

Lowans Ecology & Associates

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**Preliminary Roost Appraisal & Barn Owl Survey
Pickett Yard, Woodland Lane, Berwick St John, Shaftesbury,
Wiltshire SP7 0EX**

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1 Executive summary

Survey date: 23/03/2026
Grid reference: ST 94634 22539

Protected sites:

The site lies within Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The site lies within the Impact Risk Zones for Winklebury Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site lies within a 1km and 5km radius of protected and notable sites.

Data search:

Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre hold no records for the site. Records of roosts recorded between 1990 and 2024 and field records recorded between 2019 and 2024 are held within a 2km radius of the site.

Habitats:

The buildings are set on a concrete yard. The north boundary is lined with ash and sycamore trees. The east boundary is lined with sycamore and Norway maple trees. The south boundary is lined with a wooden fence. The west boundary is lined with a hedgerow containing hawthorn, privet, sycamore, ash and cypress. Within the site is an area of regenerated scrubby woodland, a beech hedge and some individual sycamore, Norway spruce, wild cherry, goat willow, ash and false acacia trees.

Bats:

All of the buildings have a negligible potential for use by bats. At the time of writing the report, it is understood that no trees will be removed. The boundaries of the site and woodland are likely to be used by bats for commuting and foraging. The site falls within the Core Sustainance Zones (CSZ) of the known bat roosts within a 1km radius of the site. Refer to section 6 for recommendations and precautionary mitigation measures.

Barn owl:

No evidence of barn owl was found within the buildings. Barn owls are not considered to be present on the site. There will be no adverse impacts on barn owls.

Nesting birds:

The ivy on barn 1, the hedgerows and trees are likely to be used by nesting birds. Refer to section 6 for recommendations and precautionary mitigation measures.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations in Section 6 will be conditioned as part of the planning application and will be adhered to.

Surveyor:

Louise Lowans BSc. (Hons), MCIEEM. Natural England Licences held:- Bat: 2025-86560-CL18-BAT. Dormouse 2026-90460-CL10a-DOR and Barn Owl 2026-89712-CL29-OWL.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background

Lowans Ecology & Associates were commissioned by Sonja Dineley to carry out a Preliminary Roost Appraisal and Barn Owl survey prior to the submission of the planning application.

2.2 Field survey

The aim of the ecology survey (extended Phase 1) was to confirm the presence/absence of any protected/notable plant or animal species, any suitable habitats for protected species, such as bats, badgers, reptiles, nesting birds, amphibians, barn owls, dormice and/or any protected habitats on the site and provide mitigation and/or enhancement as appropriate.

The site was assessed for species and/or habitats protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Protection of Badgers Act 1996, the Hedgerow Regulations Act 2007, the CROW Act 2000 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Species and habitats of principal importance and general biodiversity interest of the site (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) were also considered. Surveys were carried out following all relevant guidelines (refer to Section 7 References).

Local Planning Authorities are required to take into account nature conservation issues, including species and habitats protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) when making planning decisions. Local Planning Authorities also aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity (National Policy Planning Framework 2019 (NPPF)) and to have regard to conserving biodiversity, which includes restoring and enhancing a population or habitat under the Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006 (NERC 2006).

The remit of the ecologist is to recommend a course of action that: a) protects the interests of the European Protected Species and other protected species, b) protects the owners and their agents from committing an offence under the legislation and is the best course of action for primarily the welfare of the protected species, but with some regard to the implementation of the owners' project.

2.3 Report

The report aims to set out the results of the survey, highlighting any effects of the proposed development on any protected species or habitats suitable for protected species on or adjacent to the site and provide mitigation and/or enhancement as appropriate.

2.4 Site location

The site is situated within Berwick St John, OS Grid Reference ST 94634 22539. Appendix A - Plan 1.

2.5 Site description

The site comprises of two barns, a shipping container and a mobile home set in a concrete yard. The north boundary is lined with ash and sycamore trees. The east boundary is lined with sycamore, ash and Norway maple trees. The south boundary is lined with a wooden fence. The west boundary is lined with a hedgerow containing hawthorn, privet, sycamore, ash and cypress. The north and west boundaries lie adjacent to agricultural land. The east boundary lies adjacent to Woodland Lane, and the south boundary lies adjacent to the neighbouring property. Appendix A - Plan 2. Appendix B - Figures 1 to 9.

Barn 1

The barn is constructed of brick/concrete blocks and has a pitched asbestos roof with roof light panels. There is no loft void. The barn is open to the ridge.

Barn 2

Barn 2 is constructed of corrugated iron sheets. It has a flat roof. The barn is open on the south elevation.

Mobile home

The mobile home has some single-skin wooden cladding on it.

2.6 Description of proposal

It is proposed to apply for planning permission for a replacement dwelling. Appendix A - Plan 3.

3 Method

3.1 Desk study

3.1.1 Protected and other notable sites

The location was checked for habitats protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and other habitats that could be County Wildlife sites or Biodiversity Action Plan habitats using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) DEFRA website.

3.1.2 Data search

A data search was requested from Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre.

3.1.3 Zone of Influence

The study area encompassed the Zone of Influence of the project. The Zone of Influence is defined as "... the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities" (CIEEM, 2018).

The Zone of Influence of the project encompasses different areas with respect to each important ecological feature, depending upon its location and sensitivity, and the spatial extent of the relevant biophysical change (e.g. light, noise, habitat loss).

However, the majority of the activities and resultant biophysical changes are unlikely to have an effect beyond the site and the immediate surrounding area. The exceptions to this include birds and bats due to their highly mobile nature, potentially 5-7km for birds and up to 6km for bats (based on Bat Conservation Trust Core Sustenance Zones, 2020), and activities such as uncontrolled discharges of pollutants, changes to ground and surface water drainage, air pollution and the increased demand for recreational activities when the site is occupied, which might extend beyond the immediate surroundings of the site in some instances; for the majority of designated sites in the area this is up to 5km.

Therefore, the Zone of Influence and the study area are broadly considered to extend across the site or just beyond the site boundary in most cases and potentially up to or exceeding 5 km with regard to designated sites.

3.2 Date of survey

The date and time of the survey were recorded.

3.3 Weather conditions

The weather conditions were recorded.

3.4 Limitations of survey

Limitations that may affect the overall survey results were recorded.

3.5 Survey scope

This report includes surveys for the wildlife detailed below (as habitats were not present, or were not deemed suitable, for other species):

Survey Scope: habitats, bats, barn owl and nesting birds

3.5.1 Habitats

The site was surveyed for important vegetation communities such as unimproved grassland, ancient woodland or hedges (that might be protected under the Hedgerow Regulations Act) and water features.

Hedgerow Regulations

Hedges were surveyed for features cited in the Hedgerow Regulations Act, namely features such as up to 7 woody species, presence of woodland plants, a ditch, bank, links to other hedges, etc.

3.5.2 Bats

3.5.2.1 Daytime building survey

A daytime survey of the site was carried out, it investigated the status of bats by assessing the buildings' suitability for bat roosts and places of rest for bats.

This was achieved by:

Checking external walls, soffits, roof coverings, internal spaces, lofts, beams, ledges, window sills, floors, holes and cavities, etc. that display use by bats - regular use is demonstrated by staining, droppings and worn surfaces.

3.5.2.2 Daytime survey trees

The trees within the development area were assessed for potential roost features (PRF's). PRF's that may be used by bats include: woodpecker holes, rot holes, hazard beams, other vertical or horizontal cracks and splits (such as frosting cracks) in stems or branches, partially detached platey bark, knot holes arising from naturally shed branches or branches previously pruned back to the branch collar, man made holes or cavities created by branches tearing out from parent stems, cankers (caused by localised bark death) in which cavities have developed, other hollows or cavities including butt-rots, double leaders forming compression forks with included bark and potential cavities, gaps between overlapping stems and branches, partially detached ivy with stem diameters in excess of 50mm, bat, bird or dormice boxes.

3.5.3 Barn owl

The following features were used to assess the buildings' suitability for nesting barn owl *Tyto alba*. Size, openings, ledges, old nest sites, white streaks from droppings and regurgitated pellets and any evidence of current use were noted. Barn owls have distinctive feathers and pellets enabling accurate identification. Nesting can be confirmed by a build-up of pellets, droppings and feathers from nestlings.

3.5.4 Nesting birds

The site was surveyed for signs of nests of swallows, house sparrows and other birds, as building works should not conflict with bird breeding seasons.

3.6 Field equipment

Equipment available for use during the survey included. Maglite (LED bulb) torch, ladders, Snap-On endoscope, binoculars, compass, notebook, pen and camera.

3.7 Details of surveyor

Louise Lowans BSc. (Hons), MCIEEM. Director and Principal Ecologist of Lowans Ecology & Associates. Ecologist for over 20 years. Natural England Licences held:- Bat: 2025-86560-CL18-BAT. Dormouse 2026-90460-CL10a-DOR and Barn Owl 2026-89712-CL29-OWL.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Protected and other notable sites

The site lies within Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The lies within the Impact Risk Zones for Winklebury Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The site lies within 1km of the following protected and notable sites:-

- Winklebury Hill SSSI
- Deciduous woodland Priority Habitat
- Lowland calcareous grassland Priority Habitat
- Good quality semi-improved grassland Priority Habitat
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- River Ebble Chalk River

The site lies within 5km of the following protected and notable sites:-

- Gallows Hill SSSI
- Pincombe Down SSSI
- Win Green Down SSSI
- Bowerchalke Downs SSSI
- Lower Coombe and Ferne Brook Meadows SSSI
- Rotherley Downs SSSI
- Cranborne Chase SSSI
- Prescombe Down SSSI
- Fontmell and Melbury Downs SSSI
- Precombe Down National Nature Reserve

4.1.2 Data search

Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre hold no records for the site. Records of roosts recorded between 1990 and 2024 and field records recorded between 2019 and 2024 are held within a 2km radius of the site.

Roosts

Serotine, Common pipistrelle and Brown long-eared.

Field records

Barbastelle, serotine, Brandt's, Daubenton's, Whiskered/Brandt's, Whiskered, Natterer's, Leisler's, Noctule, Nathusius's pipistrelle, Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle, Brown long-eared, Greater horseshoe and Lesser horseshoe.

The MAGIC DEFRA website holds no records of European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) that have been issued by Natural England within a 1km radius of the site.

4.2 Date of survey

23/03/2026 at 16:10 hours.

4.3 Weather conditions

23/03/2026

The weather conditions were dry with 20% cloud. The air temperature was 16°C. There was no wind.

4.4 Limitations of survey

There were no limitations to the survey.

4.5 Survey scope

4.5.1 Habitats

The buildings are set on a concrete yard. The north boundary is lined with ash (C7, C9, C10) and sycamore (B8) trees. The east boundary is lined with sycamore (C1, C2, C4, C27, G1), ash (C3, C5) and Norway maple (C6) trees. The south boundary is lined with a wooden fence. The west boundary is lined with a hedgerow containing hawthorn, privet, sycamore, ash and cypress (H1). Within the site is an area of woodland (W1 regenerated sycamore, ash, goat willow, hawthorn and elder), a beech hedge (H2) and some individual trees sycamore (C11, C12, C14, C19, C24, C25, C27), Norway spruce (C15), wild cherry (C16, C18), goat willow (C17, C21), ash (C20, C23, C26), false acacia (C22). The numbering and description of the trees is taken from the Arboricultural Survey Report by Steve Russell of Woodland & Countryside Management Ltd. 13/04/2026.

4.5.2 Bats

4.5.2.1 Daytime building survey

Barn 1

Barn 1 has high levels of natural light from the roof light panels. There are no gaps that could be used by crevice-dwelling bats. No evidence of bats (bat droppings, live or dead bats, feeding remains or staining) was found. Appendix B - Figures 10 and 11.

Barn 2

Barn 2 has high levels of natural light from the open side. There are no gaps that could be used by crevice-dwelling bats. No evidence of bats (bat droppings, live or dead bats, feeding remains or staining) was found. Appendix B - Figure 7.

Mobile home

There is no loft void within the mobile home. There are no gaps between the single skin wooden boarding that could be used by crevice-dwelling bats. No evidence of bats (bat droppings, live or dead bats, feeding remains or staining) was found.

4.5.2.2 Daytime survey trees

Trees C1, C2, C3, C6, C7, C9, C10, C11, C26 & C27 have ivy growing on the trunk. C5 has cavities in the stem. C4, C8, C12, C13 to C25 have no PRFs.

4.5.2.3 Interpretation of survey results

All of the buildings have a negligible potential for use by bats. At the time of writing the report, it is understood that no trees will be removed. The boundaries of the site and woodland are likely to be used by bats for commuting and foraging. The site falls within the Core Sustainance Zones (CSZ) of the known bat roosts within a 1km radius of the site. Refer to section 6 for recommendations and precautionary mitigation measures.

4.5.3 Barn owl

No evidence of barn owl was found within the buildings. Barn owls are not considered to be present on the site. There will be no adverse impacts on barn owls.

4.5.4 Nesting birds

The ivy on barn 1, the hedgerows and trees are likely to be used by nesting birds. Refer to section 6 for recommendations and precautionary mitigation measures.

5 Legislation

5.1 Hedgerows

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect important hedgerows by controlling their removal through a notification system. It is against the law to remove most countryside hedgerows without permission. To get permission to remove a hedgerow, you must contact your LPA. If the LPA decides to prohibit the removal of an important hedgerow, it must let you know within 42 working days. If you remove a hedgerow without permission (whether it is important or not), you may face an unlimited fine. You may also have to replace the hedgerow.

5.2 Bats

Bats and their places of rest are fully protected under UK and European Law. Within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is stated that it is illegal to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter, including during the process of a development, unless a Natural England European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) has been granted.

Advice from Natural England is that a licence **is** needed if the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that, on balance, the proposed activity is reasonably likely to result in an offence under Regulation 41; or

If the consultant ecologist, on the basis of survey information and specialist knowledge of the species concerned, considers that, on balance, the proposed activity is reasonably unlikely to result in an offence under Regulation 41, then no licence is required. However, in these circumstances, Natural England would urge that reasonable precautions be taken to minimise the effect on European protected species should they be found during the course of the activity. If they are found, then work should cease and an application should be made to Natural England.

You may be committing a criminal offence if you:

- Deliberately capture, injure, or kill a bat.
- Deliberately disturb a bat.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat (bats do not have to be in occupation at the time).
- Possess or control a bat.
- Transport a bat.
- Sell or exchange a bat.
- Offer for sale or exchange any bat, alive or dead, or any part of a bat.
- Also, under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), you may be committing a criminal offence against bats if you:
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection.
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by bats.

5.3 Barn owl

All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against intentional killing and injuring. This also includes protection from damage, destruction or taking of a nest, eggs or young whilst the nest is in use or being built. Barn owls receive additional protection through being listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, which gives them special protection. It is illegal to undertake any work which could cause disturbance to breeding barn owls at or near the nest site. Anyone who could reasonably be expected to know that something they are about to do may disturb breeding barn owls, and fails to check whether barn owls are present, may be guilty of an offence under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

It is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure, or take (handle) any wild barn owl.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy a wild barn owl nest whilst in use or being 'built' (barn owls do not 'build' a nest, they make a scrape).
- Intentionally take or destroy a wild barn owl egg.
- Have in one's possession or control a wild barn owl (dead or alive), or egg (unless one can show that it was obtained legally).
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild barn owl whilst 'building' a nest or whilst in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any dependent young of wild barn owls.

5.4 Nesting birds

All birds, their nest and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird. It is an offence to intentionally take, damage or destroy the eggs, young or nest whilst it is being built or in use or prevent parent birds' access to their nests.

5.5 Western European Hedgehog

The hedgehog is a Priority Species for conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and protected from harm in the UK under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the NERC Act 2006. The hedgehog is categorised as a 'Species of Principal Importance' for biodiversity.

6 Recommendations, precautionary mitigation measures and enhancements

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out national planning policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation. Circular 06/05 (DEFRA 01/05): Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System provides administrative guidance on the application of the law in England relating to planning and nature conservation.

The following recommendations will be conditioned as part of the planning application and will be adhered to.

6.1 Hedgerows

1. The hedgerows do not fall under the Hedgerow Regulations Act.

6.2 Bats

1. There are no timing constraints as to when the work is carried out.
 2. The survey was conducted in line with the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition), The Bat Conservation Trust, London. Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). It shows the situation at the time of the survey.
 3. If at any time during the building work bats are found, then work must stop by law, and the consultant ecologist, Louise Lowans (07983 664173), will be contacted for advice.
 4. As an enhancement to the site, a bat tube will be built into the south or west elevations of the proposed dwelling. The exact location of the bat tube will be advised when the full plans have been drawn up.
 5. Example of Integrated bat tube Appendix B - Figure 12.
 6. No security lighting will be placed above or below the bat tube.
 7. Any security lighting will be low-level and will be on timers so that the level of light pollution is kept to a minimum.
 8. As the site falls within the Core Sustainance Zones (CSZ) of known bat roosts within a 1km radius of the site. The lighting within the site will adhere to the latest guidance, as detailed in Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Bats and the built environment series, Bat Conservation Trust (London) & Institution of Lighting Professionals (Rugby) (2023).
 - a) lighting will be directed to where it is needed through the design of the luminaire and by using accessories such as cowls or hoods,
 - b) lights will not be on constantly throughout the night, creating dark periods to allow bats to continue foraging without light spill affecting them,
 - c) there must be no increase in light and light levels must be below 0.5 lux,
 - d) any external security lighting will be set on motion sensors and short (1 minute) timers,
 - e) the boundaries and woodland will not be lit.
 9. If trees are to be cut back/removed. The work to the trees will be carried out between September and February only (so as to avoid nesting birds).
 10. All trees will be checked for bats prior to removal, this will include a visual inspection by a qualified ecologist/tree surgeon.
 11. Ivy will be checked for the presence of bats before it is cut through.
 12. Cracks, splits and holes will not be cut through.
 13. Limbs will be lowered to the ground and left for at least 24 hours before being removed from site.
- ### **6.2 Barn owl**
1. If at any time during the building work barn owls or evidence of barn owls are found, then work must stop by law, and the consultant ecologist, Louise Lowans (07983 664173), will be contacted for advice.

6.3 Nesting birds

1. Vegetation (ivy, hedgerows & trees) will be cut back between 1st September and 28th February, to avoid the bird nesting season.
2. As an enhancement to the site, 2 x swift boxes (that are also suitable for sparrows and starlings) will be built into the north or east elevations of the proposed dwelling. The exact location of the swift boxes will be advised when the full plans have been drawn up. Ideally, the boxes will be at least 5 metres above the ground (a lower elevation is acceptable), with a clear flight path to the entrance.
3. Swift box Appendix B - Figure 13.
4. No security lighting will be placed above or below the swift boxes. Any security lighting will be low-level and will be on timers so that the level of light pollution is kept to a minimum.

6.4 Bees

1. As an enhancement to the site, 2 x bee bricks will be built into the south or west elevation of the proposed dwelling. The bricks will be at least 1m above the ground. With no vegetation in front of them. The exact location of the bee bricks will be advised when the full plans have been drawn up.
2. Integrated Bee Brick Appendix B - Figure 14.

6.5 Western European Hedgehog

1. Hedgehogs can roam between 1 and 2km each night during their active season. It is therefore critical that they can access a wide range of gardens. If the site is to be fenced, a (13cm x 13cm gap) will be created at the base of each boundary fence/wall, to allow hedgehogs to pass through the garden. Appendix B - Figure 15.

6.6 Further survey work

1. The ecologist will be contacted when the full plans are drawn up to advise on the locations of the bat tubes, swift boxes and bee bricks.
2. If the proposed work is not carried out within two years or the proposed plans change, a follow-up ecological survey may be required, and the ecologist will be contacted for advice.

7 References

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8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A - Plans

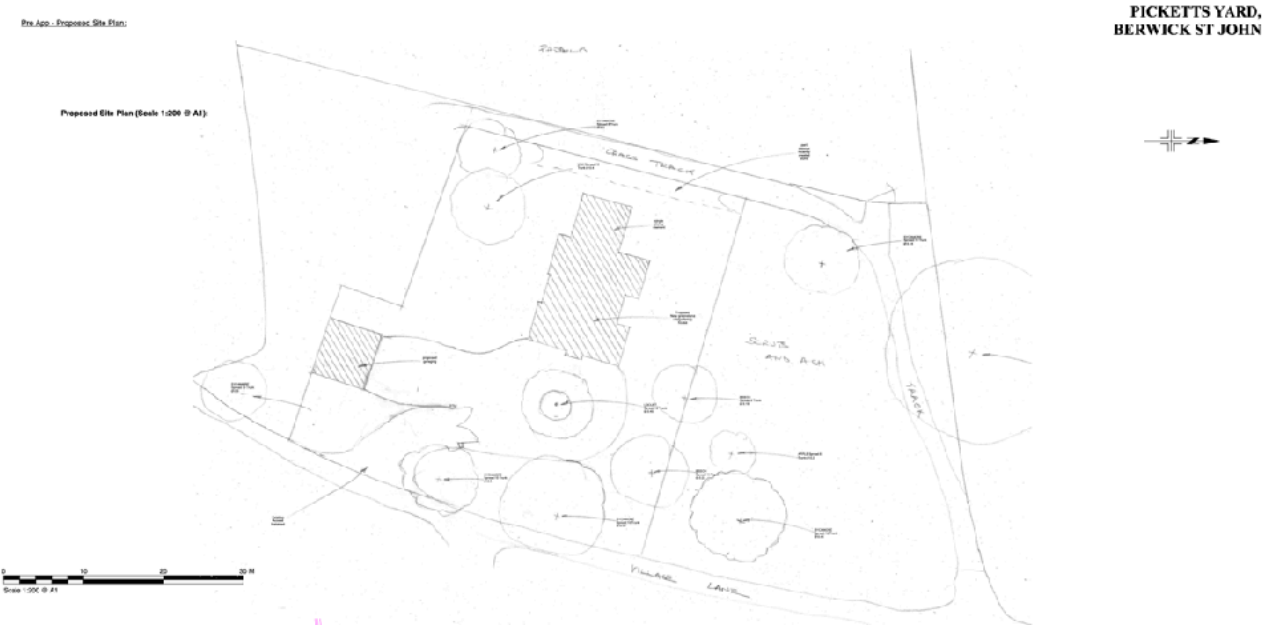
Plan 1 - Location plan



Plan 2 - Existing site plan



Plan 3 - Proposed site plan



8 Appendices

8.2 Appendix B - Figures

Figure 1 - Barn 1 - North and west elevations



Figure 2 - Barn 1 - North elevation



Figure 3 - Barn 1 - North and west elevations



Figure 4 - Barn 1 - South and east elevations



Figure 5 - Barn 1 - East elevation



Figure 6 - Barn 1 - West and south elevations



Figure 7 - Barn 2 - North elevation



Figure 8 - Mobile home



Figure 9 - Mobile home



Figure 10 - Barn 1 no potential for bats



Figure 11 - Barn 1 no potential for bats



Figure 12 - Example of integrated bat tube



Figure 13 - Example of integrated swift box



Figure 14 - Example of integrated bee brick



Figure 15 - Example of hedgehog access

