



Crossland
Ecology

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Site: Upper Studley Farm, Swindon Road, Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, SN4 8ET

Client: K. Rivers

Date: April 2026



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Site assessments / surveys (where required) have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

Due to the temporal nature of ecology, the findings of this report should not be relied upon if a significant amount of time has passed, as defined by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines.

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1.0 Summary

- 1.1** This report presents the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken at Upper Studley Farm, Swindon Road, Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire ('the Site'). The proposals for the site are to rebuild the existing structure and give it functional purpose as a 2-bed short term holiday let ('the Proposed Development').
- 1.2** The site comprised a building surrounded by modified grassland and hardstanding. The site is generally of low biodiversity value and the habitat of greatest ecological value within the site is the modified grassland.
- 1.3** No European statutory designated sites are located within 5km of the site. No national statutory designated sites are located within 2km of the site. It is considered that there will be no significant effects on any designated sites as a result of the proposed development.
- 1.4** The development is considered to be exempt from the mandatory net gain requirements (MHCLG, 2024) and a BNG assessment is not required.
- 1.5** The building within the site was assessed as having 'low' suitability to support roosting bats and one dusk emergence survey is recommended between May and August to determine whether roosting bats are present.
- 1.6** Vegetation/building removal should be undertaken following a Precautionary Method of Working (PMW) which has been recommended to safeguard any protected species (such as nesting birds/reptiles) which may be present in low numbers within the site.
- 1.7** A summary of ecological features, the likely impacts and outline mitigation/enhancement measures is provided in Table 3. Best practice construction guidelines will be followed to minimise potential impacts on any protected sites and species.
- 1.8** Through incorporation of relevant recommendations, it is considered that the proposals can deliver positive residual impacts in line with current wildlife legislation, chapter 15 of the NPPF (MHCLG, 2024); and local planning policies relevant to nature conservation.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Crossland Ecology Ltd. was commissioned by Kim Rivers to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Upper Studley Farm, Swindon Road, Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire ('the Site'). This report presents the findings and recommendations of the PEA.

2.2 The objectives of this appraisal were to:

- Map the main ecological features within the surveyed area and compile a plant species list for each habitat type;
- Make an initial assessment of the presence or likely absence of species of conservation concern;
- Identify any legal and planning policy constraints relevant to nature conservation which may affect the development proposals;
- Determine any potential further ecological issues;
- Determine the possible need for further surveys and mitigation; and
- Make recommendations for minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible in accordance with Chapter 15: *Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment*, of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2024), and relevant local nature conservation planning policies.

2.3 The details of relevant wildlife legislation in addition to national and local planning policies related to nature conservation and biodiversity are provided in Appendix 2.

3.0 Methods

- 3.1** This report has been prepared with reference to British Standards Institution (BSI) BS 42020:2013 'Biodiversity – code of practice for planning and development' (BSI, 2013) and The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) and Technical Guidance Series 'Ecological Report Writing' (CIEEM, 2017a) and Code of Professional Conduct (CIEEM, 2019a).
- 3.2** The following PEA follows guidance and methods as prescribed by the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Appraisal 2nd edition (2017b) and the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (2019b). Following these methods, a baseline of rare and/or notable ecological features (species and habitats) was established and valued. Predicted significant impacts upon these features have been identified as well as constraints and opportunities. This step-wise assessment process has informed likely mitigation and enhancement measures as well as any further assessment required. This PEA and any additional surveys will fully inform the predicted impacts of the scheme in accordance with the NPPF (MHCLG, 2024), local planning policy and relevant wildlife legislation.

Desk Study

- 3.3** Given the nature and scale of the proposed development, a data search for records of protected and notable species and for data on non-statutory designated sites from the local records centre was not considered proportionate.
- 3.4** A web-based search for statutory designated sites via the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) spatial data resource magic.defra.gov.uk was undertaken on 22nd April 2026 for the following statutory designated sites: European (5km from the surveyed area boundary) and National (2km from the site boundary).
- 3.5** An online search was undertaken for waterbodies within 250m utilising MAGIC online spatial data resource (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>) on 22nd April 2026.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 3.6** A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Survey was carried out on 13th April 2026 by Chris Bawler BSc (Hons) ACIEEM during appropriate weather conditions. UKHab survey methods are set out in the UK Habitat Classification User Manual – Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd. 2023). UKHab is a comprehensive habitat classification system designed for the UK and is intended for ecologists to identify and map habitats to provide outputs that are suitable for ecological impact assessment. Habitat mapping was undertaken using the standard classification to indicate habitat types.
- 3.7** The dominant and readily identifiable higher plant species identified in each of the various habitat parcels were recorded and their abundances assessed on the DAFOR scale:
- D - Dominant

- A - Abundant
- F - Frequent
- O - Occasional
- R - Rare

3.8 These scores represent the abundance within the defined area only and do not reflect national or regional abundances. Plant species nomenclature follows Stace (2019).

3.9 All impacts upon ecological features have been considered for the purposes of this survey following industry best practice guidance. Only relevant protected and notable species have been discussed within this report to keep its contents concise and relevant to the works being undertaken and for ease of application.

Protected and Notable Species

3.10 The surveyed area was assessed during the UKHab survey for its suitability for protected and notable species that are likely to occur in the area. Considering the results of the desk study, the location and habitats in the surveyed area, an assessment was carried out for:

- Flora;
- Badger;
- Bats (roosting, foraging and commuting);
- Breeding and non-breeding birds;
- Great crested newts;
- Hazel dormice;
- Rare or notable invertebrates;
- Reptiles; and
- Other notable mammal species.

Badger

3.11 An initial assessment was made to identify areas that might be used by badgers *Meles meles* for foraging, commuting and sett creation.

Bats

3.12 The site was assessed for its suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

3.13 As part of the protected species scoping, a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was completed in accordance with best practice (Collins, 2023). This included an assessment of the exterior of buildings on-site.

3.14 Additionally, suitability of the site for foraging/commuting bats was also assessed considering potential flight lines, wildlife corridors, artificial lighting inputs and potential pathways to impact brought about by the prospective scheme. Good bat

foraging habitat generally includes sheltered areas and habitats with good numbers of insects, such as woodland, scrub, ponds, lakes and species-rich or rough grassland. Good commuting habitat generally comprises linear features such as well-connected hedgerows, woodland edge, watercourses. The site was assigned a level of suitability according to the classification provided by Collins (2023).

Birds

- 3.15** The site was assessed for its potential to support breeding birds and significant wintering and/or migratory bird populations. Suitable habitat generally includes scrub, trees and can also include buildings, open grassland and piles of debris.

Great crested newts

- 3.16** The site was assessed for its potential to support great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*. Aquatic habitats within 250m of the site were identified using online mapping services.
- 3.17** Terrestrial habitats on site were also assessed for their suitability for great crested newts as part of the PEA. Suitable terrestrial habitat generally includes rough grassland and woodland where they can forage and hibernate, with good links to the ponds where they breed.

Hazel dormice

- 3.18** The site was assessed for its potential to support hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*. This species generally uses areas of dense woody vegetation and are more likely to be found where there is a wide diversity of woody species contributing to a three-dimensional habitat structure, a number of food sources, plants suitable for nest-building materials and good habitat connectivity.

Invertebrates

- 3.19** The site was assessed for its potential to support rare or notable invertebrate species; this assessment was made on the basis of the range of the habitats present.

Reptiles

- 3.20** The site was assessed for its suitability for the four more widespread UK reptile species; common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix natrix* and adder *Vipera berus*. Specific habitat requirements vary between species. Common lizard and slow worm prefer rough grassland although they can be found in a variety of habitats ranging from woodland glades to walls and pastures. Grass snakes have similar habitat requirements but have a greater reliance on ponds and wetlands. Adder is more associated with dry grasslands, heathland and woodland edge habitats.

Other Notable Species

- 3.21** The site was assessed for its potential to support Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 species of principal importance which are likely to occur in the local area especially hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and brown hare *Lepus europaeus*.

Assessment of Nature Conservation Value

- 3.22** CIEEM guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom (2018) have been utilised to assess the impacts upon habitats within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the site. CIEEM suggests that it is best to use the geographical scale (i.e. International, National, Regional etc.) at which a feature (i.e. a habitat, species or other ecological resource) may or may not be important, as the appropriate measure of value. As such, data from the data search and UKHab survey have been reviewed and the likely occurrence of protected and notable species/species groups assessed. This has allowed predictions of impacts to be made along with recommendations for mitigation, compensation and enhancement. If needed, further targeted survey has been recommended to refine the evaluation and associated recommendations.

Constraints

- 3.23** Desktop data searches are a valuable tool in evaluating a site's potential to hold rare and protected species, it is not however absolute in confirming presence or absence of notable species due to the nature of how the records are collected.
- 3.24** Where any data supplied by the client, or any other sources have been used, it has been assumed that the information is correct. No responsibility can be accepted by Crossland Ecology for inaccuracies in the data supplied by any other party. The conclusions and recommendations in this report are based on the assumption that all relevant information has been supplied by those bodies from whom it was requested.
- 3.25** All the species that occur in a habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent in different seasons. However, given that all the habitats were common and widespread, it was considered that an accurate assessment of the habitat type and condition could be made.

4.0 Baseline Ecological Conditions

Site Description

- 4.1** The site comprised a building surrounded by modified grassland and hardstanding. The site is bordered by farm buildings and arable land in all directions. The wider landscape is predominantly rural, with arable land alongside small pockets of woodland residential development. Junction 16 of the M4 lies approximately 420m north of the site.

Statutory Designated Sites

European Designated Sites

- 4.2** There are no European designated sites within 5km of the site boundary.

Nationally Designated Sites

- 4.3** There are no nationally designated sites within 2km of the site boundary.
- 4.4** The site lies within the Bincknoll Dip Woods SSSI and Wootton Bassett Mud Spring SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ).

Habitats

- 4.5** A UKHab map of the site is provided within Appendix 3, whilst plant species recorded per habitat type are provided in Appendix 4.
- 4.6** The UKHab types within the site are listed below, followed by a description of each habitat type:
- g4 Modified grassland
 - u1b5 Building
 - u1b6 Other developed land

g4 – Modified grassland

- 4.7** Modified grassland was the dominant habitat within the site. The grassland was unmanaged and had a varied sward height between 10-20cm.
- 4.8** Grass species evident within the grassland included perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, annual meadow grass *Poa annua*, cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata* and red fescue *Festuca rubra*. Forbs present within the grassland included white clover *Trifolium repens*, garlic mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, white deadnettle *Lamium album*, red deadnettle *Lamium purpureum*, common nettle *Urtica dioica* and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, amongst others.

u1b5 – Building

- 4.9** A derelict dairy barn was present within the site.

u1b6 – Other developed land

- 4.10** An area of developed land was present surrounding the dairy barn and modified grassland. This area comprised concrete slabs and graveled tracks.

Priority habitats

No priority habitats were identified within the site.

- 4.11** No priority habitats were identified on Magic Map within 100m of the site.

Summary

- 4.12** The habitats within the site were of **Site** importance for biodiversity. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Protected and Notable Species

- 4.13** Protected species are animals and plants protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended), The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, or listed in Section 40 or 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Protected and notable species with existing records within 2km of the site are detailed below.

Protected and invasive flora

- 4.14** No Schedule 9 listed invasive plants were observed within the site during the survey.

- 4.15** No rare or notable plants were observed within the site during the survey. Given the common and widespread habitats present within the site, it is considered unlikely that protected flora would be present.

- 4.16** The site is therefore considered to be of **Negligible** importance for flora. The confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Badger

- 4.17** No evidence of badgers was observed during the site visit. There were no opportunities for sett creation within the site. The modified grassland offers limited but suitable foraging habitat for badger. The site is connected to optimal badger foraging and commuting habitat in the wider landscape.

- 4.18** The site is currently considered of **Site** importance for badger. The confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Bats

- 4.19** No European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences for bats have been granted within 2km of the site.

Bats – roosting

- 4.20** One building was present within the site. A summary of the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the building can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Preliminary Roost Assessment of buildings on-site

Building number	Description	Access Points	Potential Roost Locations	Bat Roost Suitability
B1	Two storey former dairy barn, approximately 300 years old. The building was in a very poor condition, as the eastern end of the building had partially collapsed and some of the external walls were held up by supports. The building had solid sandstone walls and a gabled roof covered with slate tiles and half-round clay ridge tiles. Internally, the building had an open void with a timber frame. The roof was unlined and uninsulated. There were high levels of light ingress.	Open windows or windows lacking glass on eastern and southern aspects Open door on the southern aspect Open structure/collapsed roof on the eastern aspect	Gaps in missing mortar/bricks on all aspects Gaps under slipped/missing slate tiles Gap caused by a damaged/missing window frame on the southern aspect Gap caused by a damaged/missing timber frame	Low

- 4.21** Given the roosting resource available, the building is considered to be of **Site** importance for roosting bats. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Bats – foraging

- 4.22** The modified grassland provides very limited sub-optimal habitat for foraging and commuting bats. Overall, the site's habitats were considered to be of 'low' suitability for foraging and commuting bats (Collins, 2023). The site is connected to other areas of optimal habitat in the wider landscape.

- 4.23** The site is therefore currently considered to be of up to **Site** importance for foraging and commuting bats. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Birds

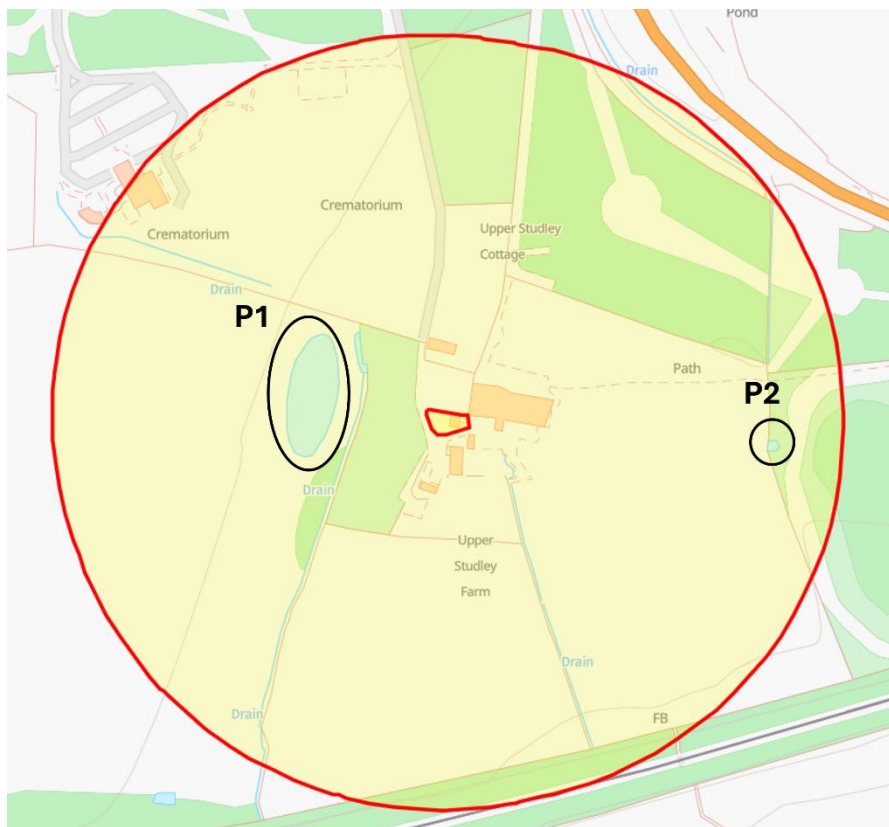
- 4.24** The building provided limited nesting habitat while the modified grassland provided foraging habitat for a limited range of species. Two inactive swallow *Hirundo rustica* nests were observed within the building.

- 4.25** Overall, the site is likely to support a common assemblage of breeding and non-breeding species. As such, the site was considered to be of up to **Site** importance. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Great crested newts

- 4.26** Two EPS licences for GCN have been granted within 2km of the site. The closest licence was 2017-32701-EPS-MIT-1 which was located approximately 240m north-west of the site.
- 4.27** A total of nine positive GCN class licence survey returns have been reported within 2km of the site. The nearest pond with a positive GCN result was located 950m south of the site.
- 4.28** No ponds are present within the site. Two ponds (denoted P1 and P2) were identified on Ordnance Survey mapping within 250m of the site. The ponds are shown on Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Pond Plan



- 4.29** Pond P1 was located approximately 60m west of the site and pond P2 was located approximately 200m east of the site. Neither pond was accessed during the survey and neither could therefore be subject to a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment.
- 4.30** The modified grassland provided limited opportunities for commuting and foraging GCN, given its size. Scattered debris and building materials across the site provided limited opportunities for sheltering and hibernation, with the majority of the debris stored on pallets which reduced their suitability to shelter GCN. The site is connected to areas of optimal habitat for GCN within the wider area.

4.31 Given the presence of two ponds within 250m of the site, and the presence of positive GCN licence returns and the two granted EPS licences in the wider landscape, the presence of breeding GCN within the local area cannot be ruled out, though their presence within the site is deemed unlikely (given the small size of the site and the intervening habitat between site and the ponds). The site was considered to be of up to **Site** importance. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Hazel dormice

4.32 No EPS licences for hazel dormice have been granted within 2km of the site.

4.33 The site does not support any habitats suitable for this species. Given the lack of licences in the wider area, it is considered that hazel dormice are unlikely to be present within the site.

4.34 As such, the site was considered to be of **Negligible** importance. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Invertebrates

4.35 The modified grassland provided suitable invertebrate habitat for a range of common and widespread invertebrate species. It is highly unlikely that the site will support any notable invertebrate species or significant assemblages.

4.36 The site is considered to be of **Site** importance for invertebrates. The confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Reptiles

4.37 The modified grassland provided limited opportunities for commuting and foraging reptiles, given its size. Scattered debris and building materials across the site provided limited opportunities for sheltering and hibernation, with the majority of the debris stored on pallets which reduced their suitability to shelter reptiles. The site is connected to areas of optimal habitat for reptiles within the wider area.

4.38 The site was considered to be of **Site** importance for reptiles. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Other notable species

4.39 The modified grassland provided opportunities for commuting, foraging and sheltering hedgehog. The scattered debris and building materials provided opportunities for sheltering hedgehog.

4.40 The site was considered to be of **Site** importance for hedgehog. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Summary

4.41 An summary evaluation of the surveyed area in relation to ecology features is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Evaluation of existing ecological features

Feature	Summary Description	Importance	Confidence
Statutory Designated Sites	No statutory European designated sites fall within 5km of the site.	International	High
	No statutory nationally designated sites fall within 2km of the site.	National	
Habitats	The habitats within the site were of Site importance for biodiversity.	Site	High
Protected and Invasive Flora	No Schedule 9 listed invasive plants were identified within the site. No rare or notable plants were identified within the site.	Negligible	High
Badgers	There were no sett creation opportunities within the site. Habitats were assessed as limited but suitable for this species.	Site	High
Bats	The building was assessed as having 'low' suitability to support roosting bats.	Site	High
	Habitats within the site were assessed as having 'low' suitability for foraging and commuting bats.	Site	
Birds	Overall, the site is likely to support a common assemblage of breeding and non-breeding species.	Site	High
Great crested newts	No ponds present within the site. Two ponds were present within 250m. No HSI assessments were undertaken. The site supports limited foraging, commuting, sheltering and hibernating habitat. The site is connected to areas of optimal GCN habitat.	Site	High
Hazel dormice	No suitable habitats within the site. Lack of EPS licences in the wider area. Species considered unlikely to be present.	Negligible	High
Invertebrates	The habitats provided suitability for a range of common invertebrate species.	Site	High
Reptiles	The site supports limited foraging, commuting, sheltering and hibernating habitat. The site is connected to areas of optimal reptile habitat.	Site	High
Other notable species	Suitable habitats for foraging, commuting, sheltering and hibernating hedgehog were present within the site.	Site	High

5.0 Preliminary Impacts, Mitigation/Enhancement Measures and Residual Effects

Description of Proposals

- 5.1** The proposals for the site are to rebuild the existing structure and give it functional purpose as a 2-bed short term holiday let.

Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.2** The site lies within the Bincknoll Dip Woods SSSI and Wootton Bassett Mud Spring SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ). However, the proposed development does not meet the criteria for this IRZ. As such, consultation with Natural England will not be required.
- 5.3** The development will result in a **neutral** residual effect on any statutory designated sites. Confidence in this assessment is **high**.

Habitats

- 5.4** The habitat of greatest ecological value within the site is the modified grassland.
- 5.5** Potential impacts to habitats during the construction phase include direct loss of habitat through site clearance and damage to retained habitats (e.g. due to pollution events or through direct damage). In addition, retained habitats could be subject to indirect effects through increased light disturbance. During the occupational phase, retained habitats are also at risk of losing their ecological functionality through edge effects due to lighting, therefore adversely affecting their biodiversity value. Control measures to limit or remove these potential impacts will be implemented through the following of best practice guidelines.
- 5.6** The development will result in the loss of a small area of modified grassland (less than 25m²).
- 5.7** Two native hedgerows will be planted as part of the proposals. Once mature, the hedgerows will result in an increase in foraging and commuting habitat for a range of species and an increase in nesting opportunities for a range of bird species.
- 5.8** The development is considered to be exempt from the mandatory net gain requirements (MHCLG, 2024) due to <25m² of natural habitat being impacted by the proposals. Consequently, an accompanying Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment is not required.
- 5.9** Further enhancements proposed to benefit specific fauna (including a bird boxes and a bat box) are detailed within this report.
- 5.10** The above mitigation measures are considered likely to result in a **positive** residual effect for habitats.

Protected and Notable Species

Badgers

- 5.11** Badgers are legally protected under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992) which makes it an offence to take, injure or kill badgers, to interfere with a sett, or to possess or sell live badgers. Badgers are also protected from cruelty under this Act.
- 5.12** The site contained limited but suitable foraging habitat for badger. Given the suitability of the habitats, there is a risk that transient individuals may traverse the site at night and therefore mitigation measures should be deployed during construction to minimise the risk of injuring and killing any badgers or other wildlife. The following precautionary measures should be followed throughout the construction phase:
- Covering trenches at night or leaving a plank of wood leant against the side to allow badgers to escape if they were to accidentally fall in;
 - Covering open pipework with a diameter of greater than 120mm at the end of the workday to prevent animals from entering and becoming trapped;
 - Appropriately storing any chemicals overnight; and
 - Regular removal of litter.
- 5.13** Any loss of foraging habitat during clearance for the proposed development should be mitigated against through the creation of new complimentary habitats (such as scrub, hedgerow or tree planting) and maintaining areas of boundary habitats and dark corridors during the construction and operation periods.
- 5.14** The above mitigation measures are considered likely to result in a **neutral** residual effect.

Bats – roosting

- 5.15** All bat species are legally protected under the WCA (1981, as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017, as amended). Taken together, it is an offence to destroy/damage or obstruct access to a bat roost, to kill/injure or disturb individual bats, or to deliberately disturb bats in such a way to be likely to significantly affect their ability to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young or their local distribution.
- 5.16** The building was assessed as having ‘low’ suitability to support roosting bats. The building is due to be demolished and as such, further surveys are recommended to address the potential presence of roosting bats. In accordance with best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2023), one dusk emergence survey should be carried out between May and August. Should bats be observed emerging from the building, two additional emergence surveys will be required between May and September, spaced at least three weeks apart. The results of the emergence survey(s) will determine whether an EPS licence will need to be sought from Natural England to allow the proposed development to proceed lawfully.

5.17 The proposed development provides the opportunity to enhance the site for bats through the provision of an additional roosting feature to be integrated into the new building. There are a wide range of bat boxes available that could be integrated into brickwork or externally mounted upon buildings (see figure 2 for example).

Figure 2: Schwegler 2F bat box



5.18 Boxes should be sited at a minimum 3m height, with a clear uncluttered flight path to the box. Ideally, the boxes would be installed with a variety of orientations, including south-facing.

Bats – foraging

5.19 The site's habitats were considered to be of 'low' value for foraging and commuting bats.

5.20 Current proposals show that the majority of the modified grassland will be retained as part of the proposals. Additionally, two native hedgerows will be planted which will increase the foraging habitat available to bats within the site. Consequently, there will be no significant impact on foraging or commuting bats. Further surveys with regard to foraging and commuting bats are therefore not considered necessary.

5.21 If any new external lighting is necessary, this should avoid directly lighting the retained and boundary vegetation. A sensitive lighting strategy should be employed throughout both the construction and occupation phases of the development to reduce indirect impacts on local bat populations. In general, it is recommended that site lighting around key features likely to be used by foraging or commuting bats is avoided. If lighting is necessary, this should avoid directly lighting vegetation likely to be utilised by bats, seeking to maintain lux levels along such features (waterbodies, hedgerows and tree canopies) that are in the region of natural nocturnal light levels (generally 0.25 lux or below, up to a maximum of 1 lux). The following mitigation strategies have been taken from the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and artificial lighting at night (2023) and other referenced

sources, and should be used to guide the development of the sensitive lighting scheme, as appropriate:

- In general, light sources will not emit ultra-violet light to avoid attracting insects and thus potentially reducing numbers in adjacent areas, which bats may use for foraging. Metal halide and fluorescent sources will not be used.
- LED luminaires will be used where possible. A warm white spectrum (ideally <2700Kelvin) will be adopted to reduce blue light component. Luminaires will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone, 2012).
- The height of lighting columns will be limited to 8m and the spacing of lighting columns will be increased to reduce spill of light into unwanted areas such as hedgerows and trees (Fure, 2006). Only luminaires with an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control will be used. Luminaires will always be mounted on the horizontal, i.e. no upward tilt.
- Other ways to reduce light spill include the use of directional luminaires, shields, baffles and/or louvres. Flat, cut-off lanterns are best. Additionally, lights will be located away from reflective surfaces where the reflection of light will spill onto potential foraging/commuting corridors. Internal luminaires can be recessed where installed in proximity to windows to reduce glare and light spill. Where windows and glass facades etc. cannot be avoided, low transmission glazing treatments may be a suitable option in achieving reduced illuminance targets.
- Lighting that is required for security or access will use a lamp of no greater than 2000 lumens (150 Watts) and be PIR sensor activated on a short timer (1 minute), to ensure that the lights are only on when required and turned off when not in use (Jones, 2000; Hundt, 2012). A control management system can be used to dim (typically to 25% or less) or turn off groups of lights when not in use.

5.22 The above mitigation measures are considered likely to result in a **positive** residual effect.

Birds

5.23 All breeding birds are protected from deliberate destruction under the WCA 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (exceptions to this are listed in Schedule 2). In addition, a select group of species are further listed under Schedule 1 of the Act and these have additional protection that makes it an offence to disturb these birds at the nest, or to disturb their dependent young. In addition to this statutory protection British birds are also classified according to their conservation status, including their position on the Red and Amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC; 2021) and whether they have been identified as Priority Species.

5.24 The habitats present within the site are likely to support a range of common and widespread species. Current proposals show that the building will be demolished and

consequently there could be an impact on nesting birds, given the presence of two inactive swallow nests within the building.

- 5.25** Work involving clearance of nesting bird habitat should be undertaken outside of the main nesting bird season (March to August, inclusive) to avoid destruction of an active nest. If this option is not available, the works should be carried out only following a nesting bird check carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist (within 48 hours prior to works) has confirmed the absence of any active nests. Any active nests located during inspections will be protected with a suitable buffer of retained vegetation around the nest (of appropriate size to the species) and monitored until the nest is no longer active/all chicks have fledged, when the ecologist will provide sign off for clearance to be undertaken.
- 5.26** To enhance the site for nesting birds, artificial nesting opportunities are recommended to be installed on the new building. Boxes are recommended to be included on buildings to attract species known to occur locally, in particular swallow (see figure 3 for example).

Figure 3: Schwegler 10B swallow nest cup for installation on buildings



- 5.27** Boxes should be sited at a minimum 3m height, with a clear uncluttered flight path to the box. Ideally, the boxes would be installed with a variety of orientations, including north through east. The swallow nest cups must be installed at eaves height, with a minimum gap of 6cm between the top of the cup and the eaves.
- 5.28** The above mitigation measures are considered likely to result in a **positive** residual effect.

Great crested newt

- 5.29** Great crested newts are legally protected under the WCA (1981, as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017, as amended). Taken together, it is an offence to kill/injure or disturb individual great crested newts, or to deliberately disturb them in such a way to be likely to significantly affect their ability to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young or their local distribution.

5.30 Suitable habitats for GCN should be retained where possible. Any loss of GCN habitat should be mitigated against through the creation of new complimentary habitats (such as tussocky grassland or hedgerow planting).

5.31 Two ponds within 250m were not accessible at the time of survey. However, Natural England's GCN 'rapid risk assessment' tool was used to help examine the likelihood of impacts on GCN, and therefore calculate the likelihood of an offence being committed under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). In this scenario, breeding GCN are assumed present in ponds P1 and P2. Based on the habitats to be affected by the development, their size, and then factoring in the proximity of these ponds, the calculated risk that the proposed development will result in an offence is 'Green: Offence Highly Unlikely' (figure 4).

Figure 4: Natural England's GCN 'Rapid Risk Assessment' Result

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)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.05
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:
		0.05
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

5.32 Consequently, further surveys for GCN are not required as, even if a breeding population is present within P1 or P2, the proposed development will not result in any impact upon these ponds.

5.33 Although GCN are likely absent from the site, as a precaution to safeguard individuals, any clearance of modified grassland will be undertaken following a Precautionary Method of Working (PMW). The PMW will encourage any GCN or reptiles which may be present within the site to move into retained habitats adjacent to the site. The following PMW will be followed:

- The construction area will be clearly marked with Heras fencing (or similar), beyond which no excavation or material storage will be undertaken.
- Prior to commencement, the clearance contractor will be briefed via a toolbox talk delivered by a suitably experienced ecological clerk of works (ECoW) regarding the potential presence of GCN and reptiles, the legislation which protects them, the site clearance methodology to be used, and what to do in the event that a GCN or reptile is found if the ECoW is absent from the site.
- To enable individual GCN or reptiles that may be present within the site to move out of harm's way, suitable vegetation will be cut during the active season for these species (mid-March to mid-October).
- Prior to any vegetation clearance, any piles of debris or artificial refugia will be dismantled by hand under the supervision of the ECoW.
- To enable individuals to relocate outside of the construction area, the vegetation cut will commence from the east, moving west, using strimmers and brush cutters. The initial cut will be to a height of 10cm above ground-level.

- Following a minimum period of 24 hours, the second phase of habitat manipulation will be undertaken in the same direction as the first phase, with vegetation cut to ground-level. Once completed, the construction area must be maintained as either bare ground or with a sward height of <5cm and construction materials must be stored on raised pallets in order to ensure that GCN and reptiles do not recolonise the working area.

5.34 Provided the above PMW is implemented in full, the welfare of GCN and reptiles will be maintained and the development will comply with current legislation and planning policies which serve to protect such species.

5.35 Enhancements should include native hedgerow planting and the creation of introduced shrub flowerbeds.

5.36 These measures could result in a **neutral** residual effect for GCN.

Invertebrates

5.37 The proposed development will result in the loss of a small area of modified grassland which is suitable for a range of common and widespread invertebrates.

5.38 Enhancements for invertebrates should include additional planting elsewhere within the site to include planting of native shrubs.

5.39 These measures could result in a **positive** residual effect for invertebrates.

Reptiles

5.40 Widespread reptile species are protected from intentional killing or injury under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended).

5.41 The proposed development will result in the loss of a small area of modified grassland which is suitable for a range of common and widespread reptiles. The PMW recommended in section 5.34 for GCN will also serve to protect any reptiles which may be present within the site.

5.42 Enhancements should include native hedgerow planting and the creation of introduced shrub flowerbeds.

5.43 These measures could result in a **neutral** residual effect for reptiles.

Other Notable Species

5.44 Section 40 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 places a legal duty on Local Authorities to conserve biodiversity. Section 41 (S41) sets out a list of 943 species and habitats of principal importance. These species are known as England Biodiversity Priority (EBP) species and are those identified as requiring action under the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity

Framework. Amongst these species are hedgehog for which suitable habitat exists within the site.

- 5.45** Potential impacts to hedgehog include risk of death/injury during construction/vegetation clearance during the operational phase.
- 5.46** If during construction a hedgehog is found it should be left in situ, and all works should cease within the vicinity of the area with either a professional ecologist or the Hedgehog Preservation Society contacted for further advice. In most cases the hedgehog can be moved by hand to a nearby off-site place of safety. However, dependant on the time of year, i.e. if temperatures are low (below 10°C) and the hedgehog was found within the hedgehog hibernation season (from November to March) then it may be necessary to take the hedgehog to a wildlife sanctuary. Moving a pregnant hedgehog or hedgehog with young can also result in mortality; so moving hedgehogs should be considered the last resort and informed by a professional ecologist.
- 5.47** Sensitive working and clearance methods will deliver a **neutral** residual effect for notable species during construction.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1** The site is generally of low biodiversity value. The habitat of greatest ecological value within the site is the modified grassland.
- 6.2** No European statutory designated sites are located within 5km of the site. No national statutory designated sites are located within 2km of the site. It is considered that there will be no significant effects on any designated sites as a result of the proposed development.
- 6.3** The development is considered to be exempt from the mandatory net gain requirements (MHCLG, 2024) and a BNG assessment is not required.
- 6.4** The building within the site was assessed as having 'low' suitability to support roosting bats and one dusk emergence survey is required between May and August to determine whether roosting bats are present.
- 6.5** Vegetation/building removal should be undertaken following a Precautionary Method of Working (PMW) which has been recommended to safeguard any protected species (such as nesting birds/reptiles) which may be present in low numbers within the site.
- 6.6** A summary of ecological features, the likely impacts and outline mitigation/enhancement measures is provided in Table 3. Best practice construction guidelines will be followed to minimise potential impacts on any protected sites and species.
- 6.7** Through incorporation of relevant recommendations, it is considered that the proposals can deliver positive residual impacts in line with current wildlife legislation, chapter 15 of the NPPF (MHCLG, 2024); and local planning policies relevant to nature conservation.

Table 3: Summary of likely impacts, mitigation and enhancement measures and residual effects

Feature	Potential Impacts	Further Surveys and Assessment	Likely Mitigation and Enhancement Measures	Residual Effect
Statutory Designated Sites	None	N/A	None	Neutral
Habitats	Direct loss Impacts to retained habitats of value during construction, including via direct damage, pollution events, light and noise Lighting of retained and created habitats during the operational phase	N/A	Retention, protection and enhancement of habitats of ecological value Sensitive lighting scheme Habitat creation and/or enhancement such as new hedge planting Standard industry pollution prevention guidelines	Positive
Badger	Disturbance or harm Lighting impacts during/ post-construction	N/A	Sensitive lighting scheme Standard mitigation measures to avoid harm during construction such as adding planks to excavations New hedgerow planting	Neutral
Bats	Disturbance or harm Lighting impacts during/ post-construction	One dusk emergence survey of building	Sensitive lighting scheme Provision of bat boxes/suitable roost features on new building New hedgerow planting Bat licence application (if required)	Positive

Feature	Potential Impacts	Further Surveys and Assessment	Likely Mitigation and Enhancement Measures	Residual Effect
Birds	Injury/death of birds and eggs Destruction/damage of nests	N/A	Precautionary Method of working eg. Nesting bird checks pre-demo (if required) Provision of artificial nesting opportunities (bird boxes) on new building New hedgerow planting	Positive
Great crested newts	Injury/death Disturbance or harm	N/A	Precautionary Method of Working for vegetation clearance New hedgerow planting	Positive
Invertebrates	Habitat loss Light disturbance during and post-construction	N/A	Wildlife friendly planting incorporating resources for a range of pollinator species. Sensitive lighting scheme	Positive
Reptiles	Injury/death Disturbance or harm	N/A	Precautionary Method of Working for vegetation clearance New hedgerow planting	Positive
Hedgehog	Death/injury Habitat loss	N/A	Standard mitigation measures to avoid harm during construction such as capping pipes and adding planks to excavations	Neutral

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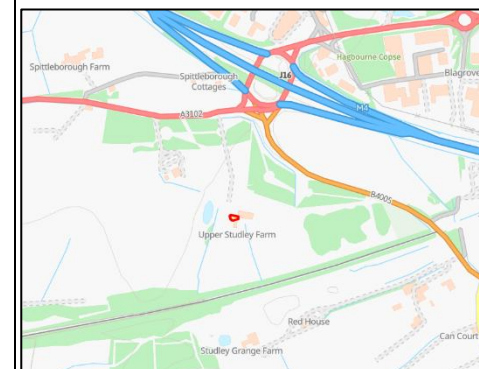
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Appendix 1: Site Location Plan



Key

 Site boundary



Project Title:
Upper Studley Farm, Royal Wootton Bassett

Drawing Title:
Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan

Version: 1.1	Drawn: CB	Checked: SC
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Date: 22/04/2026	Remarks: UKHab
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Drawing Number:
CrosslandEcology/UpperStudleyFarm/UKHab

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Appendix 2: Legislative and Policy Framework

This document has not been prepared by a legal or planning professional and should be read as an interpretation of relevant statutes and planning policy guidance only. The information presented within this document has been reported in good faith and are the genuine opinion of Crossland Ecology on such matters. Crossland Ecology does not accept any liability resulting from outcomes relating to the use of this information or its interpretation within this document.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The *NPPF* (MHCLG, 2024) outlines what the planning system should do to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through the following policy statements:

Paragraph 8

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy

Paragraph 20

Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places and make sufficient provision for:

- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation

Paragraph 29

Non-strategic policies should be used by local planning authorities and communities to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. This can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment and setting out other development management policies

Paragraph 77:

The supply of large numbers of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes). Working with the support of their communities, and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable locations for such development where this can help to meet identified needs in a sustainable way. In doing so, they should:

- a) consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area's economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains;

Paragraph 109

Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve:

- f) Identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains

Paragraph 124

Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.

Paragraph 125

Planning policies and decisions should:

- a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside;
- b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production;

Paragraph 151

Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land. Where Green Belt land is released for development through plan preparation or review, the 'Golden Rules' in paragraph 156 below should apply.

Paragraph 187

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) 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);
- b) 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;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

Paragraph 188

Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Paragraph 192

To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) 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
- b) 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 193

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) 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;
- b) 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;
- c) 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
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Paragraph 194

The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites;
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Paragraph 195

The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Paragraph 198

Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

Wiltshire Core Strategy

The Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015) provides three policies which cover biodiversity.

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 above 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.

Core Policy 51: Landscape

Landscape

Development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies. In particular, proposals will need to demonstrate that the following aspects of landscape character have been

conserved and where possible enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures:

- i. The locally distinctive pattern and species composition of natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, field boundaries, watercourses and waterbodies.
- ii. The locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings.
- iii. The separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe.
- iv. Visually sensitive skylines, soils, geological and topographical features.
- v. Landscape features of cultural, historic and heritage value.
- vi. Important views and visual amenity.
- vii. Tranquillity and the need to protect against intrusion from light pollution, noise, and motion.
- viii. Landscape functions including places to live, work, relax and recreate.
- ix. Special qualities of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and the New Forest National Park, where great weight will be afforded to conserving and enhancing landscapes and scenic beauty.

Proposals for development within or affecting the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), New Forest National Park (NFNP) or Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site (WHS) shall demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant Management Plans for these areas. Proposals for development outside of an AONB that is sufficiently prominent (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the area's special qualities (as set out in the relevant management plan), must also demonstrate that it would not adversely affect its setting.

Core Policy 52: Green infrastructure

Green infrastructure

Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green infrastructure network, and shall ensure that suitable links to the network are provided and maintained. Where development is permitted developers will be required to:

- i. Retain and enhance existing on site green infrastructure
- ii. Make provision for accessible open spaces in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Wiltshire Open Space Standards
- iii. Put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management of any green infrastructure directly related to the development
- iv. Provide appropriate contributions towards the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy
- v. Identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire.

If damage or loss of existing green infrastructure is unavoidable, the creation of new or replacement green infrastructure equal to or above its current value and quality, that maintains the integrity and functionality of the green infrastructure network, will be required.

Proposals for major development should be accompanied by an audit of the existing green infrastructure within and around the site and a statement demonstrating how this will be retained and enhanced through the development process.

Development will not adversely affect the integrity and value of the green infrastructure network, prejudice the delivery of the Wiltshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, or provide inadequate green infrastructure mitigation.

Green infrastructure projects and initiatives that contribute to the delivery of a high quality and highly valued multi-functional green infrastructure network in accordance with the Wiltshire Green

Infrastructure Strategy will be supported. Contributions (financial or other) to support such projects and initiatives will be required where appropriate from developers.

Wildlife Legislation

The two principal wildlife statutes are the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (The Habitats Regulations 2019), which deals with internationally important sites and species, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, which deals with nationally important sites and species.

Certain habitats and species within discrete sites are protected as SSSI under the WCA 1981. A proportion of these are more strictly protected as proposed or designated SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019). These designations protect features and resources listed as being of international importance from both direct and indirect effects arising from a range of issues including proposed development. In addition, non-statutory designated sites (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites) are protected under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, (1949) Section 21.

Certain species listed on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981, including all bat species, great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* and otter *Lutra lutra* are also protected under Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 making them European Protected Species (EPS). Taken together it is illegal to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture any wild animal of EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any EPS in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
- The ability of that species to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young; or
- The local distribution of that species.
- Recklessly disturb an EPS or obstruct access to their place of rest;
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of such animals;
- Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
- Possess or transport any part of an EPS, unless acquired legally; and/or
- Sell, barter or exchange any part of an EPS.

A range of species other than birds, including water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, is protected from disturbance and destruction under the WCA 1981 through inclusion on Schedule 5.

All breeding birds are protected from deliberate destruction under the WCA 1981. Certain species are further protected from disturbance at their nest sites being listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981.

Common reptiles including common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus* are protected under the WCA 1981, they are listed as schedule 5 species, therefore part of Section 9(1) and section 9(5) apply; the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) also strengthens their protection.

Badger *Meles meles* is protected from sett disturbance and destruction under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Section 40 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 places a legal duty on Local Authorities to conserve biodiversity. Section 41 (S41) sets out a list of 943 species and Habitats of Principal Importance. These species are known as England Biodiversity Priority (EBP) species and are those identified as requiring action under the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Native, species-rich hedgerows that fit certain criteria are protected as being 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997).

Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*, along with other introduced and invasive species are listed under Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981. Japanese knotweed is highly invasive, and its rhizomes cause damage to buildings and other infrastructure. Hence it is also classed as controlled waste

under the Environment Protection Act 1990 and has therefore either to be removed or disposed of in a licensed landfill or the rhizomes buried to a depth of at least 5m.

Appendix 3: Baseline Habitat Plan



Key

- Site boundary
- g4 Modified grassland
- u1b5 Building
- u1b6 Other Developed land

Project Title:
Upper Studley Farm, Royal Wootton Bassett

Drawing Title:
Appendix 3 – Baseline Habitat Plan

Version: 1.1	Drawn: CB	Checked: SC
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Date: 22/04/2026	Remarks: UKHab
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Drawing Number:
CrosslandEcology/UpperStudleyFarm/UKHab

Crossland
Ecology

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Appendix 4: UKHab Survey Plant Species

Common name	Latin name	Modified grassland
Annual meadow grass	<i>Poa annua</i>	A
Bristly ox-tongue	<i>Helminthotheca echioides</i>	O
Broadleaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	O
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	F
Cocksfoot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	F
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	F
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	O
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	F
Cut-leaved cranesbill	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	O
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	O
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	O
Field vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	R
Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	O
Germander speedwell	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	R
Perennial ryegrass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	D
Pineappleweed	<i>Matricaria discoidea</i>	R
Prickly sow thistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i>	R
Red deadnettle	<i>Lamium purpureum</i>	R
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	O
Shepherd's purse	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	R
Soft rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	O
Spear thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	O
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	F
White dead nettle	<i>Lamium album</i>	O
Willowherb	<i>Epilobium</i> sp.	R

Appendix 5: Site Photographs

Photo 1: Western aspect of the building, with modified grassland to the west



Photo 2: Western and southern aspects of the building



Photo 3: Southern aspects of the building



Photo 4: Partially collapsed eastern aspect



Photo 5: Northern aspect of the building



Photo 6: Missing mortar



Photo 7: Missing mortar



Photo 8: Missing mortar and eaves gaps



Photo 9: Missing mortar potentially leading to a cavity



Photo 10: Missing bricks and timber provide access



Photo 11: Gaps around the wooden window frame on the southern aspect provide access into the building



Photo 12: Gap around the wooden window frame and a gap above the door caused by missing timber provide access



Photo 13: Unlined slate tile roof above a timber frame



Photo 14: Unlined slate tile roof above a timber frame



Photo 15: Inactive swallow nest at the roof apex



Photo 16: Inactive swallow nest above a power socket



Photo 17: Modified grassland



Photo 18: Debris piles and building materials



Photo 19: Northern boundary of the site



Photo 20: Modified grassland

