wiltshire Council planning area. The Wiltshire Council Local Plan (Adopted 2015) (Wiltshire Council, 2015) contains Strategic Objective 5 and Core Policy 50, which are of relevance to the proposed development. Strategic Objective 5 relating to protecting the natural, built and historic environment states:

Proposed development on land within or outside a SSSI likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI will be determined in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 118 of the NPPF and Circular 06/2005. The valuable natural environment includes not only identified sites, but also other features of nature conservation value including:

- priority species and habitats (including those listed in the national and Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan)*
- areas of habitat with restoration potential (particularly those identified on the South West Nature Map or through other landscape scale projects)*
- all waterbodies covered under the Water Framework Directive*
- features providing an ecological function for wildlife such as foraging, resting and breeding places, particularly wildlife corridors of all scales which provide ecological connectivity allowing species to move through the landscape and support ecosystem functions.*

Core Policy 50

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Protection

Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.

Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would

have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity enhancement

All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/ Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.

Local sites

Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment. Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:

- i. cannot reasonably be avoided*
- ii. are reduced as far as possible*
- iii. are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest*
- iv. where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements.*

Development proposals affecting local sites must make a reasonable contribution to their favourable management in the long-term.

2. Methodology

Introduction

- 2.1 Methodology for the evaluation of the site and assessment of the potential impacts has been based on the Bat Conservation Trust Best Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023) and UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason & Wray, 2023). Additional methodology for the evaluation of the site and assessment of the potential impacts has been based on the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) in the United Kingdom published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018). Methodology for the undertaking of targeted protected species surveys have been based upon Best Practice Guidelines for each species/species group (Collins, 2023) and these have also been used to evaluate relevant features in combination with additional CIEEM guidelines (2017).

Defining the Zone of Influence

- 2.2 In order to define the spatial scope of the ecological survey at Old Mill Barn, it is necessary to predict the likely zone of influence of the development proposals. The zone of influence of a proposed development is defined by CIEEM's EclA guidelines as '*...the areas (ecological) resources that may be affected by the biophysical changes caused by a development, both in the construction and operational phases*'.
- 2.3 The types of activities that might occur as a result of the development at Old Mill Barn and the likely biophysical changes (in the absence of mitigation) include:
- a. Demolition of the existing residential dwelling, with potential impacts on roosting bats and nesting birds, if present during works;
 - b. The loss of shrubby planting surrounding the property and disturbance to nearby boundary habitats, with potential impacts on nesting birds;
 - c. Permanent loss of a small, paved area and some short sward amenity grassland close to the property to accommodate the enlarged building footprint of the new dwelling and nearby garage building;
 - d. The removal of two mature silver birch trees and several apple trees to facilitate proposals, with potential impacts on nesting birds and foraging bats;
 - e. Temporary disturbance to nearby habitats during construction, with potential impacts on nesting and foraging birds and commuting and foraging bats;
 - f. An increase of noise and dust during the construction phase.

Desktop Study

- 2.4 The desk study methodology is based upon guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Environmental and Ecological Management (CIEEM, 2017). Given the scale of the proposed development, a data-gathering exercise was undertaken to obtain information relating to statutory designated sites and key protected species which may be within the zone of influence or may otherwise be adversely affected by development proposals. This involved requesting records of protected and notable species, as well as Notified Sites within 1km of Old Mill Barn and bat records from within 2km from Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC), as well as interrogating Natural England's "Nature on the Map" (MAGIC), to establish protected sites and habitats within the likely zone of influence of the proposals. Key species records are summarised within this report and a full list of records is available on request.
- 2.5 Previous bat surveys available to view on the planning portal were also reviewed in order to collect additional information of bats recorded within the vicinity of the site.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- 2.6 An initial survey of the Site was undertaken on 1st August 2025 by Des Purdy (Natural England Bat Licence N^o: 2025-84448-CL18-BAT, Great Crested Newt Licence N^o: 2025-81393-SCI-CL08, Dormouse Licence N^o: 2026-88780-CL10a-DOR) of Bourne Ecology during calm and partly overcast weather conditions and an ambient temperature of 21°C. The survey is essentially an ecological appraisal of the site. The habitats and features within the site boundary were noted and classified. In addition, any evidence of, or potential for protected species to be on the Site or within the Zone of Influence was recorded.

Bats

Overview

- 2.7 The bat survey comprised of a combination of an assessment of habitats within the zone of influence of proposals and a daytime inspection of any buildings on site.

Daytime Inspection of Buildings within the Site Boundary

- 2.8 A daytime inspection of Old Mill Barn for bats was carried out (internal and external areas). The building was searched for evidence that bats may be using, or previously have used, the building for roosting. Such evidence may include:

- The presence of bats;
- Bat droppings within the building or on external surfaces on and/or immediately adjacent to the building; and

- Staining or scratch marks around suitable bat roost locations or suitable access points into the building.

- 2.9 Any accessible voids were searched using a Pixfra Arc A613 Thermal Imager and a very bright torch. The external inspection of the buildings involved searching for evidence with the use of a torch and binoculars.
- 2.10 Bats may roost in locations that are inaccessible to a surveyor, such as in between roof linings and exterior tiles, gaps under hanging tiles, within soffits etc. Therefore, potential areas for bats to roost or potential access points were also noted during the survey in order to assess the buildings 'potential' to support roosting bats, in line with Bat Conservation Trust best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023). An assessment of the buildings' potential value to bats was made at this initial inspection stage in order to determine the level of any further survey work required to fully assess the site for bats.

Table 2.1: Assessment of Bat Roost Suitability of Buildings

Potential	Criteria
Negligible	Negligible features on site likely to be used by bats
Low	Potential features present which may support low numbers of bats irregularly but no suitable features for regular use by large numbers of bats
Moderate	A building with one or more potential roost features that may be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, condition and habitats present. Unlikely to support a roost of high conservation value
High	A building with one or more potential roost sites that are suitable for use by a large number of bats on a regular basis

Phase 2 Bat Surveys

- 2.11 As Old Mill Barn was assessed as providing 'high - unconfirmed' bat roost potential, further surveys were undertaken to assess the presence or likely absence of roosting bats and to characterise any roost types. Surveys comprised of three emergence/re-entry surveys undertaken according to BCT Best Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).
- 2.12 Two surveyors in total (for each of three surveys) were positioned around Old Mill Barn, at locations identified as allowing good sight lines and ensuring that all potential bat access/egress points were visible between the surveyors. Each surveyor was equipped with

either an Echometer Touch 2 Pro, Batlogger M or Anabat Walkabout to record any unidentified calls for subsequent computer analysis.

- 2.13 All observers used during emergence/re-entry surveys are experienced bat surveyors (NE Class 2 Bat Licence numbers shown in brackets), including Des Purdy (2025-84448-CL18-BAT), Jake Cousins and Shona Campbell.
- 2.14 Each surveyor was supplied with a plan of the site on which to mark bat activity. The following information was recorded for any bats seen or heard:
- Species;
 - Time;
 - Behaviour (whether it was feeding, commuting, social calling or swarming);
 - If seen, direction of flight; and
 - If it emerged or re-entered the building.
- 2.15 Behaviour was identified by flight patterns and call characteristics, as heard on the bat detector. Weather conditions (temperature, wind speed/direction, cloud cover, rainfall in the last hour) were also recorded at the start and end of each survey.
- 2.16 During emergence/re-entry surveys, the building was also filmed using night vision aids (NVAs). Thermal Imagers (Pixfra Arc A613) and Infra-Red cameras (Canon XA11) using 850nm IR Illuminators were used to identify potential bat roost locations within and around the building during low light conditions.
- 2.17 Three dusk emergence surveys were conducted at Old Mill Barn on 6th August, 28th August and 29th September 2025.

Table 2.2 *Timings & weather conditions of bat surveys undertaken at Old Mill Barn.*

Date	Type	Personnel	Start	End	Sunset/ Sunrise	Weather
06/08/25	Dusk Emergence	Des Purdy Shona Campbell	20:29	22:14	20:44	Start temp – 18.3°C, finish temp – 16.2°C, wind BF 1-2, cloud 100%, no rain
28/08/25	Dusk Emergence	Des Purdy Jake Cousins	19:46	21:31	20:01	Start temp – 17.3°C, finish temp – 15.6°C, wind BF 1-3, cloud 25%, no rain.

29/09/25	Dusk Emergence	Des Purdy Shona Campbell	18:33	20:18	18:48	Start temp - 17.1°C, finish temp – 15.3°C, wind BF 0-1, cloud 100%, no rain
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Birds

- 2.18 Any habitat features, for example buildings, scrub, hedgerows and trees, which could potentially be used by nesting birds were surveyed and any nesting activity was noted. The habitat was also assessed regarding its potential for bird activity.

Reptiles

- 2.19 During the survey, habitats within the site boundary were assessed for their potential to support reptiles. In addition, the surrounding landscape and adjoining habitats were appraised for their potential to support reptiles in order to ascertain the likelihood of these species being present. Any natural refugia encountered were inspected for reptile presence.

Dormice (*Muscardinus avellenarius*)

- 2.20 Habitats within and adjacent to the Site boundary were considered for their potential to support dormice. The structure of any boundary and woody habitats were noted and the composition of species, as well as links to other patches of suitable habitat in the surrounding area was considered. During the desktop study aerial maps were referred to, in order to assess how well linked any suitable habitats on the Site are to those surrounding habitats within the wider landscape.

Amphibians

- 2.21 During the PEA the site was searched for any ponds. Ordnance survey maps and aerial photos were assessed for the presence of ponds within 500m of the boundary. The terrestrial habitats within and adjacent to the site boundary were assessed for their suitability for amphibian species presence and habitats were mapped and described during the preliminary ecological appraisal.

Badgers (*Meles meles*)

- 2.22 The Site and its environs were searched for any evidence of badger activity, as well as setts. Any signs were recorded and any holes were classified according to their likely use.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

- 2.23 Due to the close proximity of the River Avon, the suitability of the habitat was assessed for otters and any signs noted such as spraints, runs & slides, potential holt locations and feeding remains.

Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibious*)

- 2.24 The suitability of the habitat was assessed for water voles, any waterbodies were assessed for the presence of suitable foraging areas and burrowing habitat. Any field signs such as latrines, burrows or feeding remains were noted, if present.

Terrestrial Invertebrates

- 2.25 An assessment was made of the site for the potential to support diverse communities of invertebrates, or any Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species. The assessment was made based on the presence of a number of habitat features which may support important invertebrate communities such as:
- An abundance of deadwood;
 - Presence of diverse plant communities;
 - Presence of varied woodland structure and sunny woodland edge;
 - Presence of ponds or watercourses; and
 - Presence of free draining soil exposures.
- 2.26 During the initial survey, no attempt was made to identify invertebrate species and where habitats were identified capable of supporting important or rare species, further Phase II survey work may be necessary to assess the importance of the site.

Survey Constraints

- 2.27 Bats will often roost in places that are inaccessible to the surveyor, such as under tiles and within soffits. During the inspection due regard was paid to the noting of features that have the potential to support crevice dwelling species.
- 2.28 Bats are nomadic and invariably move between roost sites, therefore any bat survey will only provide a snapshot of how bats may be using a particular site at that time.

3. Survey Results and Evaluation

Designated Sites

- 3.1 The Site's closest Statutory Protected Wildlife Site is The River Avon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is located 14m east of the boundary of the Site. Although the proposed development will not result in a net increase in the number of residential dwellings, given the spatial proximity to this statutory designated site, measures must be undertaken to ensure construction work does not allow potential pollutants to enter the River Avon which may damage this sensitive chalk stream habitat. Any such direct or indirect impacts on this statutory designated site resulting from the proposed development would be ecologically significant.

Site Overview: Broad Habitats and Features

- 3.2 Refer to **Appendix 3** which shows the existing site layout.
- 3.3 The Site comprises of the regularly maintained garden and the residential dwelling of Old Mill Barn. Two recently constructed wooden garden sheds were also located within the amenity garden. A more detailed description of the building affected by development plans is included within the bat survey section below.
- 3.4 The garden at Old Mill Barn comprises predominantly of areas of gravelled hard standing used for car parking (**Figure 1**) and large areas of short sward amenity grassland which is regularly mown (**Figures 2, 3 and 4**). Planting within the garden largely comprises of a mixture of both native and non-native ornamental shrubby species surrounding the residential dwelling, and a selection of both mature and young trees including Acacia, Birch and Maple species, along with a selection of mature and young apple, pear and plum trees. Sections of regularly maintained Field Maple (*Acer campstre*) hedging, Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and mixed species native hedgerow dominated by Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) are located around boundary habitats to the east, north and west of the site. Post and wire fencing bordering extensive areas of farmland grazing pasture forms the remainder of the boundary. There will be a small area of short sward grassland, two mature birch trees and several fruit trees lost in order to facilitate the construction of the new garage to the south of the new property and shrubby planting surrounding the current dwelling will be lost to facilitate the proposals. All other on site planting will be protected and retained post-development.



Figure 1 – Gravel hard standing car parking within the front garden at Old Mill Barn



Figure 2 – Regularly maintained garden and patio to the rear of the property



Figure 3 – Trees and short sward grassland south of Old Mill Barn



Figure 4 – Grassland areas forming the majority of the garden at Old Mill Barn



Figure 5 – Field Maple hedging forming the roadside frontage



Figure 6 – Regularly maintained beech hedging forming the northern and western boundary of the garden

Bat Survey

Pre-existing Records

- 3.5 Local bat records provided by Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) show presence of Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius' Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) Brown Long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), Leislers bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), Greater Horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), Daubentons bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*) and Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) within 2km of Old Mill Barn. Of these species, only the Common & Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared bat can be considered as being at all common. The other species range from local to rare.
- 3.6 A review of broad habitats nearby, indicates good quality bat foraging habitat locally in the form of the river corridor of the River Avon, grazing pasture, a number of small woodland blocks and interlinking hedgerow networks, as well as potentially suitable roosting sites within nearby properties along the Woodford Valley.

European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs)

- 3.7 A search of the Government website Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) revealed the presence of a single granted EPSL with respect to bats within 2km of Old Mill Barn. This is located approximately 1.3km northeast of the Site and concerns the destruction of a resting place of Brown Long-eared bats. No further EPSLs with respect to other European protected species have been granted within 2km of the Site.

Ground Level Tree Inspection

- 3.8 A ground level tree inspection for bats was undertaken as part of the PEA. No trees with bat roost potential are located within the zone of influence of the proposals within the development boundary.

Daytime Inspection of Buildings on Site

- 3.9 A daytime inspection of Old Mill Barn (external and internal areas) was undertaken during the PEA of the 1st August 2025. The two small, recently constructed wooden sheds located 40m south of the residential dwelling lacked any bat roosting potential and were not inspected further. Both will be retained post-development.

Old Mill Barn – external inspection

- 3.10 Old Mill Barn is an 'L-shaped' brick-built dwelling supporting a slate tiled roof and ridge (**Figures 7, 8 & 9**) constructed over one and two storeys. The property was in residential use at the time of survey. A double garage forms part of the eastern aspect of the building. A cavity wall is present.
- 3.11 Old Mill Barn is in generally very good exterior condition, although several potential bat access points which could not be investigated further were identified around the building. These were in areas of missing mortar below ridge tiles on the southern (**Figure 10**), eastern (**Figure 11**), and southwestern (**Figures 12 & 13**) roof aspects, around the dormer window on the eastern facing roof aspect (**Figure 14**) and around soffits on the southwestern aspect (**Figure 15**). These exterior gaps may offer potential bat access to squeeze gap/crevice roosting locations. Roofing slates were generally close fitting and areas of lead flashing were tight to the surrounding roof structure. All mortar around tile verges was intact and offered no potential access opportunities for bats.



Figure 7 – Eastern and southern aspects of Old Mill Barn



Figure 8 – Northern and western aspects of Old Mill Barn



Figure 9 – Southwestern aspect of the property with adjoining paved patio area



Figure 10 – Missing mortar below ridge tile on southern hipped section of roof



Figure 11 – Gaps below ridge tiles on eastern-facing roof



Figure 12 – Missing mortar below ridge tile (southwestern aspect)



Figure 13 – Gaps below ridge tiles, western aspect



Figure 14 – Gap between slates and dormer soffits, eastern aspect



Figure 15 – Gap in soffits (southwestern aspect)

Old Mill Barn – internal inspection

- 3.12 The property supports a Fink trussed loft void running the entire length of the main ridge (**Figure 16**). Access is via a single loft hatch located on the first floor. The loft interior is partly boarded, allowing some inspection access to the interior.
- 3.13 The internal void is insulated at floor level throughout with glass fibre insulation. The internal dimensions measure approximately 16m (l) x 1.6m (h) x 2.8m (w). Scattered mouse droppings were noted throughout the loft space, which is heavily trussed (**Figure 17**) and was used for some domestic storage at the time of survey. Some cobwebbing was evident and the interior of the roof structure is lined with bitumastic type roofing felt. There was no visible light ingress and internal conditions were cool and still. There is no access to the void space located above the single storey western aspect of the building. No current or historic evidence of bat occupancy was noted within areas which could be closely examined.



Figure 16 – Loft void viewed southwards from access hatch



Figure 17 – Loft void viewed northwards from access hatch

- 3.14 An additional small storage area is located above the double garage on the eastern aspect of the property (**Figure 18**). This is accessed through a small door from first floor and was used for domestic storage. Careful examination did not reveal evidence of current or historic bat occupancy.
- 3.15 The property was assessed according to BCT guidelines (Collins, 2023) as providing 'high - unconfirmed' bat roost suitability, based on the presence of several suitable bat access points to potential crevice or void roosting sites and the buildings' location within high quality bat habitat, known to support a suite of species. Further Phase 2 emergence surveys have been carried out to establish bat presence/probable absence and inform suitable mitigation prior to the proposed demolition and replacement of the property.



Figure 18 – First floor storage area

Phase 2 Bat Surveys

3.16 The emergence/re-entry surveys undertaken at Old Mill Barn are summarised in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Summarised results of the bat activity surveys carried out at Old Mill Barn.

Survey Date	Bat Emergences/Re-entries	General Activity
6 th August 2025 Dusk	Five Soprano Pipistrelles were observed and filmed emerging from the building. Two emerged from missing mortar on the southern (#2) hipped tile verge, one emerged from below a nearby ridge tile on the western aspect and two emerged from a gap in the end of the western soffits between 20:54 and 21:08.	Species recorded: Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Long-eared bat, Noctule, Myotis sp. & Serotine. Activity: Moderate levels of bat activity were observed and recorded, principally from individual/low numbers of Soprano Pipistrelles throughout the survey. Bats were observed foraging and commuting around the building and nearby garden. Occasional passes were recorded from individual commuting and foraging Common Pipistrelles, a Long-eared bat, Noctules, a Myotis species and Serotines.

28 th August 2025 Dusk	No bats were observed or filmed emerging from the property during the survey.	Species recorded: Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule, Myotis sp. & Serotine. Activity: Moderate levels of activity from individual Soprano & Common Pipistrelle bats were recorded commuting/foraging around the building and surrounding garden. Occasional passes were recorded from commuting Noctule and a Myotis bat species. A single pass by an individual commuting Serotine was noted at 21.00.
29 th September 2025 Dusk	Three Soprano Pipistrelles were observed & filmed emerging from the building. One emerged from below a ridge tile on the western aspect and two emerged from a small gap at the end of the western soffits (the same roosts as previously noted on 06/08/25).	Species Recorded: Soprano Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Myotis sp., Noctule & Serotine. Activity: Moderate levels of Soprano & Common Pipistrelle foraging activity around the garden at the property from low numbers of bats. Occasional passes were also observed and recorded from individual commuting Noctules high above the property during the survey. A single pass from an individual Myotis sp. and a Serotine were recorded close to the end of the survey.

Bat Survey Interpretation & Evaluation of Results

- 3.17 A maximum count of 5 Soprano Pipistrelles were observed and filmed emerging from three different roost sites around the building during the survey of 06/08/25. Two emerged from below a ridge tile on the hipped southern section of roof (shown in **Figure 10**), one from below a nearby ridge tile on the western aspect (shown in **Figure 13**) and two from a small gap at the end of the soffits (shown in **Figure 15**) on the western aspect of the property. Soprano Pipistrelles were observed egressing two of these three roosting sites on the subsequent survey of 29/09/25.
- 3.18 A European Protected Species Licence will be required to legally carry out the proposed works at Old Mill Barn, as the submitted plans will require demolition of the building which has been shown to support three day roosts used by up to 5 Soprano Pipistrelles, which would lead to a breach of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Reptiles

- 3.19 During the PEA, the habitats on site were assessed for their potential to support reptiles. In addition, the surrounding landscape and adjoining habitats were appraised for their potential to support reptiles in order to ascertain the likelihood of these species being present.
- 3.20 Given the nature and relatively small size of the development area surrounding the property, good existing access around the Site and an absence of the tussock grassland structure favoured by these species, there is very limited potential to support the more common and

widespread species of reptile such as Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica*). The WSBRC data search returned a single record of the presence of Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) within 1km of Old Mill Barn, suggesting reptile species are uncommon within the local area. Accordingly, no further surveys for these species prior to development is considered proportionate or necessary.

Amphibians

- 3.21 No records exist with respect to Great Crested Newts (*Triturus cristatus*) locally. A single record was returned by WSBRC for the presence of Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) within 1 km of Old Mill Barn. A search of the Government website Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) did not reveal the presence of ponds within 500m of the Site and there are no ponds at the property.
- 3.22 Very limited opportunity exists for terrestrial life phases of amphibian species within areas to be impacted in the regularly maintained gardens at Old Mill Barn. Boundary hedges may offer very limited habitat requirements. These will be retained post-development. Given the nature and scale of the proposals, no further surveys for these species are considered proportionate or necessary.

Hazel dormouse

- 3.23 Habitats within the zone of influence of the proposals (the construction zone and any potential working zone) are considered to be of negligible quality for hazel dormice. Suitable hedgerows and vegetation on site are limited and these lack connectivity to more suitable hedgerows within the wider local environment. Consequently the proposed works are deemed very unlikely to impact on dormice (if present). The WSBRC data search did not return records of dormouse presence within the local area. Accordingly, no further surveys for this species are considered necessary.

Nesting Birds

- 3.24 During the inspection of the building and surrounding garden within the development site, no evidence of birds' nests were observed. However, shrubby planting surrounding the residential property at Old Mill Barn presents some limited opportunities for nesting birds. This planting will be lost during development.
- 3.25 Two mature silver birch trees and several small apple trees (**Figure 3**) located south of the property are indicated for removal to facilitate proposals to erect the new detached garage. These trees have a very open canopy and provide limited bird nesting suitability.
- 3.26 Potentially suitable nesting habitat is also present within other hedgerows, shrubs and mature trees within the wider site environs. These will be protected and retained following development.

Other Protected and Notable Species

- 3.27 Given the size and scale of development proposals, it is considered unlikely that other protected and notable species would be impacted by works at the Site. No Badger (*Meles meles*) setts were noted during the survey, although given the rural location of the Site it is possible the species may commute and forage locally. The amenity garden at Old Mill Barn may support other notable species such as Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), which may commute through the Site to areas of more suitable habitat nearby. This species is of conservation priority and is listed under Section 41 of the NERC act. No evidence of Otter or Water Vole presence was noted, although it is possible these species may travel along the river course, if present locally. The proposed development would not be expected to directly impact any of these species.

4. Potential Impacts in the Absence of Mitigation

Introduction

- 4.1 This section details the potential ecological impacts of the proposal in the absence of mitigation. The potential activities are identified with reference to the scheme, as described in **Section 1**. Recommended mitigation and enhancements to ensure that the favourable conservation status of species on site is maintained, in compliance with the relevant legislation and planning policy, is detailed in **Section 5**.

Impacts to Sites & Habitats

- 4.2 Given the relatively small scale of the proposed development and as the proposed development will not result in a net increase in the number of residential dwellings, negligible direct post-development impacts to designated nature conservation sites are anticipated.
- 4.3 None of the habitats within the Site boundary are considered to be of intrinsic nature conservation value, apart from their potential to support protected species.
- 4.4 Any pollution or run-off during the construction or landscaping process entering the nearby River Avon SSSI may result in damage to aquatic ecosystems and cause harm to aquatic plants, invertebrates and fish species.

Impacts to Flora & Fauna

- 4.5 The development proposals at Old Mill Barn will result in demolition of the existing dwelling, resulting in a small increase to the existing building footprint and the construction of a new double garage within an area of short sward amenity grassland.
- 4.6 Works to demolish the residential property, including removal and replacement of the existing roof have the potential to disturb, injure or kill bats if present during the time of works, resulting in a breach of the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.
- 4.7 Proposals will result in the destruction and permanent loss of three day roosting sites used by up to five Soprano Pipistrelles.
- 4.8 Any increase in incident light splay on boundary hedgerows and mature trees arising from the development may potentially impact on bat commuting and foraging routes to nearby areas.
- 4.9 The completion of these works may result in the potential loss of, or disturbance to nests of common and widespread bird species (if present) within shrubby vegetation surrounding the existing dwelling. If the presence of nesting birds is confirmed, any works which may disturb them will be delayed until the young birds have fledged the nest of their own accord.

- 4.10 The removal of two mature silver birch trees to facilitate the construction of the new garage may result in the potential loss of, or disturbance to nests (if present) of common and widespread bird species within. Landscaping or building works undertaken during the nesting bird season may disturb or destroy bird nests, resulting in a contravention of Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 4.11 The clearance of small areas of vegetation with very limited potential to support common and 'widespread' reptiles or amphibian species could have a negative impact upon the favourable conservation status of these species (if present) due to the loss of suitable habitats and the potential to harm individual animals, which would cause an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). However, it is considered very unlikely that common and widespread reptile species, or protected species of amphibian would be present within on-site habitats.
- 4.12 Notwithstanding this, even if these species were present locally, it is not considered that the development would have any significant adverse impact upon them. This is due to the limited amount of vegetation that would be disturbed or lost as a result of proposals; its relative isolation from more suitable habitats; and the presence of more suitable terrestrial habitats for these species located further away from the development area (giving the likelihood that individual protected species will not be disturbed).
- 4.13 Failure to observe appropriate root protection areas around all retained mature trees on Site during construction works could result in damage to trees from root compaction, leading to a decline in general tree health.
- 4.14 Overall impacts on biodiversity as a whole may arise from the loss of, or damage to habitats available for a variety of species (if present), including birds, bats, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. Any increase in lighting during the construction & operational phases of the development and post-development changes to on-site structure may affect commuting and foraging bat species.

5. Requirements & Recommendations

Mitigation and Opportunities for Enhancement

- 5.1 In order for the proposals to comply fully with applicable legislation and planning policy, it is necessary to mitigate or compensate for the ecological impacts as identified in **Section 4**. The National Planning Policy Framework also places an onus on developments to provide ecological enhancements and to meet local biodiversity objectives wherever possible. Within this section mitigation measures are recommended to ensure that sensitive habitats and protected species are considered during the construction and operation phases of the development, in compliance with applicable legislation and planning policy.

Ecological Constraints

- 5.2 Appropriate root protection areas (RPAs) around all retained trees and hedgerows on Site and within the neighbouring properties must be observed during the construction process to avoid compaction of the ground by construction operations and any stored building materials. If necessary, RPAs will be cordoned off using appropriate barrier fencing to ensure vehicle movements and stored materials do not damage tree roots, leading to a decline in overall tree health.
- 5.3 Any plant washing facilities are to be appropriately constructed and sited away from the River Avon to prevent overflow and all effluent generated should be retained for proper treatment and disposal off site. No wash down of plant or vehicles is to occur outside of these dedicated facilities.
- 5.4 Any hazardous materials or chemicals proposed to be used during the construction process should be clearly identified and an appropriate Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) assessment must be carried out. Pollution prevention guidance issued by the Environment Agency should be followed. The site manager will be responsible for ensuring all staff are adequately briefed on potential personal and environmental hazards as part of health and safety requirements. Substances likely to be used on site may include fuels, oils, cement and concrete.
- 5.5 All mobile plant is to be refuelled in a designated area away from the River Avon and an appropriate spill kit is to be available at the site. Concrete is highly alkaline and corrosive and must not be allowed to enter the river during construction work.

Mitigation and Compensation Measures

Bats

- 5.6 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identified potential roost access

points at multiple locations around the building. Subsequent Phase 2 bat surveys confirmed the presence of three day roosting sites, one within the western tile verge used by an individual Soprano Pipistrelle, one below a ridge tile on the hipped southern roof aspect used by up to two Soprano Pipistrelles and one at the southwestern end of the soffits used by up to two Soprano Pipistrelles.

- 5.7 A European Protected Species Licence granted by Natural England will be necessary to legally carry out the proposed works at Old Mill Barn.
- 5.8 Where possible, construction work will be timed to minimise the impact on bats. An ecologist will be on call during development operations in the event any bats are encountered.
- 5.9 Any destructive works involving removal of roofing materials, soffits and any other areas that have the potential to support bats will need to be directly supervised by a suitably qualified and licensed bat ecologist. All potentially sensitive areas of the building such as roofing, soffits, lead flashing and exterior masonry will be hand stripped, following a detailed toolbox talk to all site personnel. The methodology for undertaking destructive works would be as detailed below, unless varied under the terms of any subsequently granted EPSL.
- 5.10 Prior to the start of works, temporary mitigation features in the form of two Schwegler 2FN bat boxes (or a similar design) will be installed on one of the several nearby suitable retained trees to provide alternative roosting opportunities for bats whilst the work is being carried out. These boxes are within an area used by commuting and foraging bats and will be left in position following completion of works to provide enhanced roosting opportunities for bats around the site.
- 5.11 The destructive works will be timed accordingly to avoid the sensitive times of year. To avoid potential disturbance to hibernating bats, no destructive works to the roof structure, soffits and masonry (bat sensitive areas) will be commenced during the hibernation season, which is generally considered to be from 1st November to 31st March (although this is dictated by weather conditions).
- 5.12 Suitable mitigation for the loss of the 3 roost sites used by five individual Soprano Pipistrelles would be incorporation of three integral bat tubes such as a Schwegler 1FR (or a similar design), one within the eastern facing gable, one within the two-storey section of the southern facing gable and one within the two storey western gable, with all integral boxes located close to the roof apexes (see **Appendix 8**). These boxes will provide differing internal conditions based on likely solar gain, which may provide roost sites suitable for use by the resident population of Soprano Pipistrelles at different times during the year.
- 5.13 As bats are likely to forage within the local area, any increase in lighting post-development must also be avoided (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2023; Lacoeyilhe *et al.*, 2014). Any new external lighting must be directed to minimise light spillage on adjacent trees or hedgerows by the use of directional lighting hoods. All external lighting must be fitted with

timing sensors to minimise the period of unnecessary illumination and reduce the potential for the lights to attract invertebrates. All on-site lighting must comply with the Guidance Notes on Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (GN08:2023), as outlined by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023). Any luminaires or bollard lighting to be used must be designed to limit upward lighting to 0% above 90° to the horizontal plane. Lighting measures must ensure the following:

- Lights will not be aimed at boundary trees or vegetation;
- Lighting must not be aimed at potential roosting features associated with buildings, mature trees and hedgerows along the boundaries within the curtilage of the proposals;
- Light levels will be kept to below 1lux where possible;
- Light hoods will be used to reduce light spillage; and
- Timed / motion sensor security lighting will be used where external lighting is required.

Birds

- 5.14 It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to disturb nesting birds. To avoid contravention of protected species legislation, any building modifications or tree/shrub removal associated with the development must be scheduled to avoid peak bird nesting season (which runs from 1st March to 31st August, inclusive), unless inspection by an ecologist concludes that there are no nesting birds present immediately prior to the commencement of works. If the presence of nesting birds is confirmed, any works which may disturb them will be delayed until the young birds have fledged the nest of their own accord.
- 5.15 Given the nature of the proposed works, the impacts on birds are considered to be potentially 'limited' at the site scale.
- 5.16 The potential loss of bird nesting opportunities within the existing building and associated shrubby vegetation will be compensated for by installing new nesting features for a variety of species. These will be located within retained mature trees and shrubs within the garden. Two Schwegler 1B nest boxes (or similar designs) will be placed within suitable trees along with an open-fronted 2H Schwegler nest box (or similar design) in an appropriately concealed location within a retained hedgerow surrounding the property at Old Mill Barn.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 5.17 The area to be impacted upon by the proposals has very low potential to support the more common and widespread species of reptile or amphibian. Further Phase 2 surveys for both

species are not considered necessary, although a precautionary approach to any vegetation clearance should be employed.

- 5.18 In the very unlikely event that reptiles or amphibians are found during development, an ecologist should be contacted to advise on how to proceed or to carefully catch and move animals out of harm's way to more suitable retained habitat nearby within the wider ownership of the Client.

Enhancements - General Considerations

- 5.19 In addition to the mitigation and enhancements recommended for bats and birds described above, the creation of habitats can have benefits for biodiversity as a whole, in line with national and local planning policy. Recommendations for these within the wider ownership of the Client include:

- Additional planting of native, flowering and fruiting shrub and tree species as part of landscaping work;
- Erection of a woodstone insect block (or similar design) on a suitable tree, fence or wall in a sunny position within the garden at Old Mill Barn; and
- Construction of a log pile within an area of retained hedgerow using materials generated from tree clearance operations.

Residual Impacts

- 5.20 Provided the mitigation recommended above is implemented in full there should be no residual impacts to protected species and habitats as a result of the proposed development at Old Mill Barn.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- 6.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and daytime inspection for bats has been undertaken at Old Mill Barn following best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2017., and Collins, 2023).
- 6.2 Within the Site boundary no habitats of any intrinsic nature conservation value were noted. However, habitats within the Site boundary have the potential to support protected species.
- 6.3 Old Mill Barn has been shown to support three day roosts used by up to five Soprano Pipistrelles and accordingly, a European Protected Species Licence granted by Natural England will be required to legally carry out the proposed works which will permanently destroy these bat roosts.
- 6.4 Shrubby vegetation associated with the building and on-site trees are considered to have some potential to support nesting birds.
- 6.5 There is very limited potential for a small amount of habitat within the Site to support the more common and widespread species of reptile or amphibian. However, a precautionary approach to any necessary vegetation clearance using hand tools is recommended.
- 6.6 Recommendations for mitigation and enhancement have been made and are listed below.

Recommendations

- 6.7 Mitigation and enhancement recommendations include:
- Implementation of a bat mitigation strategy for both licensable and non-licensable works to the building;
 - Appropriate steps must be taken where necessary to protect the adjacent River Avon from pollution or run-off during the construction and landscaping work;
 - Clearance of two mature Silver Birch trees, fruit trees and shrubby vegetation associated with the property outside of the nesting bird season or, if this is not possible, following an early morning bird survey and under the supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist;
 - The hand clearance of any areas of paving or masonry that may provide potential refugia for terrestrial life stages of amphibians under ecological supervision;

- Observance of appropriate root protection areas around all retained mature trees and hedgerows on site and within neighbouring properties, using barrier fencing to protect these, where deemed necessary;
- Planting of native, fruiting tree and hedgerow species as part of any new landscaping;
- The installation of bird, bat and insect boxes at suitable locations within the garden at Old Mill Barn; and
- The creation of a log pile within a retained hedgerow using materials won from site during tree clearance operations.

6.8 Provided the mitigation measures recommended above are implemented in full, there should be no residual impacts to ecological features as a result of this development.

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Appendix 1

Relevant Legislation

CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS 2017

These **Regulations** consolidate the Conservation of **Habitats and Species Regulations** 2010 (S.I. 2010/490) with subsequent amending instruments. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Habitats Regulations) transpose Habitats Directive into UK legislation. The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation and protection of European Sites and European Protected Species. European Sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which form part of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas across Europe.

European Protected Species (EPS) are those listed under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations and include dormouse, great crested newt, otter and all species of bat. The regulations prohibit the deliberate capture, killing or disturbance of any EPS; it is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any of these species. In order to carry out a lawful operation (e.g. development work which has full planning permission) that may result in an offence under the Habitats Regulations, it is necessary to obtain a licence from Natural England. EPS Licences will only be granted after Natural England has been satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternative and that there will not be any adverse impacts on the favourable conservation status of the species.

WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the principle piece of legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. Various amendments have occurred since the original enactment. The Wildlife and Countryside Act contains both habitat and species protection. Certain bird, animal and plant species are afforded protection under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. Measures for the protection of the countryside, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are also included within the Act.

COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT 2000

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 adds to the protection afforded in the WCA to SSSI's and other important sites for nature conservation. In addition, under the Act it became a criminal offence to "recklessly disturb" Schedule 1 nesting birds and species protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. It also enabled heavier penalties on the conviction of wildlife offences.

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 improved wildlife protection by amending the WCA. The main function of the NERC Act was to raise the profile of biodiversity amongst public authorities. 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.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL LEVEL - THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF, 2024)

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2024) (available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Section 15 of the NPPF provides guidance on conserving and enhancing the natural environment through the planning system. This guidance replaces *Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation*. Section 15, Paragraph 170, of the NPPF specifies that the planning system 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.

In consideration of habitats and biodiversity, Paragraph 174 states 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 biodiversity; 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.

Paragraph 175 states 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 reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR 06/05: BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

The Government Circular 06/05 provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation. It was originally produced to accompany PPS9, and although some of the information contained within it is now out of date, paragraphs 98 and 99 of the document remain relevant.

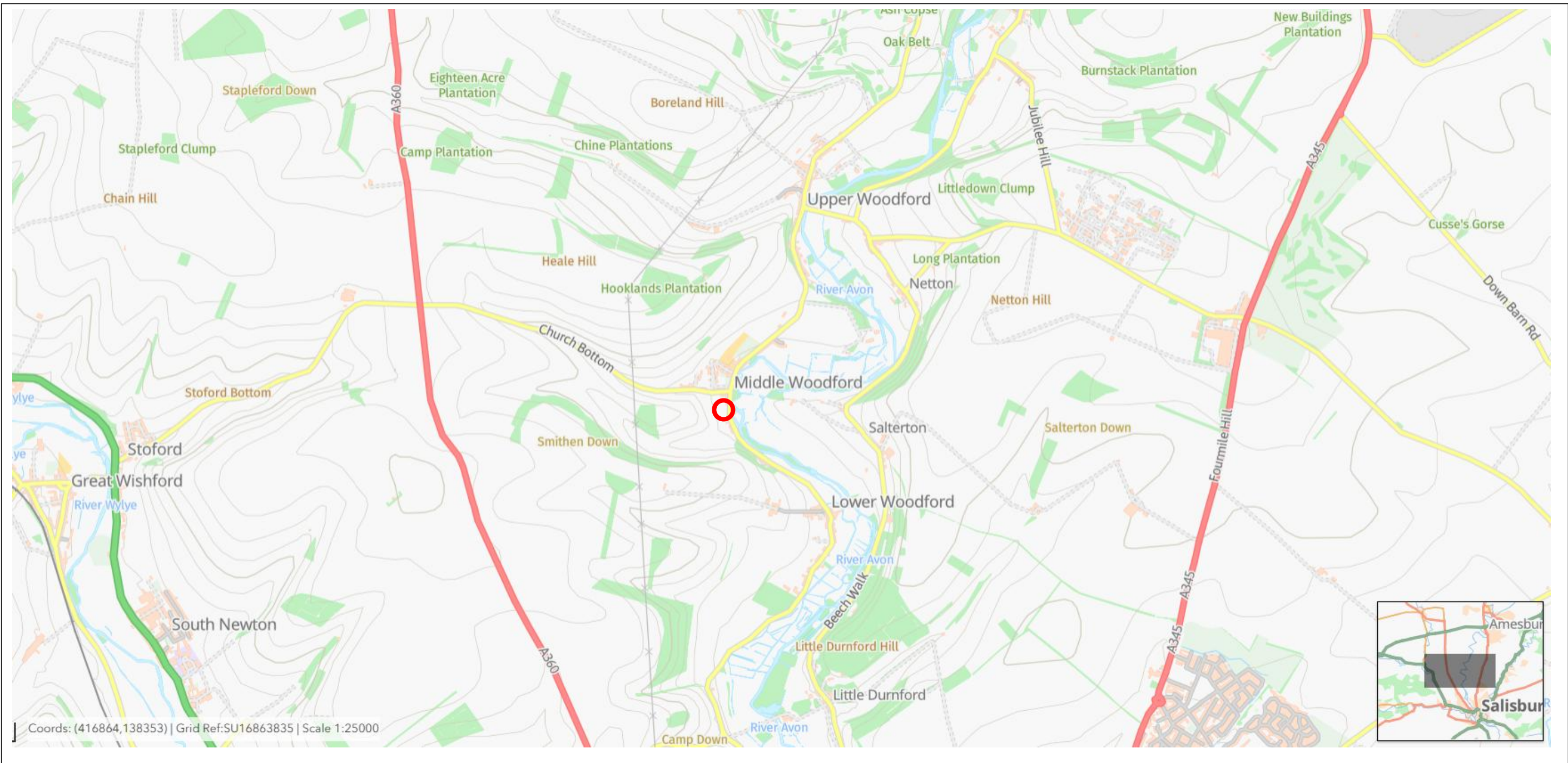
Paragraph 98 states that *“the presence of protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitats”*

Paragraph 99 states that *“it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted”*

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The Wiltshire Council Local Plan: Adopted January 2015, available online at: <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-policy-core-strategy> sets out the long term spatial planning strategy for the region.

Appendix 2: Site Location (○)



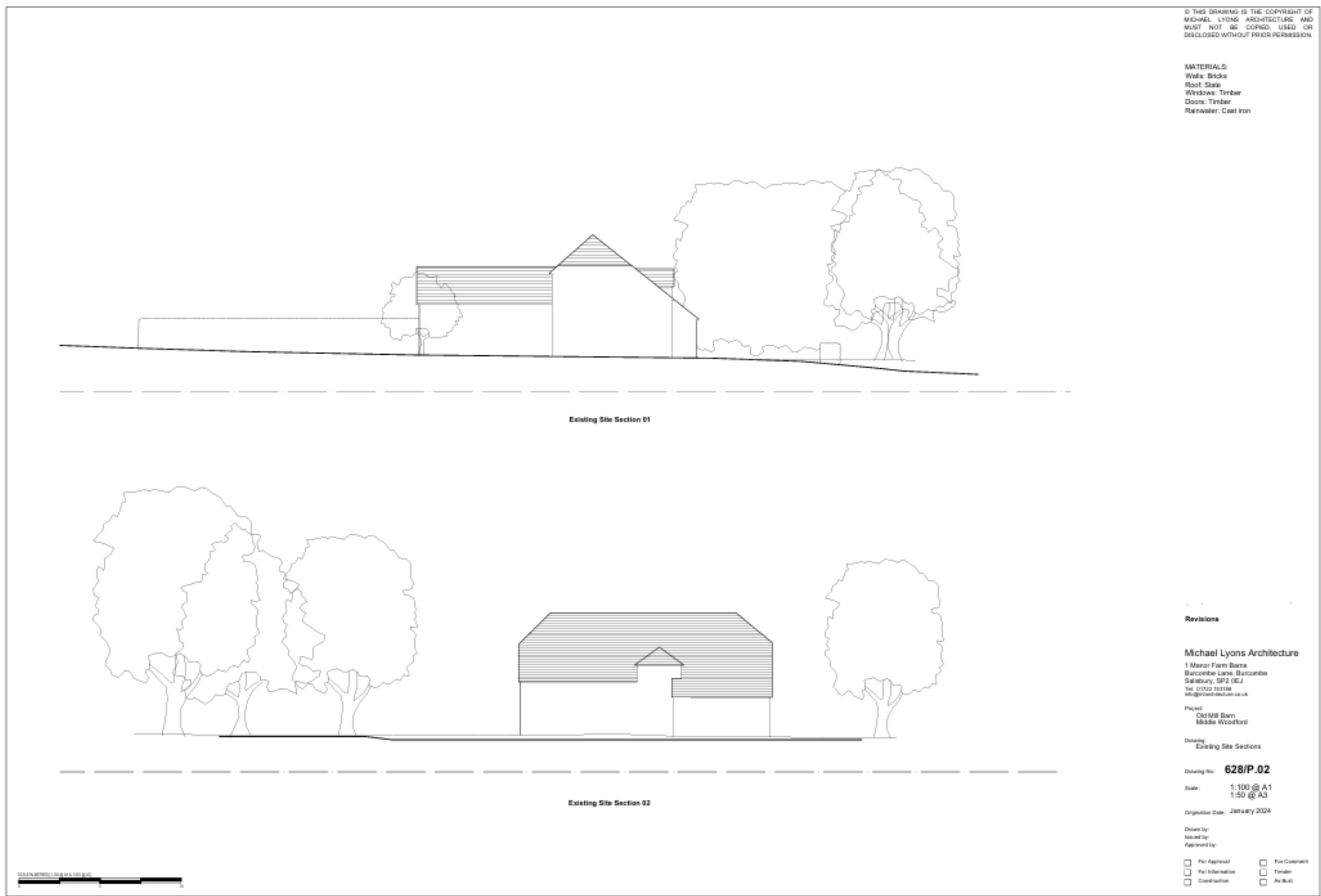
OLD MILL BARN, MIDDLE WOODFORD
PEA & Phase 2 Bat Survey

Appendix 3: Existing Site Layout



OLD MILL BARN, MIDDLE WOODFORD
PEA & Phase 2 Bat Survey

Appendix 4: Existing Site Sections



Appendix 5: Proposed Site Plan



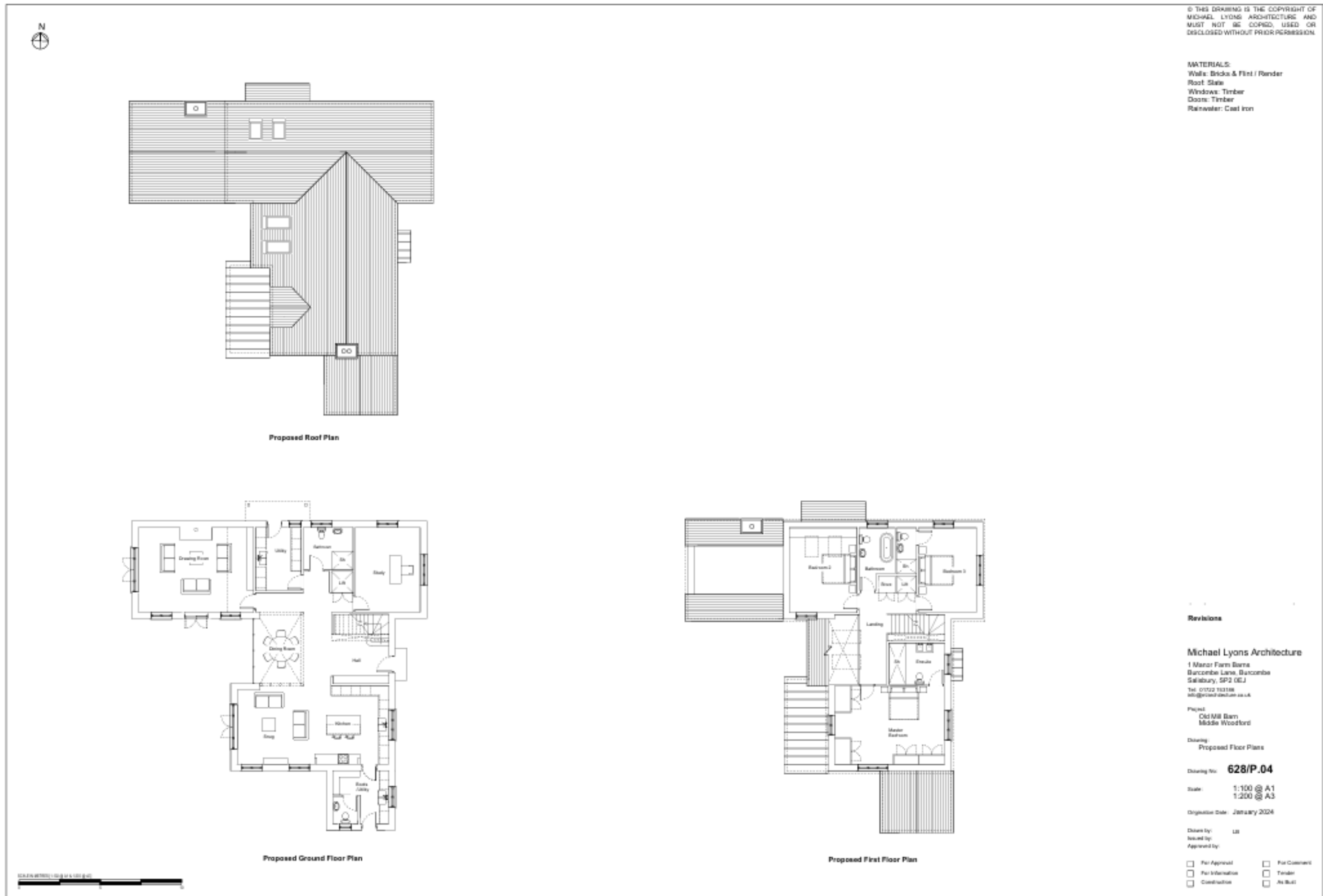
OLD MILL BARN, MIDDLE WOODFORD
PEA & Phase 2 Bat Survey

Appendix 6: Proposed New Site Sections



OLD MILL BARN, MIDDLE WOODFORD
PEA & Phase 2 Bat Survey

Appendix 7: Proposed New Building Design



Appendix 8: Proposed New Dwelling Elevations



OLD MILL BARN, MIDDLE WOODFORD
PEA & Phase 2 Bat Survey

Appendix 9: Proposed New Garage/Outbuilding

