



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Report prepared for: Mr R Livock

Kington Langley Stud

Ashes Lane

Kington Langley

Wiltshire

SN15 5NP

May 2026

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Methods used to prepare this report, including those carried out in the field followed The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken at Kington Langley Stud, Ashes Lane, Kington Langley, Wiltshire SN15 5NP (central Ordnance Survey (OS) Reference ST 92204 77291). Development proposals are described as the residential conversion of the buildings within the equestrian yard.
- 1.2 The findings included in this report are based on a survey undertaken during April 2026 by Cotswold Environmental Ltd. The purpose of the survey was to undertake an appraisal of the site for its potential ecological value to notable and protected wildlife, and to look for evidence of such species. The survey results provide information to determine the likely ecological impact the proposed development will have on wildlife species, and to inform the level of further survey effort and mitigation required to comply with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation. The evaluation and findings in this report can be used by Wiltshire Council in their view of a planning application. Survey results detailed within this report should be considered valid for a period of 18 months from the survey date.
- 1.3 Kington Langley Stud is located to the immediate west of Ashes Lane, at the north-western edge of Kington Langley village. Chippenham town centre is located approximately 3.5 km to the south. The site location is shown in Fig. 1.
- 1.4 All survey and assessment work was completed in accordance with official assessment guidelines¹ and largely followed that recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)² and follows the British Standard Code of Practice³.

Survey Objectives

- To determine suitability for protected species
- Ascertain evidence of protected species
- Assess site habitats under the UKHab framework
- Determine potential ecological impacts the proposed development will have on protected species.
- Inform the level of further survey effort that is required.

¹ Collins J (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edn. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

³ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.

2 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

- 2.1 A records search was undertaken using freely available desktop resources such as the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside⁴ (MAGIC) website. MAGIC was used to search for records of designated sites, habitats and granted European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) within a 2km radius. Google Earth⁵ was also used to study the nearby landscape.

Field Survey

- 2.2 Ecological consultant Jason Skinner (NE Class 2 Bat Survey licence 2025-86057-CL18-BAT, NE Barn Owl licence number 2026-88685-CL29-OWL) carried out the field survey on Tuesday 28th April 2026.

Relevant surveyor experience

- 2.3 Jason Skinner has nine years professional ecological experience, primarily involved with bats and reptiles through consultancy and assisting on research projects. Experienced with small-scale and large-scale development projects and involvement in the management and supervision on multiple bat mitigation licences. Co-author of peer-reviewed research papers on reptiles and amphibians. Member, BBCARG and Wiltshire Bat Group.
- 2.4 The field visit involved a walkover using visual encounter survey techniques. The dominant vegetation structure was assessed, allowing habitats on site to be valued for their ecological importance to protected wildlife. Habitats were classified using the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab V2)⁶, which provides a standardised framework for describing habitat types in the UK.
- 2.5 Binoculars were also used to scan for features likely to support protected species. All protected species were considered during the assessment and all wildlife species were recorded. The work was completed largely following methodologies set out by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and British Standard Code of Practice.

Species

- 2.6 All protected species were considered during the survey. Only those considered likely to utilise the site are mentioned in this report.

⁴ Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). Crown Copyright and database rights [2026]. Ordnance Survey 100022861. Available at: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

⁵ https://www.google.co.uk/intl/en_uk/earth/

⁶ UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0. Available at: <https://ukhab.org/>

Bats

- 2.7 Survey effort was completed in line with official assessment guidelines⁷ and largely followed that recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)⁸ and British Standard Code of Practice⁹. The assessment followed the standard methodology. The site was searched using visual encounter survey techniques. Potential bat movement corridors and movement barriers were assessed and noted. During the site visit, where possible, all suitable areas were examined for evidence of bats.

Table 1: Guidelines summary for assessing potential bat roost suitability

Suitability	Description of building, tree or structure
None	The building, tree, or structure has no features with the potential to support roosting bats and is entirely unsuitable. This includes structures that are fully sealed, modern, well-lit, and/or in exposed locations with no access points, no internal voids, and high levels of human disturbance.
Negligible	The building or tree has minimal features (e.g. small gaps or cracks), but these are assessed as highly unlikely to be used by bats due to their condition, location, or lack of access to suitable internal voids.
Low	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, potential roost sites not suitable for larger numbers or regular use (i.e. maternity or hibernation).
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time.
Confirmed roost	Evidence of bats or use by bats found.

2.8

⁷ Collins J (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edn. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁸ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

⁹ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.



European Hedgehog

- 2.9 The site was assessed for its suitability to support European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Features such as hedgerows, scrub, dense vegetation, log piles, and gaps under fencing were checked for signs of hedgehog activity, including droppings, tracks, or nests. Habitat connectivity with surrounding green spaces was also considered to assess the site's value for hedgehog movement.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 2.10 Habitats were assessed for their potential to support reptiles and amphibians, including great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN). Waterbodies typical of those utilised for breeding and foraging activity, and terrestrial refugia suited to sheltering and basking such as waste heaps and plastic/metal/timber sheeting were noted if present (see limitations). In addition, any dense vegetation including tall ruderal and scrub that is connected to hedgerows and linear tree features was inspected during the assessment.

Nesting Birds

- 2.11 The survey also included an internal and external inspection of the surveyed buildings for evidence of common nesting birds as well as notable and protected species. Inside the building, artificial light was used to search for birds, dead birds, dead chicks, nesting material and eggs.
- 2.12 All accessible elements of the surveyed buildings containing nesting potential were checked to see if the development would have any adverse effects on nesting birds. The active nests of all wild birds are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). An active nest is one that is being built, containing eggs or chicks, or on which fledged chicks are still dependent. Birds within Schedule 1, such as barn owl *Tyto alba*, are also protected from disturbance during the nesting period.
- 2.13 The presence of notable and protected bird species and any signs indicative of their past and present use was taken into consideration during the inspection of the buildings. Likely perches and nesting locations were checked, and all ledges and cavities were examined for nesting debris where accessible.

Limitations

- 2.14 The absence of evidence for a particular species does not confirm its absence from the site. Wildlife, including protected species, can be elusive or transient, and may use habitats or structures intermittently, meaning they can go undetected during a single visit.

- 2.15 Evidence of bat activity, such as droppings or feeding remains, can degrade quickly due to weathering or be removed by wind or rain, particularly around external building features. Therefore, the absence of such signs should not be taken as confirmation that bats are not present.
- 2.16 Many UK bat species are crevice-dwellers and can roost in small or concealed spaces such as gaps under roof tiles, behind fascia boards, or within wall cavities. These features are often inaccessible and cannot always be fully inspected during a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA).
- 2.17 For Health & Safety purposes the roofs of the buildings were assessed from ground level.
- 2.18 Two ponds are located within a 250 m radius of the site. Access to these waterbodies was not obtained for Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) due to lying on private land, however, as the site offers overall poor terrestrial habitat for great crested newt, this was not considered significant and did not affect the conclusions made within this report.
- 2.19 Biological records were not obtained. Given the modest scale and scope of the proposed development, the lack of data from the Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) is not considered likely to materially affect the conclusions drawn in this report.

3 RESULTS

Desk Study

Designated sites

- 3.1 According to the MAGIC website, no statutory or non-statutory designated sites exist within a 2 km radius (see limitations) and no internationally designated sites, such as special areas of conservation (SACs) designated for their bat populations, exist within a 10 km radius of the site.

Granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within a 2km radius

- 3.2 According to the MAGIC website, no EPSLs have been granted within a 2 km radius of the site. A single GCN Class Survey Licence return has been submitted from a site located 1.9 km to the south, although no positive Pond Surveys (2017-2019) for GCN were identified.

Surrounding Habitats

- 3.3 Habitats within the 2 km study area are typical of a rural village-edge landscape dominated by agricultural land. The equestrian yard is immediately surrounded by grazing pasture, while the wider landscape comprises a mosaic of improved pastoral fields and arable land bordered by mature hedgerows. The area immediately surrounding the site is relatively poorly wooded; however, desk study records identify several blocks of deciduous woodland (Priority Habitat) within the study area, the nearest located approximately 560 m to the south. Two areas of ancient woodland occur approximately 1.6 km to the south-east at Sydney's Wood and Old Coppice. Areas of woodpasture

and parkland (Priority Habitat) are also present further afield (c.1.8 km to the north-east and south-east).

- 3.4 Other notable habitats within the study area include two parcels of lowland meadow (Priority Habitat), the closest approximately 230 m to the east, and an area of good quality semi-improved grassland around 750 m to the south-west. Together with the surrounding hedgerow network, these habitats are likely to contribute positively to the ecological value and connectivity of the local landscape. No Priority Habitats are present on-site or within the immediate vicinity of the survey area.

Local waterbodies

- 3.5 Through the use of aerial imagery and the MAGIC website, two ponds were identified within a 250 m radius of the site boundary, see Table 2 below.

Table 2: Pond Locations within a 250 m radius

Pond	Distance from Site (Metres)	Direction	Grid Reference	Notes
1	118	South-West	ST 92158 77185	Not accessed for HSI assessment – See Limitations
2	170	South-West	ST 92151 77136	Not accessed for HSI assessment – See Limitations

Field Survey

- 3.6 Weather conditions during the daytime assessment are shown in the below table. Temperatures were recorded onsite using an Elitech RC-51 Temperature Logger.

Table 3: Weather conditions during Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Date	Start	Finish	Temp °C	Wind	Cloud %	Rain	Notes
28/04/2026	10:30	12:00	13	10 km/h	82	Dry	N/A

Onsite Habitats

- 3.7 The site is located at the western end of an established equestrian yard and comprises a small group of equestrian buildings surrounded predominantly by gravelled hardstanding. The buildings onsite include a traditional stone-built accommodation and stables building, a steel-framed barn, a small timber-framed stable block, and a circular timber-framed horse walker. The majority of the site is used for access, parking, and general equestrian activity, resulting in extensive areas of compacted gravel and other artificial surfaces throughout.

- 3.8 Small areas of grassland are present around the edges of the site, although these are limited in extent and regularly managed, supporting a relatively species-poor assemblage of common grasses and ruderal herbs typical of equestrian land. An ornamental hedgerow lines a section of the site margins. No trees are present within the survey boundary.
- 3.9 No ponds or priority habitats exist within the survey area and no ponds are to be destroyed or impacted by the proposed works. The individual habitat types recorded at the site are described under the sub-headings below, using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) framework, with the location and extent of each illustrated in the Habitat Map in Figure 2.

u1b5 – Buildings

- 3.10 Building B1: The surveyed structure is located to the western side of the yard and comprises a mixed stone-built and timber-clad structure beneath a pitched roof. The east-facing roof slope is clad in imitation stone tiles, while the west-facing slope is finished with metal box-profile roofing sheets. The lower elevations are constructed from stone, with the upper elevations clad in waney-edge timber boarding.
- 3.11 Internally, the ground floor is subdivided into a series of stable units accessed via three doors on the east-facing elevation. A single UPVC double-glazed window is present at ground floor level on this elevation. The first floor is divided into two accommodation rooms, accessed externally via steps located at the southern gable end. UPVC double-glazed windows are present on the first-floor east-facing elevation and within the north-facing gable end. The first-floor rooms feature vaulted ceilings and no loft void is present within the roof structure. The building is currently in active use.
- 3.12 Building B2: Adjoining the south-western extent of building B1 is a large, single-storey modern agricultural structure of simple construction. The building comprises a steel frame supporting a mono-pitched roof clad in box-profile steel sheeting, with a small catslide roof projection present at the south-western extent. The elevations are formed of concrete blockwork to lower levels with steel sheet and timber slatting cladding above. Guttering is present along the roof edge, although no fascia boards are installed. The structure is open along the northern and southern elevations, with wide open access points. It is currently utilised for equine housing and general storage.
- 3.13 Building B3: Located to the north-west of building B2, the structure is a timber framed and wooden clad stables block with a pitched roof covered in metal box profile sheets. The structure features two stable compartments, each accessed by stable doors on the east facing elevation and an open sided hay storage area is also present.
- 3.14 Building B4: Located to the immediate north-east of buildings B1 and B2 is a round wooden framed horse walker, approximately 20 m in diameter with a plywood boarded roof that is covered in felt tiles and features an open central section.

u1c – Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface

- 3.15 The buildings are surrounded by gravelled hardstanding. This is compacted and largely lacking vegetation.

g4 – Modified grassland

- 3.16 Limited areas of improved grassland are located around buildings B3 and B4. This is maintained at a sward height of less than 10 cm and dominated by perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* and cocks foot *Dactylis glomerata*. Forb species consist of white clover *Trifolium repens*, common daisy *Bellis perennis*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, and common dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. Localised patches of common nettle *Urtica dioica*, herb robert *Geranium robertianum* and garlic mustard *Alliaria petiolata* were observed at the edge of buildings and within the centre of building B4.

h2b - Non-native and Ornamental hedgerow

- 3.17 A 7 m long x 1.8 m high cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* grows to the immediate east of building B4. The hedgerow is well-managed and no other species are present.

Notable Flora

- 3.18 No notable plant species were identified during the survey and no Schedule 8 or 9 plant species of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were identified on site (see limitations). An indicative plant species list is provided in Table 4: Plant Species Recorded Onsite. Site habitats are shown in Fig 2: Site Map.

Species

Bats

- 3.19 A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the onsite buildings was conducted to identify any Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) and to look for evidence of roosting bats.

Building 1

- 3.20 Externally, the stonework was found to be in good condition overall, with intact mortar joints and no significant cracks, gaps, or crevices identified within the masonry. The upper elevations are clad in waney-edge timber boarding, which displayed some localised gaps and irregularities. In addition, the concrete imitation roof tiles exhibited a small number of gaps and crevices beneath their edges. Collectively, these features represent a limited number of external PRFs that could be utilised by crevice-dwelling bat species, such as *Pipistrellus* spp. No evidence of bat activity, including droppings or staining was recorded on the exterior of the building.
- 3.21 Internally, the ground floor comprises actively used stables, with doors and windows generally kept closed. The stable units appeared well sealed, with no gaps around doors that could be exploited by bats. The first-floor accommodation areas were also well sealed and not accessible to bats. The first-

floor rooms feature vaulted ceilings, and no loft void or enclosed roof space is present within the building. Furthermore, no externally accessible internal voids or enclosed compartments were identified that could be used by void-dwelling species such as brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*. No evidence of bats or field signs associated with bat use was recorded during the internal inspection.

Building 2

- 3.22 Building B2 is open along the northern and southern elevations, with wide open access points. It is currently utilised for equine housing and general storage. Externally, the steel cladding to both the roof and elevations is tightly fitted, with no lifted or displaced sheets. The concrete blockwork is in good condition, with no cracks, damage, or missing mortar identified.
- 3.23 Internally, the building is open and well-lit due to the exposed elevations. No skylights are present; however, there is a high level of light ingress via the open elevations and gaps within the wall structure. The roof is not underlined, and the steel support framework is fully exposed throughout. No enclosed roof void or internal compartments are present. The building is subject to regular disturbance associated with its use for housing horses. No evidence of bats, including droppings, staining, or feeding remains, was identified during the survey. No gaps, crevices, or enclosed features were identified internally that could provide sheltering opportunities for bats.

Building 3

- 3.24 Building B3 comprises a timber-framed structure with partial open-sided sections along the eastern elevation and is currently used for equine housing and hay storage. Externally, the timber cladding was found to be well-maintained and tightly fitted, with no lifted boards, gaps, or crevices identified. The profiled metal sheet roofing was similarly in good condition, with no visible gaps between the roofing sheets or along the roofline.
- 3.25 Internally, the building was relatively light and exposed due to the partially open elevations. The roof was not lined, and the timber framework remained fully exposed throughout, with no enclosed roof voids, soffits, or internal compartments present. The structure is subject to frequent disturbance associated with ongoing equestrian activity and daily use. No evidence of bats, including droppings, feeding remains, staining, or urine marks, was identified during the survey. Furthermore, no suitable features offering sheltering or roosting opportunities for bats were identified internally.

Building 4

- 3.26 Building B4 comprises a circular timber-framed horse walker structure which is predominantly open along the side elevations. The structure is covered by a pitched roof clad with felt tiles which, although showing signs of weathering in places, remained intact with no notable gaps, lifted sections, or crevices identified during the inspection.
- 3.27 Due to the open-sided design and exposed central section, the interior of the structure was highly ventilated and subject to prevailing weather conditions. The roof lacked an internal lining and all structural timbers were openly visible, with no enclosed voids, boxed-in features, or sheltered

compartments present. The structure is in continual active use for exercising horses and consequently experiences frequent levels of disturbance. No evidence of bat use, such as droppings, or feeding remains was recorded during the survey. Additionally, the building did not contain any suitable internal features capable of supporting roosting bats.

- 3.28 Habitats within the application boundary hold low suitability for commuting or foraging bats due to the overall lack of suitable vegetation and regularly disturbed nature of the active equestrian yard.

3.29

3.30

European Hedgehog

- 3.31 No evidence of European hedgehog, such as tracks, droppings, or day nests, was recorded during the field survey. The onsite habitats - namely, the isolated ornamental hedgerow and limited areas of species-poor grassland - provide minimal shelter or foraging resources. No dense vegetation or scrub are present within the survey boundary to offer suitable refuge or hibernation opportunities.
- 3.32 The buildings are routinely accessed and are unlikely to be used by hedgehogs. While the plot itself is suboptimal, surrounding offsite habitats such as hedgerows and field margins may offer more suitable sheltering and foraging habitat.

Nesting Birds

- 3.33 Small gaps beneath the roof tiles and within sections of timber cladding on Building B1 provide suitable nesting opportunities for small passerine birds. These sheltered features could be used by cavity-nesting species such as blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* and house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, which commonly utilise small gaps and concealed spaces within buildings for nesting. The features present are comparable to the naturally sheltered conditions provided by tree cavities and similar enclosed habitats.
- 3.34 No evidence of active or historic nesting birds was identified within Buildings B2, B3 or B4 during the survey. However, due to their open-sided design, all three buildings remain accessible to birds. Buildings B2 and B3 provide some limited nesting opportunities within exposed roof beams, ledges, and sheltered sections of the framework, particularly for bird species commonly associated with

farmyards, such as robin *Erithacus rubecula*, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, and swallow *Hirundo rustica*. The horse walker structure (B4) is similarly open and exposed, although sections of the roof framework could occasionally be used for nesting by adaptable species.

- 3.35 The suitability of Buildings B2, B3 and B4 for nesting birds is reduced by the open and well-lit internal conditions, together with the regular disturbance associated with ongoing equestrian activity and daily use of the yard. No nests, nesting material, feathers, droppings, or other signs of nesting activity were recorded during the survey. No evidence of roosting or nesting barn owl, such as pellets, whitewash, or feathers, was identified within any of the surveyed buildings.
- 3.36 An ornamental hedgerow located along the site boundary provides additional nesting habitat for common bird species. The dense shrub cover offers suitable shelter and nesting opportunities for a range of garden and farmland birds, although no active nests or evidence of recent nesting activity were identified within the hedgerow at the time of survey.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 3.37 The habitats within the application site were assessed for their potential to support reptiles and amphibians. The site is dominated by artificial surfacing with limited vegetation cover. These features lack the vegetation structure, refugia, or connectivity typically associated with suitable reptile or amphibian habitat. No tussocky grass, log piles, compost heaps, or other potential hibernacula were observed. No ponds are located within the application boundary.

4 DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Habitats

- 4.1 The application site lies within a rural edge-of-village setting and comprises an active equestrian yard with minimal vegetation cover. The surrounding environment is characterised by pastoral farmland enclosed by hedgerows, occasional tree lines, and small copses, with scattered Priority Habitats including Deciduous Woodland and Lowland Meadow located within a 2 km radius.
- 4.2 No statutory or non-statutory designated nature conservation sites are present within a 2 km radius of the site. The site falls within a Natural England Impact Risk Zone (IRZ); however, the nature and scale of the proposed development do not require consultation with Natural England.
- 4.3 Onsite habitats are limited in both extent and ecological quality. The dominant habitats within the survey boundary include graveled surfaces and limited areas of modified grassland. Additional features include an ornamental cherry laurel hedgerow, but this is of limited ecological value. No trees or native shrubs are present within the red line boundary.

- 4.4 Proposals for the site include the conversion of the existing structures. These works will result in the loss of an as-yet undetermined portion of modified grassland. However, as none of the habitats within the application boundary are classed as Priority Habitat, and given their low intrinsic ecological value, these losses are not considered significant in the local context. No habitats of principal importance will be directly impacted, and the site lacks connectivity to nearby Priority Habitats due to intervening infrastructure and land use.
- 4.5 The proposed works are not expected to result in any direct or indirect impacts on surrounding high-value habitats, which lie at sufficient distance to avoid disturbance. Nonetheless, the introduction of external lighting associated with residential development may result in increased nocturnal light spill, which could affect the functionality of nearby habitats. As such, sensitive lighting design should be incorporated into the scheme, in accordance with current best practice guidance.
- 4.6 In summary, the site supports a limited range of managed and artificial habitats of low ecological value. No significant adverse effects on local habitats or wider ecological networks are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

Species

Bats

- 4.7 No EPSLs have been granted for bats within a 2 km radius, although habitats surrounding the site are considered to have a moderate level of suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting activity for bats of various species.
- 4.8 All buildings within the survey boundary were subject to a detailed internal and external inspection to assess their suitability to support roosting bats.

Building B1

- 4.9 The masonry was found to be in good condition with no significant cracks or crevices, while the upper elevations clad in waney-edge timber boarding displayed localised gaps. In addition, a small number of crevices were present beneath the imitation stone roof tiles. These features collectively provide several external Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) suitable for crevice-dwelling bat species, such as *Pipistrellus* spp.
- 4.10 Internally, the ground floor stable areas and first-floor accommodation were found to be well sealed and actively used, with no loft void or enclosed roof spaces present. The vaulted ceiling arrangement prevents the formation of internal roof voids, and no externally accessible enclosed compartments were identified that could be utilised by void-dwelling species. No evidence of bat activity, such as droppings, staining, feeding remains, or live bats, was recorded during the survey.

- 4.11 Consideration was given to the potential for hibernation; however, the exposed nature of the features, lack of internal voids, and generally well-sealed and frequently disturbed conditions indicate that the building is unlikely to provide the stable, cool, and humid microclimate required for hibernating bats.
- 4.12 Under the current proposals, the conversion of the structure will comprise internal works only. No works are proposed to the roof covering, external timber cladding, soffits, fascias, or any other external building fabric associated with the identified Potential Roost Features (PRFs). Furthermore, no alterations to external access points or external lighting affecting these features are proposed as part of the scheme. On this basis, the proposals do not include works that would disturb, damage, obstruct, or otherwise affect features that could be utilised by crevice-dwelling bats.
- 4.13 Based on the above, building B1 is determined to offer moderate roosting potential for bats. However, the proposed development is limited to internal works only, with no alterations proposed to the roof, external cladding, or other external building fabric associated with identified Potential Roost Features. As such, there is no reasonable likelihood for disturbance, injury or killing of bats, nor for the destruction or obstruction of any roost that may be present. Further presence/absence survey effort is therefore not considered necessary in relation to the current design.
- 4.14 Should the proposals change at any stage to include works affecting the roof, external timber cladding, or any other feature with potential to support roosting bats, further ecological assessment would be required. This is likely to include two dusk emergence surveys undertaken during the optimal period (May to August) and may necessitate consultation with Natural England should bat roosts be discovered. If a roost were confirmed, a bat mitigation licence may be required before works could lawfully proceed.

Buildings B2, B3 and B4

- 4.15 Buildings B2, B3 and B4 are all of relatively simple construction and were found to provide limited opportunities for roosting bats. Building B2 comprises a modern steel-framed structure with tightly fitted cladding and no enclosed cavities, roof voids, or internal compartments. Building B3 similarly comprises a largely open-sided timber-framed stable and hay storage building, while Building B4 consists of an open-sided horse walker structure with an exposed timber framework beneath a felt-tiled roof.
- 4.16 All three buildings are highly exposed internally, with significant levels of light ingress and air movement resulting from their open-sided design and lack of internal lining or enclosed voids. Structural timbers were fully exposed throughout, and no suitable crevices, gaps, or sheltered features capable of supporting roosting bats were identified during the inspection. In addition, the buildings are subject to frequent and ongoing disturbance associated with regular equestrian activity, including the housing, storage, and exercising of horses.
- 4.17 No evidence of bats, including droppings, feeding remains, staining, or live bats, was identified within Buildings B2, B3 or B4 during the survey. Owing to the absence of suitable roosting features, exposed

internal conditions, and regular disturbance, these buildings are considered to offer negligible potential for roosting bats. Consequently, no further bat survey effort is considered necessary in relation to these structures.

- 4.18 Habitats outside the application boundary, likely provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for local bat populations. To avoid unnecessary disturbance and to maintain dark corridors, lighting associated with development should adopt bat-sensitive design, to avoid illumination of boundary vegetation.

Nocturnal lighting measures

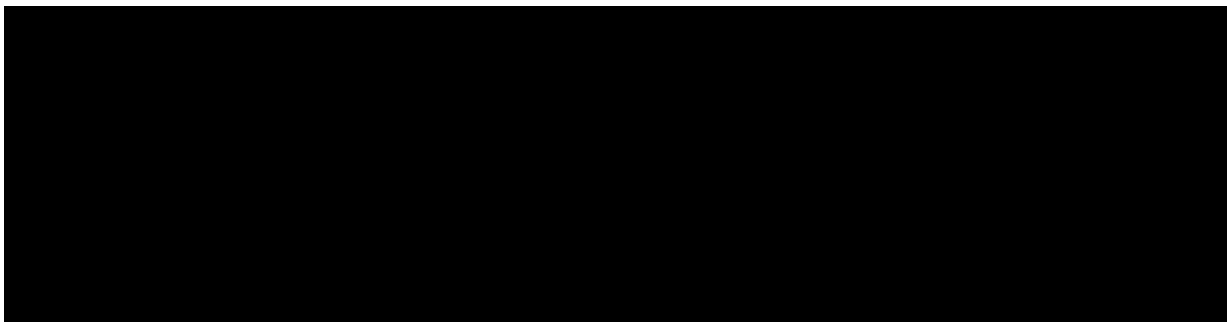
- 4.19 As suitable bat habitat occurs within the nearby surrounding environment, low-level lighting measures should be implemented to avoid indirect disturbance to bats and other nocturnal animal species that may exploit local habitats. Measures must be taken to ensure nocturnal animals are safeguarded from inappropriate use of light and noise throughout the hours of night during the construction period, as well as to protect important commuting corridors for bats. Any external lighting installed as part of the development must be used in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting¹⁰.
- 4.20 Sensitive lighting strategy measures during the construction period are as follows:
- Works must not be carried out after dusk and must not commence until after dawn where possible.
 - Generators and machinery that emit significant noise levels must not be left to run after dusk.
 - LED lighting sources must be used, which generally have a narrower and more directional beam.
 - Light spill must be controlled and if lighting is required at night, hooded shields must be fitted to prevent spill onto nearby habitats that are likely to support wildlife, including nearby trees and hedgerows.
 - Lighting must not be directed towards any bat or bird compensation features.
- 4.21 In addition to the above, when selecting appropriate external lighting, the following specifications should be taken into consideration:
- Any external lighting incorporated into the proposed development must be LED luminaires due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability.
 - Luminaires must feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats¹¹.
 - All luminaires must lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, fluorescent sources will not be used¹²

¹⁰ <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

¹¹ Stone, E.L. (2013) *Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation*

¹² Bat Conservation Trust & Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) 2023. *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series.*

4.22



European Hedgehog

- 4.23 No evidence of hedgehog activity was recorded. The application area is predominantly managed grassland, hardstanding and gravel with limited connectivity to sheltering features, and lacks the vegetative cover suitable for nesting or hibernation. More suitable habitat is present outside the application boundary. Hedgehog presence within the site is therefore considered unlikely and no negative impacts are expected.
- 4.24 Should new boundary fencing be installed, consideration should be given to incorporating occasional ground-level access gaps (130 mm x 130 mm) to maintain permeability for small mammals.

Nesting birds

- 4.25 No active nests or other signs of nesting birds were identified during the survey. However, the site hedgerow proposed for removal, together with Buildings B1–B4, provide suitable nesting opportunities for a range of bird species. The hedgerow offers dense cover suitable for nesting passerines, while the buildings contain sheltered ledges, roof beams, and small gaps that could be used by species commonly associated with agricultural sites.
- 4.26 All wild birds, their nests, and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). To avoid committing an offence, vegetation clearance and any works to the buildings should ideally be undertaken outside of the main bird nesting season, which typically runs from February to August inclusive.
- 4.27 Where this is not possible, a precautionary nesting bird check should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist no more than 24 hours before works commence. If an active nest is discovered, a suitable exclusion zone should be established around the nest and works within this area temporarily suspended until the nest is no longer in use and any young have fledged. In most cases, a buffer of at least 5m would be appropriate, although this may need to be increased depending on the species present and the nature of the works. The exclusion area should be clearly marked on site using canes, barrier tape, temporary fencing, and appropriate signage.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 4.28 Although desk records confirm GCN within the wider landscape, with a single GCN Class Survey Licence return submitted from a site located 1.9 km to the south, habitat within the application

boundary comprises short-mown grassland, gravelled areas and artificial surfaces offering negligible shelter or foraging opportunities and no ponds occur within the development footprint. Two ponds were identified within 250 m, although these are isolated from the site by open farmland, significantly limiting terrestrial dispersal potential.

- 4.29 Given the lack of suitable terrestrial habitat and disturbed ground conditions, impacts on reptiles and amphibians are unlikely and no further survey is recommended.

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 4.30 The NPPF (2024) outlines obligations of Local Planning Authorities to promote Biodiversity Net Gain where possible:

Bats

- 4.31 An option to increase biodiversity relating to bats onsite would be the incorporation of integrated bat roost features within the proposed development, such as Schwegler 1FR units or similar enclosed integrated bat boxes. Alternatively, where integrated features are not feasible, a minimum of two external bat boxes, such as Schwegler 1FF or Schwegler 2F boxes (or similar), may be affixed to retained buildings, mature trees within the site boundary, or pole-mounted in an appropriate position. Bat boxes must be positioned no lower than 4m above ground level and they must not face in a northerly direction.

Nesting Birds

- 4.32 Ways to enhance the site value with regards to bird nesting would be to fit nest boxes to existing trees or buildings. Options include close-hole boxes and open-fronted boxes which would then provide opportunity for a variety of bird species. We recommended that one external bird nest box (Schwegler 1B or similar) is installed onsite. For maximum success, our recommendations are as follows:

- Bird boxes must be positioned away from busy areas where disturbance would be more likely.
- Following British Ornithology Trust guidelines, bird boxes must be positioned no lower than 2m from ground level and preferably above 3 m to prevent possible predation.
- The proposed placement of the bird nest boxes must allow for a clear flight path, without obstruction to the nest box entrance.
- Avoid installing nest boxes in a south-westerly facing direction in order to offer protection from prevailing winds and rain.
- The nest box should ideally be slightly tilted in a downwards position to offer further weather protection.

APPENDIX A: PLANTS RECORDED¹³

Table 4: Indicative plant list recorded on site

Scientific Name	Common Name	DAFOR*
g4 - Modified grassland		
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial ryegrass	D
<i>Poa annua</i>	Annual meadow grass	O
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red fescue	O
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cocks foot	D
<i>Taraxacum sp.</i>	Dandelion	F
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup	O
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Common daisy	O
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover	F
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle	O
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Bitter dock	F
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic mustard	O
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb robert	F
h2b – Non-native and ornamental hedgerow		
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry laurel	-

*D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare

¹³ Plant names according to Rose F, O'Reilly C (2006) The Wild Flower Key, Revised Edition. Penguin Books, London.

APPENDIX B: LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Habitats Directive

Species listed in the Habitats Directive 1992 (transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and subsequently 2017 as amended) for which it is illegal to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any individual, or deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting site. In 2007 and 2009, the Habitats Regulations were amended to define illegal disturbance as that which would affect the ability of a significant group of animals of a European Protected Species to survive, breed or to rear or nurture their young, or to hibernate or migrate, or to affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The act to makes provision about bodies concerned with the natural environment and rural communities; to make provision in connection with wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and the Broads; to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

The CRoW applies to England and Wales only, enforcing a statutory policy for biodiversity conservation. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) provides the framework for fulfilling the UK's responsibilities towards the Convention on Biological Diversity. The CRoW Act is compliant with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, requiring consultation where the rights of the individual may be affected by these measures.

The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitat Regulations) (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidate the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 with subsequent amendments. The Regulations transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive), into national law. They also transpose elements of the EU Wild Birds Directive in England and Wales. The Regulations came into force on 30th November 2017 and extend to England and Wales (including the adjacent territorial sea) and to a limited extent in Scotland (reserved matters) and Northern Ireland (excepted matters). In Scotland, the Habitats Directive is transposed through a combination of the Habitats Regulations 2010 (in relation to reserved matters) and the and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) transpose the Habitats Directive in relation to Northern Ireland.

Bats

In England and Wales, bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of the animals to survive, breed, or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species whether in a roost or not
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat
- Possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead) or parts of bats

A roost is defined as being 'any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection' and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

Reptiles

All native British species of reptile (of which there are six) are listed in Schedule Five of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and as such are protected from deliberate killing, injury or trade. Therefore, where development is permitted and there will be a significant change in land use, a reasonable effort must be undertaken to remove reptiles off site to avoid committing an offence. The same act makes the trading of native reptile species a criminal offence without an appropriate licence.

Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts and their habitats receive protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This species is also afforded full protection under the Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under such legislation it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a great crested newt;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt; and
- Intentionally or recklessly* disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

*Reckless offences were added by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which applies only to England and Wales.

Badger

Badger is protected in Britain under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992* and *Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

The legislation affords protection to Badgers and Badger setts and makes it a criminal offence to:

- wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a Badger sett; or
- to disturb a Badger when it is occupying a sett.

Dormouse

The dormouse has undergone substantial declines in recent years as a result of habitat loss, deterioration and fragmentation and is consequently protected as a 'European Protected Species' under the 2017 Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, which implements the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom. In relation to European Protected Species (EPS), the 2017 Regulations make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species, in particular any disturbance which is likely to:
 - (i) impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or to hibernate or migrate or (ii) affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; and/or
- To (a) be in possession of, or to control; (b) to transport any live or dead animal or any part of an animal; (c) to sell or exchange or (d) offer for sale or exchange any live or dead animal or part of an animal of an EPS.

In addition, Dormice are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended).

Dormice are listed on Schedule 5 of the Act and are subject to the provisions of Sections 9.4b and 9.4c, which make it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a Dormouse while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; and/or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a Dormouse.

Birds

All common wild birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird

Certain rare breeding birds are listed on Schedule 1 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation they are afforded the same protection as common wild birds and are also protected against disturbance whilst building a nest or on or near a nest containing eggs/unfledged young.

APPENDIX C: MAPS & SITE PLANS

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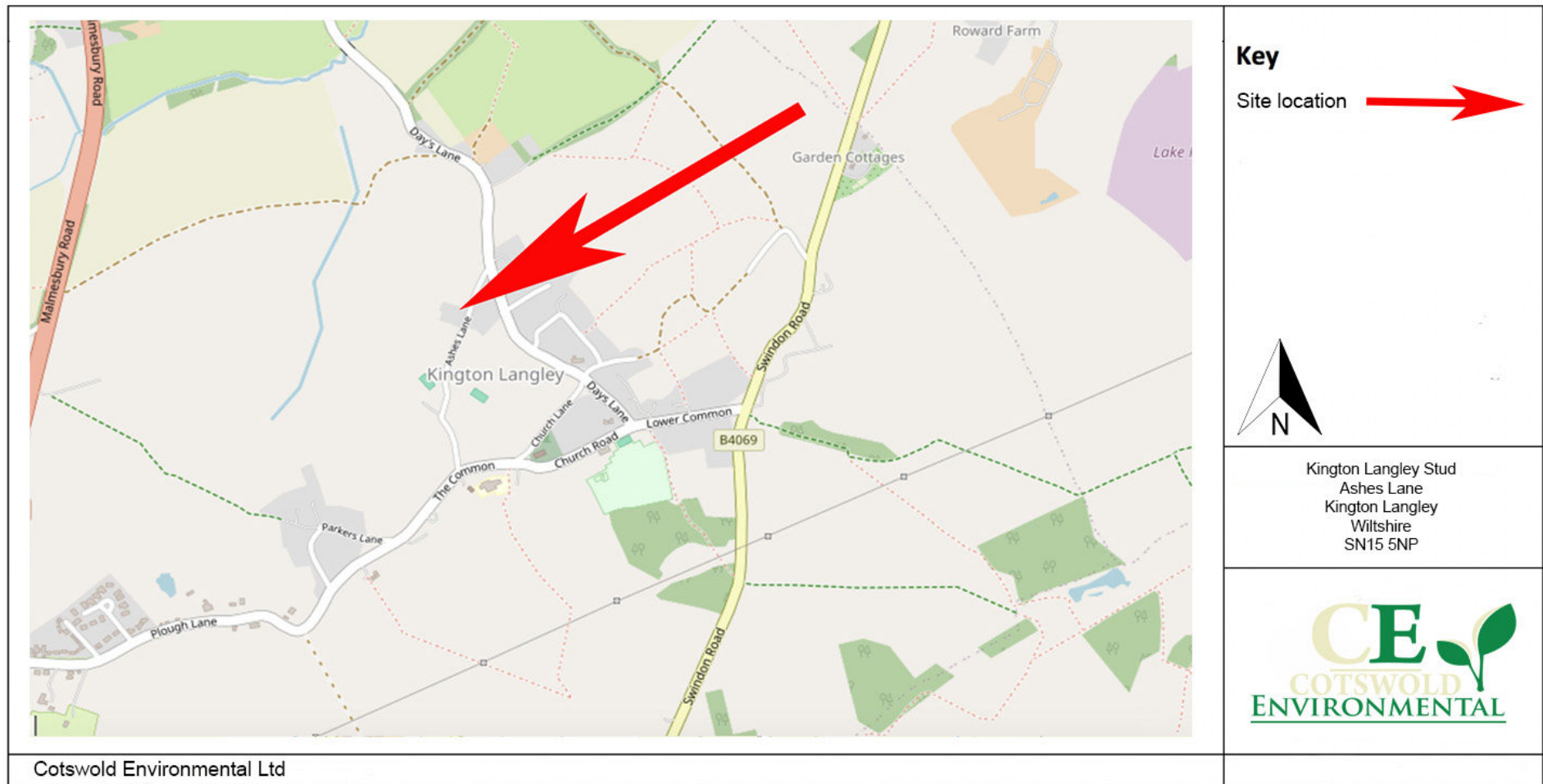


Figure 1: Location Map



Figure 2: Habitat Map

APPENDIX D: SITE IMAGES



Photo 1: A view of the surveyed building B1 from the east of the yard.



Photo 2: B1 - metal sheet clad roof pitch.



Photo 3: The east facing front elevation of B1.



Photo 4: B1 - The southern gable end with external steps to the first floor.



Photo 5: B1 - an example of the gaps present beneath the waney edge timber boards.



Photo 6: B1 - gaps present beneath the imitation stone tiles.



Photo 7: A view of the surveyed building B2 from the south-west of the yard.



Photo 8: B2 – An internal view of the main structure.



Photo 9: B2 – An internal view of the lean to element.



Photo 10: B3 – Viewed from the south-east.



Photo 11: B3 – An internal view of the structure.



Photo 12: B4 – Viewed form the north.



Photo 13: B4 – An internal view of the structure.



Photo 14: An example of the marginal grassland.



Photo 15: Grassland within the centre of B4.



Photo 16: Compacted gravelled surface surrounding the buildings.



Photo 17: Cherry laurel hedgerow located to the immediate east of B4.