



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal & Preliminary Roost Assessment

Survey site:

The Kennels, Spye Park, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN15 2PR SN152PR

Client:

The Meadowbrook Trust

Survey date:

10/03/2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Wiltshire Council. This proposal can be described as 'The existing kennels building and stables will be sensitively renovated to form two guest houses. The adjacent puppy kennels will be repurposed to accommodate wellness facilities including a steam room, sauna and cold plunge. A landscaped courtyard will be introduced between the three buildings, creating an outdoor space that connects the accommodation and wellness facilities'.

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion

Executive Summary

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in Tables 1, 3 & 4 of this report.

Key Findings

Flora

- The Local Planning Authority (LPA) may be required to consult Natural England to determine whether there could be any effect on Spye Park SSSI.
- Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution affecting the nearby priority habitats and Spye Park SSSI must be implemented during construction. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) may be required for this.
- The proposed development will require a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment to calculate the value of habitats on site and ensure the delivery of a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain.

Fauna

- Three bat emergence/re-entry surveys will be required on B1, requiring 4 surveyors and semi-manned IR cameras to provide full coverage of the building's elevations.
- Two bat emergence/re-entry surveys will be required on B4, requiring 2 surveyors and semi-manned IR cameras to provide full coverage of the building's elevations. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building, one additional survey may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England.
- One bat emergence/re-entry survey will be required on B3, requiring 2 surveyors and 3 semi-manned IR cameras to provide full coverage of the building's elevations. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building, two additional surveys may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building, two additional surveys may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England.
- A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will be designed to incorporate the measures laid out in the latest (2023) bat lighting guide Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting¹.

- Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys will be required of the ditch on site to determine the presence or absence of great crested newts.
- Precautionary working methods are recommended for reptiles, birds, badgers, otters, hazel dormice and hedgehogs.
- Habitat and specific enhancements have been recommended within the relevant sections of the report.

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Introduction and Context

Introduction

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development. The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

Methodology

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

PRA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PRA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

Limitations

Whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report is a preliminary assessment and does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. Nor does it represent a full botanical assessment. It assesses the likelihood of protected, notable and important habitats and species being present, based on a site and landscape level habitat value-based risk assessment. This is based upon the ecology, biology and known distribution of species as currently understood.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

The survey was completed outside of the optimal survey period (April to October) for ground flora, and as such the accuracy of botanical assessment and condition assessment data may be limited in terms of species visible and ground conditions at the time of survey.

Results, Impacts and Recommendations

Site Location and Landscape Context

Table 1: Site location and landscape context

Site Location
The site is located at National Grid Reference ST 95097 66932 and has an area of approximately 0.33ha comprising four buildings, six scattered trees, developed land; sealed surface, artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, bramble scrub and modified grassland. Priority habitats woodpasture and parkland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and ancient woodland bound the site on all sides. The site is located in a rural setting within the grounds of Spye Park House. The wider landscape is largely rural and is characterised by agricultural land and pockets of woodland, interspersed by small lanes. A review of historic maps indicates the landscape has remained largely unchanged since the late 1800s. The area is hydrologically active with two drainage ditches located to the north of the site boundary and further ditches and ponds within 500m, which are likely to enhance the local area for amphibians, bats and birds. The site is situated on slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage with an underlying bedrock geology of sandstone.
Priority Habitats and Designated Sites
Summary of Survey Findings <u>Priority Habitats</u> A review of the MAGIC database indicates that small areas of priority habitat wood pasture and parkland and deciduous woodland, are mapped within the site boundaries. However, the site survey identified these areas as modified grassland and bramble scrub; therefore, they are not considered to represent priority habitat in and of themselves. Additionally, the MAGIC database indicates that the area behind B3 comprises priority habitat wood pasture and parkland, deciduous woodland and ancient woodland. The site survey confirmed that this area contains other neutral grassland and two ditches, with woodland occurring behind the northernmost ditch approximately 16 m north of the site. Nevertheless, these habitats are likely to be functionally connected to adjacent priority habitats.

There are 6 priority habitats located within 2 km of the site. These comprise deciduous woodland and ancient woodland adjacent, wood pasture, and parkland to the southern and western boundaries, and traditional orchard, lowland fens, lowland heathland and lowland meadows through the wider landscape. The closest priority habitats are wood pasture and parkland, deciduous woodland and ancient woodland, located approximately 16 m north of the site.

Designated Sites

The site is adjacent to Spye Park SSSI.

Table 1a: Statutory sites on-site.

Designation	Reason for designation	Distance from site
Spye Park SSSI	Spye Park is an extensive habitat mosaic comprising large expanses of some of the finest undisturbed alderwoods in the county, along with oakwoods, parkland and an area of dry acidic grassland containing several locally uncommon plants. Rich communities of lichens, bryophytes and vascular plants flourish in the wet soil conditions prevailing over much of the park.	Adjacent to the eastern site boundary.

There are no other statutory sites within 2 km of the site.

The site falls within the impact risk zone of Spye Park SSSI. As the site is not a householder application, the development is considered high risk and consultation with Natural England is recommended.

The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the local records centre. Whilst some habitats in the wider landscape may host designations, the immediate environs of the site do not host habitats likely to be of designable quality.

Impacts

The proposals include the renovation of existing buildings and the creation of new landscaping. As these works are confined to areas of the site that have already been developed, they are considered unlikely to affect the function or ecological connectivity of Spye Park SSSI.

Additionally, there will be no direct impacts on nearby property habitats, and no works will occur within the 15 m buffer of the nearby ancient woodland. However, construction activities could result in localised impacts, including pollution from dust generation and surface water runoff if appropriate mitigation measures are not implemented.

Recommendations

The Local Planning Authority (LPA) may be required to consult Natural England to determine whether there could be any effect on Spye Park SSSI.

Additionally, best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution affecting the nearby priority habitats and Spye Park SSSI must be implemented during construction. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) may be required for this.

Habitats and Flora

The site survey was undertaken by Kelly Clarke Dip H.E, Senior Ecologist.

Table 2: Survey weather conditions

Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
10/03/2026	10	79	100	0	None

Table 3: Habitats and flora

Habitats and Flora: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations

This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other

consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

Onsite habitats

Summary of Survey Findings

Developed land: sealed surface (u1b)

The site contains developed land sealed surface in the form of concrete, which creates the entrance and parking areas, as well as what appears to be the foundations of a building on the northeast corner.

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, this habitat is not subject to a condition assessment and is automatically assigned a poor condition.

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (u1c) - Bare ground (510) - Ruderal or ephemeral (81)

Large areas of the site are dominated by artificial, unvegetated, unsealed surfaces in the form of gravel drives and parking areas. To the west of the site, fast-colonising plant species were observed throughout this habitat type, as listed below. Centrally, areas of bare ground are present where the soil appears to be compacted due to vehicle use.

Species present within this habitat include hedgerow crane's-bill (*Geranium pyrenaicum*), dandelion (*Taraxacum*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), bramble sp. (*Rubus* sp.), cleavers (*Galium aparine*) and bristly oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*).

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, this habitat is not subject to a condition assessment and is automatically assigned a poor condition.

Bramble scrub (h3d) - Ruderal or ephemeral (81) - Earthbank (112)

Within the northwest corner of the site, there is a raised earth bank which is dominated by dense bramble scrub. The scrub is mature and over 1.5 m in height, with no visible clearings or glades. Ruderal species were observed along the edges of this habitat type, as well as six willow and beech trees, which will be discussed further under the tree section.

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, this habitat is not subject to a condition assessment and is automatically assigned a poor condition.

Table 3a: Bramble scrub species abundance.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>)
Abundant	Pendulous sedge (<i>Carex pendula</i>)
Frequent	Common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>)
Occasional	Red dead-nettle (<i>Lamium purpureum</i>)
Rare	-

Modified grassland (g4) - Anthills (124)

There are two areas of modified grassland located to the west of the site, which will be collectively referred to as parcel 1 for the purpose of this report, due to having the same species composition and management. At the time of the survey, the sward height ranged from approximately 5 cm to 10 cm, and 4 species per square metre were observed. Additionally, several small ant hills were observed within the westernmost area.

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the modified grassland was assessed to have a poor condition value.

Table 3b: Modified grassland species abundance.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	Yorkshire-fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>)
Abundant	-
Frequent	Red dead-nettle (<i>Lamium purpureum</i>), hedgerow crane's-bill (<i>Geranium pyrenaicum</i>), daisy sp. (<i>Bellis sp.</i>), dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>)

Occasional	Hairy bitter-cress (<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>), creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), common mallow (<i>Malva sylvestris</i>)
Rare	Broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>)

Modified grassland (g4)

To the east of the site, there are a further two areas of modified grassland which will be referred to collectively as parcel 2, given their similar species composition and management. These parcels had a short and uniform sward height of approximately 5cm at the time of the survey. The species composition was limited due to regular management, and 3 species per square metre were observed. Sheep were also observed to be grazing on the wider part of the field associated with this parcel off-site.

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the modified grassland was assessed to have a poor condition value.

Table 3c: Modified grassland species abundance.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	Perennial rye-grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>)
Abundant	Creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>)
Frequent	Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i>), white clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>)
Occasional	Daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>)
Rare	-

Scattered Trees (32)

There are 6 trees present on site within the area of bramble scrub, all of which are semi-mature and of a small size. The survey identified willow (*Salix spp.*) and common beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). All identified species are native to the UK.

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment Matrix, the trees were assessed to have a moderate condition value.

Building (u1b5)

There are four buildings on site; one is a dog kennel on the ground floor and a flat on the first floor, one is a storage barn, one is a horse stable and one is a kennel. Full details for buildings on site are included within Table 4.

Off-Site Habitats

Other neutral grassland (g3c) - Earthbank (112)

The area to the north of the red line boundary is dominated by other neutral grassland. At the time of the survey, this habitat had a sward height between 10 and 40 cm, with the taller sward located to the north, on the far side of the ditch adjacent to the woodland. This area contained a higher species diversity than of the grassland on site, with approximately 5 species per square metre. The habitat was dominated by Pendulous Sedge, which indicates prolonged damp soil conditions. On the far side of the ditch, the earth is raised, forming an earth bank.

Table 3d: Other neutral grassland species abundance.

Abundance	Species
Dominant	Pendulous sedge (<i>Carex pendula</i>)
Abundant	Common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), great horsetail (<i>Equisetum telmateia</i>), yorkshire-fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>)
Frequent	Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>), creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>), daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>), cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>)
Occasional	Common & atlantic ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>), spear thistle (<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>), white clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), carrot (<i>Daucus carota</i> subsp. <i>sativus</i>), selfheal (<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>)
Rare	Daffodil (<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i> subsp. <i>pseudonarcissus</i>)

Standing open water and canals (r1) - Neutral grassland (g3) - Ditches (50)

Two ditches are located to the north of the site. The first runs parallel to the woodland, separating the woodland and area of other

neutral grassland for approximately 71 m. At the time of the survey, the ditch contained approximately 20 cm of standing water. Duckweed covered approximately 10% of the water surface, and the water appeared dark brown in colour, likely due to suspended organic matter. Submerged, emergent and floating vegetation were observed throughout the ditch. A pile of rubble was also observed in the ditch to the northeast of the site.

The second ditch is located behind Building B3. This ditch is approximately 23 m in length and did not contain any water at the time of the survey. Vegetation, including daffodils, appeared to be well established, indicating that the ditch is not likely to retain water for long periods of time.

Species present within this habitat include great horsetail (*Equisetum telmateia*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), pendulous sedge (*Carex pendula*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), willow herb (*Epilobium* spp.) and daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus* subsp. *pseudonarcissus*).

Impacts

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land. This is likely to lead to a net loss in biodiversity at the site.

Recommendations

Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. This should include the following measures:

- Remove only the minimum of habitat required to facilitate the development
- Use of Heras or other appropriate fencing to prevent encroachment by contractors onto retained habitats.
- Protect retained turf and soil resource from destruction and compaction using plastic matting and wooden boarding. Do not store skips and other heavy materials on retained turf.
- Grasscrete, cell web or any other porous surface treatment facilitating recovery of vegetation is preferred to hard standing.

The proposed development will require a Biodiversity Net Gain assessment to calculate the value of habitats on site and ensure the delivery of a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain.

Invasive / Non-native species

Summary of Survey Findings

No non-native invasive or otherwise problematic plants were recorded on site or are considered likely to be on site.

Impacts

None

Recommendations

None.

Fauna

Table 4: Fauna

Fauna: Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations

This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

Roosting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

A review of the MAGIC database for European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) for bats within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. 1 EPSL was identified, as detailed below:

Table 4a: EPSL records within 2km of the site - bats

EPSL reference	Bat species affected	Distance from site	Impacts allowed by licence
2020-48642-EPS-MIT	Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle and brown long eared	~1,929 m northwest	Destruction of a resting place

No buildings or trees were present on site with suitable roosting features for bats to utilise.

Buildings

Building B1 Description

B1 is a two-storey, detached, brick-built building with dog kennels on the ground floor and a flat on the first floor. The building has a hipped roof covered in tiles, and internal voids were recorded. No bat evidence was found during the survey.

In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J (Ed) 2023), B1 is assessed to have high habitat value for roosting bats due to the building contains multiple lifted tiles, gaps under hanging tiles, and access to the internal voids which contain tears in the loft lining and broken timber boards.



B1

			B1
Feature	Materials	Condition/Suitability	Photographs
Roof	Tiles	The roof is of tiled construction and hipped in structure. The roof condition is average, with multiple lifted tiles noted across the building. Specifically, on the west elevation, lifted interlocking tiles create gaps, and open edge tiles provide access. On the northern elevation, numerous gaps exist under lifted tiles. Four timber cupola structures are present along the ridge line, with lifted LED flashing on the north and south elevations where they meet the roof tiles. These cupolas also provide	

ventilation with open sides, offering direct internal access to the building. These features may provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats.

Lifted tiles on west elevation of B1



Gaps under edge tiles on west elevation of B1



Lifted tiles on north elevation of B1

				SE S SW W 120 150 180 210 240 270 300 204°SW (T) 51°24'4"N, 2°4'17"W ±10m ▲ 113m  09 Mar 2026, 12:24:13 Gaps under edge tiles on the west elevation of B1 SE S SW W 150 180 210 240 270 300 217°SW (T) 51°24'4"N, 2°4'19"W ±14m ▲ 114m  09 Mar 2026, 12:27:04 Internal view of cupola on B1
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				SE120150180S210SW240270W 193°S (T) 51°24'4"N, 2°4'19"W ±3m 112m  09 Mar 2026, 12:20:27 Lifted flashing around cupola on north elevation W240270300330NW330N0NE6 325°NW (T) 51°24'4"N, 2°4'18"W ±5m 113m  09 Mar 2026, 12:32:57 View of cupola from south elevation	
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Walls	Brick-built	The brick-built walls exhibit some cracking and mortar loss, which were inspected and determined to be superficial in nature. On the southern elevation, a section of the building features clay hanging tiles on the first floor, with the majority of these tiles lifted, providing access for crevice-dwelling bats.	 <i>Handing tiles on the southern elevation of B1</i>
Eaves	Timber	The eaves and soffits are timber and exhibit frequent defects with multiple gaps present. On the northwest corner, a gap between soffits allows access into the soffit box. On the west elevation, a broken soffit board has created a gap. On the south elevation, decayed soffit boards have created gaps between the soffits and the edge tiles. These features may provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats.	 <i>Gap between soffits on northwest corner.</i>

0 30 60 90 120 150 180
N NE E SE S
89°E (T) 51°24'4"N, 2°4'18"W ±11m ▲ 113m

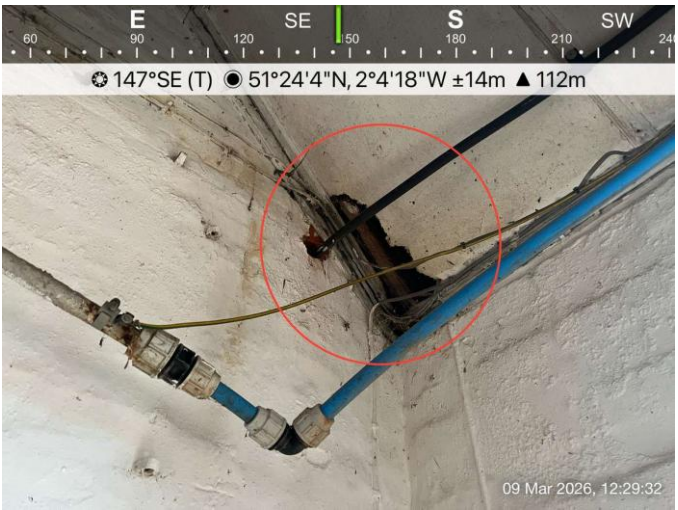
Broken soffit on the west elvation of B1

0 30 60 90
W NW NE E
3°N (T) 51°24'4"N, 2°4'18"W ±10m ▲ 114m

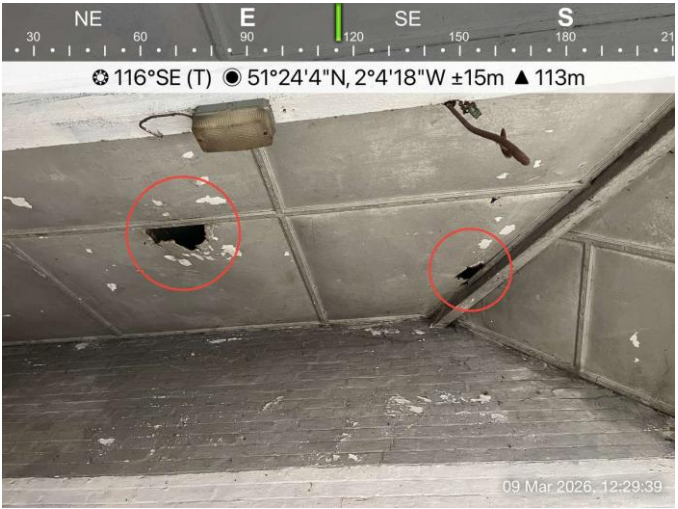
Decayed soffit on the southern elevation of B1

	Voids	Plastic sheeting + Timber boards	A small loft void, measuring 3m in length, 2.4m in width, and 1.4m in height with an area of approximately 7.2m², was recorded centrally above the first-floor flat. This void is accessible and lined with plastic sheeting. A temperature of 9°C and humidity of 79% were recorded within this void. Three tears were noted in the lining, allowing light ingress and potentially providing roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats. Internally, the building is separated into several kennels with timber board ceilings. Gaps were observed in the timber panels forming the kennel ceilings, which are likely to provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats.	 The top photograph shows a view of the main loft void in B1 looking north. It features a white spherical object, possibly a light fixture, and wooden beams. The bottom photograph shows bird nests present inside the kennels at B1, with a white wall and a wooden frame visible.	
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				<i>Tears in the loft lining within B1</i> <i>Light ingress observed in the loft void in B1</i>	
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Gap in ceiling inside the kennels in B1



Gap in ceiling inside the kennels in B1

Building B2 Description

B2 is a detached, single-storey, metal-framed storage barn. The structure features a gabled roof clad in corrugated metal sheeting. No bat evidence was recorded during the survey of this building.

In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J (Ed) 2023), B2 is assessed to have negligible habitat value for roosting bats due to the lack of traditional features that would typically provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats. Additionally, the building is likely to be subject to temperature fluctuations due to the nature of the construction materials, creating an unstable thermal environment that does not support bat roosting.



B2

Building B3 Description

B3 is a single-storey, detached, timber-framed building which has previously been used as horse stables. The main structure has a gabled roof clad in corrugated bitumen felt. To the west elevation of the building, there is a small metal-framed structure with a corrugated metal roof that is utilised for storage. No internal voids were recorded during the survey, and no bat evidence was found within the building. Internally, the building has a timber beam structure.

In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J (Ed) 2023), B3 is assessed to have low habitat value for roosting bats due to the building containing only a small number of suitable roosting features.



B3

Feature	Materials	Condition/Suitability	Photographs
Walls	Timber-framed	The walls of the building exhibit open cracks and voids. Specifically, on the northern elevation, a broken timber panel has created a gap, allowing access to the internal space and providing potential roosting opportunities between the external timber structure and internal timber boards. Additionally, several stable doors on the southern elevation are frequently left open, granting access to the interior space. Internally, the building has timber beams which may provide a suitable surface for	

			cavity-dwelling bats to roost.	Broken timber walls on B3	
Building B4 Description					

B4 is a single-storey, detached, brick-built kennel building. The structure has a gabled roof covered with clay tiles. The walls are brick-built, and the kennel doors are open, providing internal access on the southern elevation. Frequent defects were noted in the roof, with multiple gaps present. No bat evidence was found during the survey.

In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J (Ed) 2023), B5 is assessed to have moderate habitat value for roosting bats due to the presence of roosting features, including multiple lifted and broken roof tiles and ridge tiles, as well as direct access into the internal space where suitable features for crevice dwelling bats were observed.



B5



B5

Feature Materials Condition/Suitability

Photographs

	Roof	Clay tiles	The roof is of gabled construction and clad with clay tiles. Frequent defects were noted, with multiple gaps present. There are multiple lifted and broken roof tiles on the north and south elevations, which may provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats. Multiple lifted ridge tiles were also observed on the north and south elevations. Along the edge of the roof tiles on the east and west elevations, there is missing mortar, which may provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats.	 <i>Lifted roof tiles on the northern elevation.</i>  <i>Lifted and broken tiles north elevation.</i>
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				NW N NE E SE 330 0 30 60 90 120 48°NE (T) 51°24'4"N, 2°4'17"W ±11m ▲ 114m  09 Mar 2026, 12:58:09 Broken tile on the southern elevation. E SE S SW 90 120 150 180 210 240 167°S (T) 51°24'4"N, 2°4'16"W ±8m ▲ 115m  09 Mar 2026, 12:54:57 Gap under ridge tile on the north elevation.	
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				Gap under ridge tile on the south elevation. Missing mortar along the edge of the tiles on the west elevation.	
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	Voids	timber boards	Internally, the building has been separated into several kennels, the ceilings of which are formed of timber boards. There are gaps around the timber boards that line the roof, which may provide roosting opportunities for crevice-dwelling bats. Additionally, there are also cracks in the brickwork internally, which may provide roosting features for crevice-dwelling bats.	Gaps around timber boards inside B5. Cracks in the brickwork inside B5.
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Offsite Building Description

One additional building was subject to survey due to its proximity to the site (3 m north). The building is a single-storey, detached, metal-framed building used for storage. The structure features a flat roof clad in corrugated metal sheeting. The walls are constructed of breeze block and open timber slats, with several sides of the building being completely open. No bat evidence was recorded during the survey of this building.

In line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, J (Ed) 2023), this building is assessed to have negligible habitat value for roosting bats due to the lack of traditional features that would typically provide suitable roosting opportunities for bats. Additionally, the building is likely to be subject to temperature fluctuations due to the nature of the construction materials and the fact that the building is open on the southern elevation, creating an unstable thermal environment that does not support bat roosting.



B4



B4

Trees

There are 6 trees on site, all of which are semi-mature and are not large enough to contain any features suitable for roosting bats. As such, T1-T6 are considered to be PRF-None.

Impacts

Building B1 and B3 will be sensitively renovated to form two guest houses; this will include the construction of a conservatory on the southern elevation of B1. B4 will be repurposed to accommodate wellness facilities. Additionally, as part of the proposed works, B2 may be repositioned. This could result in the destruction of any bat roosts if present and could cause disturbance, death or injury to bats.

All trees on the site will be felled to facilitate the development. However, given their lack of suitable roosting features, this will not result in any impacts on roosting bats.

Recommendations

- Three bat emergence/re-entry surveys will be required on B1, requiring 4 surveyors and semi-manned IR cameras to provide full coverage of the building's elevations.
- Two bat emergence/re-entry surveys will be required on B4, requiring 2 surveyors and semi-manned IR cameras to provide full coverage of the building's elevations. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building, one additional survey may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England.
- One bat emergence/re-entry survey will be required on B3, requiring 2 surveyors and 3 semi-manned IR cameras to provide full coverage of the building's elevations. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building two additional surveys may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building, two additional surveys may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England.

These survey visits should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August inclusive and the survey visits should be at least three weeks apart. Completing surveys in the sub-optimal season, early May and September, would require greater justification of timing e.g., weather conditions, known local bat activity.

One of the surveys could be a dawn re-entry survey, or all three can be at dusk if supported by night vision aids (NVA).

Every surveyor should be equipped with an infrared camera as part of the survey to determine specific roost locations.

Lighting mitigation may be required based on the outcome of the night bat survey(s).

If any bat roosts are confirmed from this survey schedule, a bat licence would be required to demolish the buildings as it would involve the destruction/disturbance of roosts. This is applied for with the help of a class 2 licensed bat ecologist after planning permission is granted, but before commencement of works.

Foraging and Commuting Bats

Summary of Survey Findings

The modified grassland, bramble scrub and trees on site could be used by local bat populations for foraging and commuting. In addition, the site is well connected to more suitable habitats in the wider landscape, such as priority habitat ancient and deciduous woodland, and wood pasture and parkland, which are likely to be of elevated ecological value for bats. As such, the site is considered to have moderate value for foraging and commuting bats.

Impacts

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land. This is likely to be inconsequential to local bat populations due to the small size of these habitats on site and the extensive high-quality foraging and commuting habitat within the wider landscape.

In addition, construction works and external lighting fixtures on the proposed development could include the use of lighting which could spill onto bat foraging and commuting habitat and could deter bats from using these areas.

Recommendations

A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will be designed to incorporate the measures laid out in the latest (2023) bat lighting guide Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting¹.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging bats:

- Planting of locally characteristic trees, shrubs, and hedgerows to increase foraging opportunities.

Amphibians

Summary of Survey Findings

A review of MAGIC database found no granted EPSL for great crested newts (GCN) within 2km of the site.

A check was also completed for great crested newt class survey license returns and historic pond surveys. No records were identified within 2 km.

Aquatic Habitat Suitability

No ponds are located on or adjacent to the site. A review of aerial imagery shows one pond within 250 m of the site and a further four ponds within 500 m.

Ponds P1 and P2 are located approximately 244 m and 401 m to the west of the site respectively. The ponds appear to be surrounded by a small area of unmanaged grassland within a larger field of mostly managed grassland. A small lane is present between the ponds and the site; however, this is not considered to be a significant barrier to dispersal.

Pond P3 is located approximately 342 m northwest and is likely to be an ornamental waterbody. The pond appears to be surrounded by management grassland. Several small lanes are present between the pond and the site; however, this is not considered to be a significant barrier to dispersal.

Ponds P4 and P5 are located approximately 435 m and 452 m east of the site. These ponds are located within a large pocket of woodland which is well connected to the north of the site.

Two ditches are located to the north of the site. The first ditch runs along the edge of the woodland and was observed to contain standing water with submerged, emergent and floating vegetation, which may provide suitable conditions for amphibian breeding. Additionally, a small rubble pile was observed within the ditch, which could support sheltering and hibernation. The second ditch is located behind B3 and did not contain any water at the time of the survey, making it largely unsuitable as breeding habitat.

Adjacent to the northern boundary is a large area of priority habitat comprising ancient woodland, deciduous woodland and wood pasture and parkland, which is likely to be of elevated ecological value for local amphibian populations. This habitat may provide

terrestrial sheltering, foraging and dispersal opportunities. As such, the presence of amphibians within the site cannot be ruled out.

Terrestrial Habitat Suitability

The habitats present within the site, including bramble scrub are likely to provide foraging, commuting and sheltering opportunities for amphibians. Areas of developed land, including buildings, hardstanding and gravel surfaces, together with the well-managed areas of other modified grassland, are considered to be suboptimal for amphibians due to their limited structural diversity and lack of suitable refugia. However, the adjacent areas of woodland and other neutral grassland are likely to provide foraging and commuting opportunities.

Furthermore, the site lies within the Amber Impact Risk Zone for Great Crested Newt (GCN). Impact Risk Zones are derived from species distribution modelling, which predicts the potential presence of GCN based on habitat suitability and known records. The Red Impact Risk Zone indicates highly suitable habitat and a high likelihood of GCN occurrence, whereas the Amber zone indicates a moderate likelihood of presence.

Impacts

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land.

If great crested newts are present within the pond located approximately 244 m west of the site, when completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces a 'green' risk score, which states: 'offence highly unlikely'.

However, if great crested newts are present within the ditch to the north of the site, the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015) produces an 'amber risk score, which states: 'offence likely'.

Recommendations

Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys will be required of the ditch on site to determine the presence or absence of great crested newts. This will comprise collecting water samples and sending them off for laboratory analysis; such surveys must be undertaken between mid-April and June, in accordance with current survey guidelines (Biggs et al, 2014). The surveys are likely to be required before planning permission can be granted.

Alternatively, a district level licence (DLL) could be obtained. A DLL can be sought without any further survey work and will require no compensatory habitat creation and less stringent on site mitigation during construction. However, its important to note that entering the DLL scheme requires the applicant to make a conservation payment to the DLL provider to provide the compensatory habitat creation off-site on their behalf. The cost of which is relative to the scale of the impacts. As a general recommendation, if no ponds are being removed to facilitate the development, entering the DLL scheme is likely to be the most cost effective licensing option, if necessary.

Regardless of the result of further surveys on the ditch, a precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction due to the presence of additional ponds within 250 m of the site. This will include the following measures:

- A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area.
- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand, and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease, and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Reptiles

Summary of Survey Findings

The habitats present within the site, including bramble scrub, are likely to provide foraging, commuting and sheltering opportunities for reptiles due to their heterogeneous structure and vegetation cover. Areas of developed land, including buildings, hardstanding and gravel surfaces, together with the well-managed areas of modified grassland, are considered to be suboptimal for reptiles due to the limited availability of suitable refugia and basking opportunities. Additionally, a small rubble pile was

observed within the ditch along the northern boundary, which could provide sheltering and hibernation opportunities for reptiles.

Adjacent to the northern boundary is a large area of priority habitat, comprising ancient woodland, deciduous woodland, and woodpasture and parkland, which is likely to be of elevated ecological value for local reptile populations, particularly along woodland edges and within any open glades or clearings. As such, the presence of reptiles within the site cannot be ruled out.

Impacts

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to their low value and the presence of more suitable habitats locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to reptiles, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures:

- Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation season (November to February) insofar as is possible.
- A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of reptiles at the site.
- A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for reptiles.
- A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any reptiles to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter reptiles from the working area.
- Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent reptiles from utilising these areas.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

Birds

Summary of Survey Findings

Several old swallow nests were observed within the kennels on building B1; all of the nests appeared to be unused at the time of the survey. Additionally, one unidentified bird nest was observed in one of the trees located within the scrub to the west of the site. Other buildings on the site, including B3 and B5, as well as the scrub and trees, may also provide suitable nesting opportunities and could be used by common nesting birds.

Robin, Crow and Coal tits were heard throughout the survey and are anticipated to utilise the site and the adjacent habitats for nesting, foraging and commuting.

The site is located within Spye Park SSSI and is surrounded by priority habitat wood pasture and parkland, ancient and deciduous woodland, which are likely to host a wide assemblage of bird species, and may, on occasion, use the site. However, due to the small size of the site and the extent of the habitats recorded, the site is not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds.

Impacts

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local bird populations owing to the presence of more extensive habitats locally. However, the proposed development could result in the destruction or disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.

Recommendations

Any building or vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests, depending on species present, until the young have fledged.

Badgers

Summary of Survey Findings

No badger setts or evidence of badger activity, such as latrines, paths, footprints or hairs, were recorded on site. However, it should be noted that a full inspection of the bramble scrub was not possible due to the dense vegetation.

The majority of the site is considered unsuitable for sett excavation due to the open, flat nature of the managed grassland and urban habitats, which lack sufficient cover and topographical variation typically favoured by badgers for sett creation. However, the bramble scrub to the west of the site may provide suitable foraging and sett creation opportunities. Furthermore, the site is in close proximity to a pocket of woodland to the north and an open field to the west, which are likely to be of elevated ecological value to badgers. While there is no direct evidence of badger activity, occasional transient use of the site for movement between more suitable habitats cannot be entirely ruled out.

Impacts

No works will be undertaken within 30m of a known badger sett. The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to the presence of more extensive habitats locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of badgers at the site.
- A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for any new badger activity if works do not commence within three months.
- Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained habitats where badger setts could be present.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Any pipework exceeding 150mm will be capped overnight.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

- In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Riparian animals

Summary of Survey Findings

Two drainage ditches are located to the north of the site, one of which contained standing water at the time of the survey. A review of MAGIC and Ordnance Survey mapping indicates that the ditches on site are not directly connected to any other waterbodies within the wider landscape.

Otters

No evidence of otter activity, such as holts, spraints or footprints, was observed during the survey. One ditch contained approximately 20 cm of standing water at the time of the survey and was not considered likely to support a suitable fish population that would provide a foraging resource for otters. The second ditch was dry at the time of the survey and is considered likely to remain dry throughout much of the year, as it remained dry despite the recent heavy rainfall.

The wider area is hydrologically active, with a network of drainage ditches and ponds located to the north and south of the site. Notably, ditches to the south of the site appear to be connected to the River Avon, located approximately 3.2 km to the west. Otters have large territorial ranges and, given their known presence along the River Avon, their presence within the site cannot be entirely discounted. However, given the limited suitable terrestrial habitat present, any use of the site is likely to be transient in nature.

Water Vole

No evidence of water voles, such as burrows, latrines or nibbled vegetation, was observed during the survey. Recent vegetation clearance on the site may have removed some suitable vegetation; however, the vegetation on the northern side of the ditch (off-site) had not been subject to recent mowing and no evidence of water vole foraging was recorded.

The banks of the ditches on site are not considered sufficiently large to provide suitable burrowing opportunities. In addition, the low water level (approximately 20 cm) may not be sustained throughout the year, which further reduces the suitability of the ditches for water voles. As such, the site is not considered to support a localised population of water voles.

Impacts

Otters

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land. This could result in the death or injury of transient otters, if present.

Water Vole

No impacts on water voles are anticipated due to the suboptimal nature of the habitats on site.

Recommendations

Otters

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the limited suitable otter habitat on site, further otter surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of otters at the site.
- A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for otters.
- Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment within 8m of the watercourse.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to the watercourse and any retained habitats which otters could use.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to the watercourse and any retained habitats that otters could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.

In the unlikely event that an otter holt or den is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Water Vole

In the unlikely event that water voles or evidence of water voles is identified, works must cease, and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Hazel dormouse

Summary of Survey Findings

The majority of the site is dominated by developed land and grassland, which is not considered suitable habitat for hazel dormice. However, the small area of bramble scrub within the northwest of the site provides suitable structure for foraging, commuting and potential nesting opportunities. Furthermore, this habitat is well connected to the adjacent area of priority habitat, namely ancient and semi-natural woodland, which is likely to be of elevated value for local hazel dormouse populations. As such, the presence of hazel dormice within the area of scrub on site cannot be ruled out.

Impacts

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub and 6 small trees. Given the very small area of habitat to be lost and the presence of extensive areas of suitable habitat in the surrounding landscape, this loss is unlikely to have a significant impact on local hazel dormouse populations. However, site clearance could result in the injury or death of dormice, if present.

In addition, the proposed habitat clearance is not expected to result in habitat fragmentation, as the remaining adjacent habitats provide continued connectivity for dormice.

Recommendations

Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to dormice, further dormouse surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the dormouse hibernation season (November to March) insofar as is possible.
- A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of dormice at the site.
- Heras fencing will be erected around the working area to prevent encroachment into retained habitats where dormice could be present.
- A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for dormice.
- Habitat clearance will be undertaken under the supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist.

In the unlikely event that a dormouse or evidence of a dormouse is identified, works must cease, and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Invertebrates

Summary of Survey Findings

The modified grassland, bramble scrub, trees on site are likely to provide habitat value for a variety of commonplace invertebrate species, but are unlikely to support any notable species or assemblages of conservation concern.

Impacts

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to the presence of more extensive habitats locally.

Recommendations

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for invertebrates:

- Planting of pollinator friendly grassland species
- Installation of insect hotels
- Incorporation of log piles/dead wood
- Creation of rock and brash piles

Other e.g. small mammals

Summary of Survey Findings

The bramble scrub and modified grassland habitats on site offer foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs and other small mammals. The structural diversity within these habitats is beneficial, providing dense cover for shelter and open spaces that support a variety of invertebrate species essential to the hedgehog diet. The availability of such shelter and food resources makes the site highly favourable for hedgehog activity. Additionally, the site's proximity and connectivity to the adjacent woodland further enhance its value for hedgehogs.

Impacts

The proposed development is likely to result in the loss of approximately 0.014 ha of bramble scrub, 0.006 ha of modified grassland and 6 small trees, as well as areas of developed land. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitats locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.

Recommendations

A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Any pipework exceeding 100mm will be capped overnight.
- The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any small mammals are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs:

- Creation of brash piles
- Installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas.

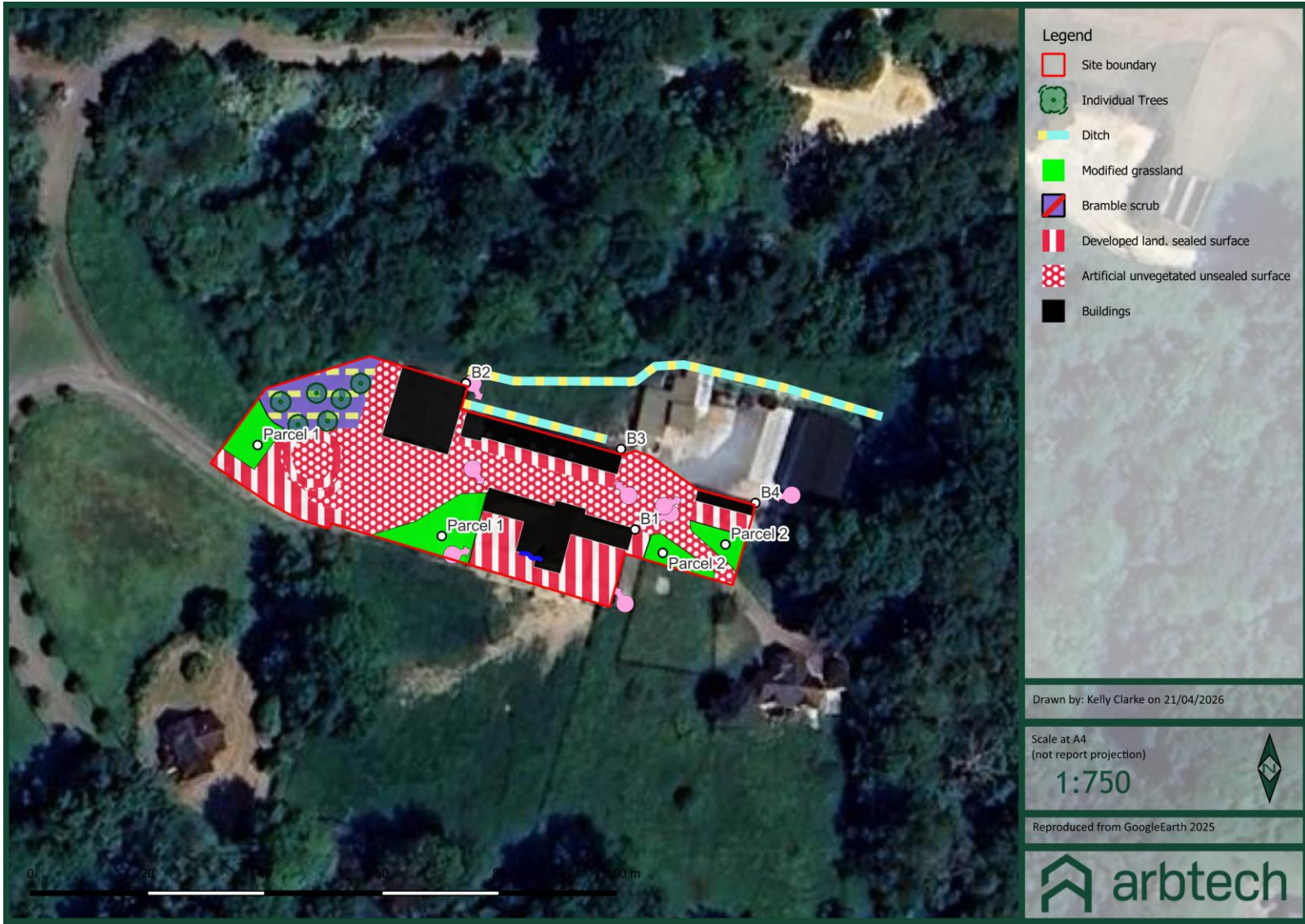
Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



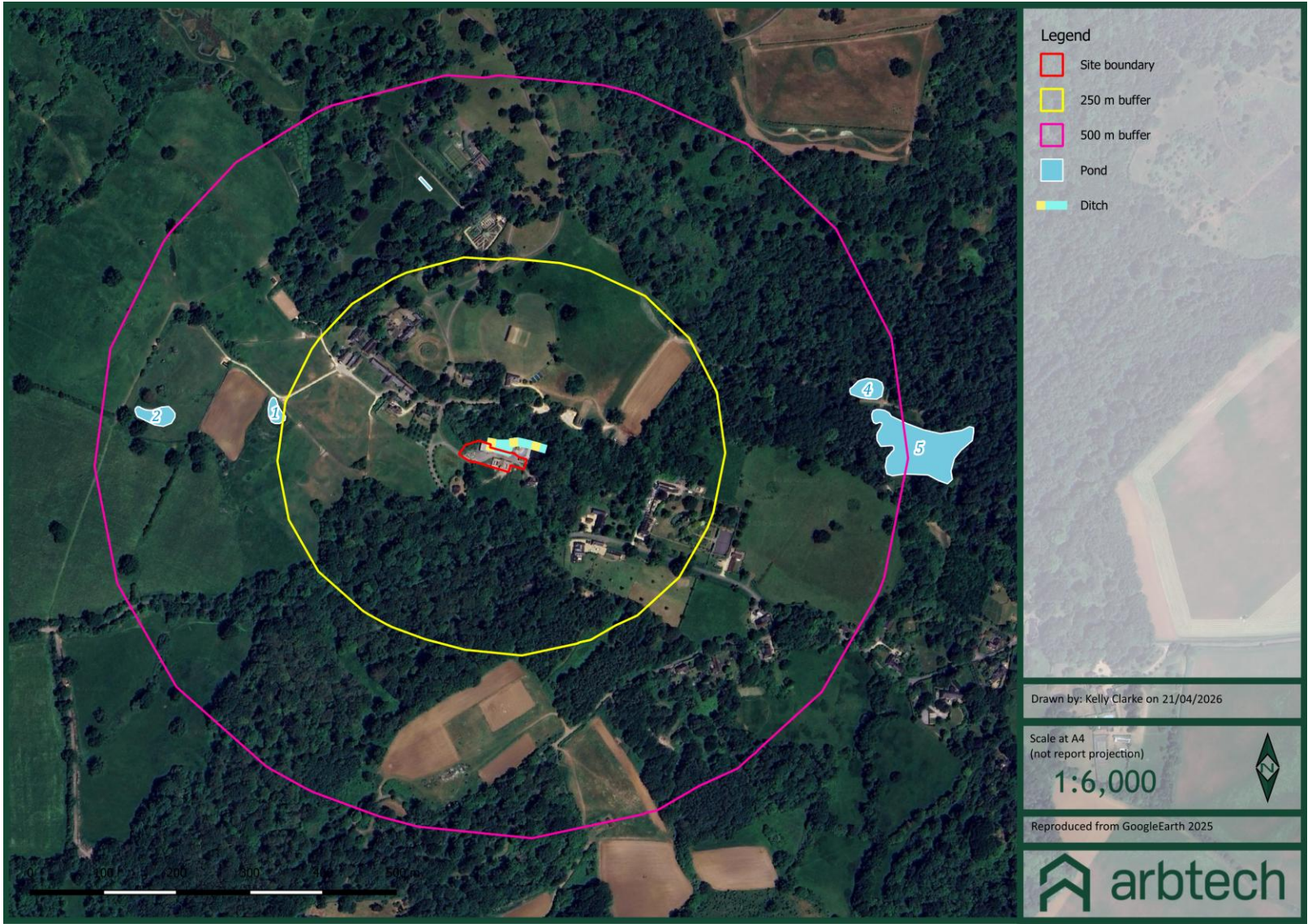
Appendix 3: Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 4: PRA Plan



Appendix 5: Pond Plan



Appendix 7: Site Photographs



Photo 1: View of developed land; sealed surface within the west of the site.



Photo 2: View of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.



Photo 3: View of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface including ruderal



Photo 4: Bramble scrub within the northeast corner of the site.

vegetation.



Photo 5: View of modified grassland (parcel 1) within the western section of the site, looking west.



Photo 6: View of modified grassland (parcel 1) looking east.



Photo 7: View of modified grassland (parcel 2) looking south.



Photo 8: View of offsite building to the north.



Photo 9: View of ditch along the northern boundary.



Photo 10: View of ditch behind B3.



Photo 11: Rubble in the northern ditch.



Photo 12: Individual trees within the mixed scrub



Photo 13: B1



Photo 14: B1



Photo 15: B2



Photo 16: B3



Photo 17: B4



Photo 18: B4

Appendix 8: Baseline Condition Assessments

Table 8a: Modified grassland condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	N
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Y
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble Rubus fruticosus agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens). For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.	Y
F	Cover of bracken Pteridium aquilinum is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	Y
		Total 6/7
	Condition Poor due to failing one or more essential criteria.	

Table 8b: Modified grassland condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	N
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens). For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.	Y
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA).	Y
		Total 5/7
	Condition Poor due to failing one or more essential criteria.	

Table 8c: Other neutral grassland condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	N
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Y
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens. For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.	Y
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	Y
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA5) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Y
		Total 4/5
	Condition Poor due to passing 4 of 5 criteria and all essential criteria.	

Table 8d: Ditches condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	The ditch is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution.	N
B	A range of emergent, submerged and floating-leaved plants are present. As a guide >10 species of emergent, floating or submerged plants present in a 20 m ditch length.	Y
C	There is less than 10% cover of filamentous algae and or duckweed Lemna spp. (these are signs of eutrophication).	N
D	A fringe of aquatic marginal vegetation is present along more than 75% of the ditch.	Y
E	Physical damage is evident along less than 5% of the ditch, with examples of damage including: excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, or any other damaging management activities.	Y
F	Sufficient water levels are maintained - as a guide a minimum summer depth of approximately 50 cm in minor ditches and 1 m in main drains.	N
G	Less than 10% of the ditch is heavily shaded.	Y
H	There is an absence of non-native plant and animal species.	Y
		Total 5/8
	Condition Poor due to passing 5 of 8 criteria and all essential criteria.	

Table 8e: Scattered trees condition assessment.

	Criteria Description	Criteria Passed?
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Y
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	Y
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	N
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	Y
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	N
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y
		Total 4/6
	Condition Moderate due to passing 4 of 6 criteria and all essential criteria.	

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Version Control

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